special protection of the Immaculate Conception. Besides the Cathedral Church in the Vicariate of Bengasi, there are now eleven oratories dedicated to Mary, the most noted of which are the Marian sanctuaries of Berca and of Messa. In the latter the beautiful wooden statue of Our Lady of the Mountain is venerated. Every year on August 15 the faithful gather there from the city of Bengasiabout two hundred kilometers distant. The city of El Mari also has a popular celebration on August 15-the Feast of La Madonna del Grano. There is always a solemn triduum and a great procession through the streets of the city.

The cult of Mary was introduced into Tripoli toward the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, amid circumstances that were truly Franciscan. The missionaries went there to serve the Christians who had been enslaved and forced to hard labor under the Turkish rule. In a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. the missioner used to gather the people at sundown, after their labor for the day had ended, and instruct them in Christian doctrine and morals. He also read to them inspiring stories from the lives of the saints in order to help them increase their fervor and bear their sufferings patiently. Then, before going to rest, they recited prayers in common. In the morning they arose early to assist at Mass. On feastdays they were not permitted to rest from work, but they were able to attend Mass and to listen to a brief explanation of the Gospel. In the afternoon they could chant Vespers. On Fridays the missioner preached a sermon, after which the people adored the Cross and chanted the Stabat Mater. The Feast of the Holy Rosary was always celebrated with the greatest possible solemnity. Even the Prefect Apostolic attended the ceremonies, together with missioners from other places and the few free Christians who lived in the city for business purposes.

On the Christmas of 1703 Nicholas of Chio, Prefect of the Mi dedicated a small church to Saint of the Angels; and in 1857. Ferd King of Sicily, donated a very statue of the Madonna and Child, Saint Francis, Patriarch of the Mi at her feet, together with Saint Patron of Libya.

In modern times devotion to has increased greatly in Tripoli. In when the war in Africa had end was still going on in Europe. a was built in a suburb of Tripoli cated to Mary, Queen of Peace. prilgrimages were held there, and it the center of the Catholic Action The year 1930 saw the erection Marian chapel in Azizia, called Ot of the Rains. The feast is celebra November 12, when the need is most urgent for the fertility country. Not far from there family built a beautiful private dedicated to Our Lady of the Ol 1926 a statue was brought from to Tripoli, where a very lovely was built for it. The sanctuary troved by a bomb in 1941, but the rebuilt it almost immediately.

Much could be said about to Mary in our missions, but it be summed up by saying that of the Virgin Mother of God fi wherever the sons of Saint Fran implanted the Faith. In passing note one more specific instancathedral church of Bellary, Indedicated to Our Lady of Fatiguring the month of May a different takes care of the expenses for candles, flowers, and similar item.

If Mary is Queen of the Porder, she is very specially the and protectress of the Franciscan Notitiae Franciscanae Missiona 1953, 12, 29.



VOL. IV No. 8, AUGUST, 1954

#### **CONTENTS**

UR MONTHLY CONFERENCE Father Silvano Matulich, O.F.M.	226 %
GARDEN ENCLOSED Sr. Mary Frances, S.M.I.C.	230
EEKING OUR FATHER WITH MARY William J. Manning	237 🗸
THE SEED OF FRANCISCANISM Fr. Celestine Regnier, O.F.M. Conv.	242 7
SUNDAY MASS IN MEXICO Father Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.	246
Fr. Vincent de Paul Sullivan, O.F.M. (trans.)	249 '
THE MODERNITY OF SAINT CLARE  Mother M. Immaculata, P.C. (trans.)	252 ~
RANCISCAN BRIEFS	256

The CORD, a monthly magazine specifically devoted to Franciscan Spirituality, blished under the sponsorship of the Franciscan Educational Conference by The ciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., New York. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M., Assistant Editor: Sr. Frances, S. M. I. C. and Board: Ignatius Brady, O. F. M., Columban Duffy, O. F. M., Thomas Plass-O. F. M., Allan Wolter, O. F. M. Annual subscription, \$2.00. Entered as second catter on November 25, 1950, at St. Bonaventure P. O., New York, under, March 3, 1879. All communications, whether of a business or a literary nature, be addressed to The CORD, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., ork. Cum permissu superiorum.

# OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE Abandonment

For the Christian there is nothing in this world so combeautiful, so logical, and so productive of peace of mind and as total abandonment to God. We have a Father who is in wise, good, and provident; a Father who has an infinite sairness, who is considerate beyond measure, who is concerned us with a divine solicitude. He is accessible always, even if wicked, provided we are penitent. We have a Father who downt to be feared, who always calls to us that we come to he have a Father, who though omnipotent, is not concerned a half as much as he is about his mercy, and who finds more pardoning the penitent sinner than in creating a universe a Father, who though he can never really forget our iniquital having once forgiven them, he will embrace his former enembosom for all eternity.

Even when he chastises he is prompted by paternal lo he is compassionate when he sees us under our merited at There was a man at the Pool of Bethsaida who had been in thirty-eight years. He was waiting for the movement of the in the hope that he might be cured, but he could never in time. This man had been punished by God because of (cf. Jn. 5, 14). Jesus, passing by, saw him; and though Jesus, had punished him, yet looking upon him he had compassion offered him a miraculous cure. Dost thou want to get wells take up thy pallet and walk.

Is it hard to trust him? to leave everything in his hands wit might be: health or sickness, success or failure, joy or sorn or misunderstanding, praise or blame? It should not be, he tells us through St. Paul: We know that for those who all things work together unto good (Rom. 8, 28). He turn thing to our spiritual profit. Even with such hopeless material as our faults, provided we are not attached to gathers for us the fruits of humility and the spirit of pemploying them to dig a deep foundation and to raise ungrand edifice.

This simple and direct way, therefore, of trusting out and serving him is to love and do his holy will in all thin

t is the means of coming to God on the precise road he has n for us. We would not be in danger of scotching his plans, or of putting on the brakes when he is drawing us to himself. would take the preoccupation of planning out of our poor and leave it in the hands of the supreme Architect, in the s of Christ our Pathfinder who has blazed for us the way into leavenly sanctuary.

Our heads are not clear enough, and often our hearts are not re enough to take the burden. Our planning is ruined so by our prejudices, by our pride, our ambition, our love of our dread of pain, our lack of self-knowledge. We would doubtlay down for ourselves a very devious and tortuous pathing high to flatter our pride, then dipping low to meet our going dangerously close to the brink to avoid pain, and taking usand chances because we do not know our own soul. If ever ere to reach perfection under such circumstances, it would be late in the day.

There is a divine providence for this physical world, there is a providence for the world of the spirit. . let providence have ay. Finally, it is the child that takes its father's hand and lets be led. The child does not lead its father except it is petulant, icious, spoiled. Francis Thompson describes such a child in lations to its heavenly Father:

"'Why do you so clasp me,
And draw me to your knee?
Forsooth, you do but chafe me,
I pray you let me be:
I will be loved but now and then
When it liketh me!'
So I heard a young child,
A thwart child, a young child
Rebellious against love's arms,
Make its peevish cry.
To the tender God I turn:—
'Pardon, Love most High!
For I think those arms were even Thine,
And that child was even I.'"

Thus we deport ourselves toward God when we persist in taking own bearings on our way home to heaven through this dang world, and fail to love the pressure of that guiding hand whice so much love, so much concern in it... "I pray you let me be!"

The model in this is sublime and clear. Jesus is the n. Son of God. He was sent into this world by his Father. From I came forth and have come; for neither have I come of myset he sent me (Jn. 8, 42). But why was he sent? Jesus himself to I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly (Jo.) Before Pilate he declared: I have come into the world to witness to the truth (Jn. 18, 37). St. Paul writes: Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners (I Tim. 1, 15). Again he writes sent his Son..., that we might receive the adoption of sons 4, 4-5). In the Gospel according to St. John we read: God disend his Son into the world in order to judge the world, but the world might be saved through him (3, 17). But Jesus reduction to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me (Jn. 5).

Such is the Model, such is the simple system he followed must copy that—do the will of God, as St. Paul puts it, as sla Christ, doing the will of God from your heart (Eph. 6, 6). The is expressed in the commandments, and for us religious, a refine in their observance; it is expressed in the rule we profess expressed in the legitimate customs among us; it is expressed the limitations or duties which necessity places upon us, as sickness immobilizes us; it is indicated by the demands of religible obedience; it is expressed to us by the inspirations of God's and by the remorse through which he chides us for our negli

Let us draw out a little more in detail this last form of donment: complete surrender to the inspirations of grace. one who is in the state of grace can repeat the triumphant we St. Paul: It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me (20). Christ is our life (Col. 3, 4). He is the Head of that B which we are the members; he is the Vine, we are the brane such is the case, will not Christ strive for self-expression the us? Will he not wish that the branches produce the fruits are natural to such a Vine? He wishes to reveal himself to the by the manifestation of his life in our lives, so that the life

sus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4, 11). He shes us to be replicas of himself, even as the Apostle admonishes to put on Christ, for God has predestined (us) to become conmed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8, 29).

R MONTHLY CONFERENCE

To this end we have the solicitous activity of the Holy Ghost thin us, the promptings of his prevenient grace. Always he urges to conform our lives to the life of Christ so that the life of Christ ay be made manifest in us. We walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5, 16), e are led by the Spirit (ib. v. 18). In Romans, St. Paul says: whoper are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (8, 14). is this Spirit who inspires in our hearts that reassuring cry of ve, Abba, Father (ib. 8, 15); it is he who helps our weakness and eads for us with unutterable groanings (ib. v. 26); his presence us is the proof that we are the sons of God (Gal. 4, 6). It is he ho conforms us, by grace, to the image of the Son of God. Will he ot desire that that image be expressed in our lives? Therefore, he leads us by his inspirations, by his promptings, urging us to live our life as Christ would live it. This is expected of us, for he who mays that he abides in him (God), ought himself also to walk just as he (Christ) walked (1 Jn. 2, 6). Our eager Guide is the Holy Ghost, to whom we should give full and glad obedience. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4, 30) by turning a deaf ear to his **Inspirations...** "I pray you let me be"! Rather, we must practice absolute abandonment to this solicitude of the Holy Ghost. Then shall live worthily of the Son of God, for the fruit of the Spirit charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, ntinency (Gal. 5, 22-23). Thus by generous, constant abandonent to the inspirations of his grace, the Holy Ghost will lead us ward till Christ be formed in us; thus too shall we achieve that casure of holiness which God expects of us.

However, the preceding remarks are not to be understood in sense that we are always to expect ceaseless and distinct inspirans of the Holy Ghost, and that we are to rule our life exclusively guidance. We shall not always be aware of the workings of the rit. Besides, his grace often is attached to external things which ighten or move us, such as spiritual reading, the good example mother, an admonition and the like. Neither are we dispensed the duty of applying our reason, as enlightened by faith, to the

ARDEN ENCLOSED

government of our lives, nor from cherishing the spiritual dire which might be given us.

Let us, therefore, abandon ourselves entirely to God's ext providence in our regard and to the inspirations of the Holy This is the simple way intended for children, for we are his chil We have received a Spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of we cry, Abba! Father! (Rom. 8, 15). Abba is a child's man address. The Holy Spirit himself, therefore, instructs us by that we are little children, Abba! Father! It is logical, then, the take the simple and uncomplicated way to the Father.

Life is short. It is prudent and wise to employ it well. Se is a very dangerous thing; it is living after the instincts of this of which St. John says, The world with its lust is passing away, who does the will of God abides forever (I In. 2, 17). Leave thing in the hands of God, and with the Apostle cry out confid I know whom I have believed (2 Tim. 1, 12).

Father Silvano Matulich,

### A GARDEN ENCLOSED

One of the loveliest saints in the Franciscan family is Beatt Silva, foundress of the first religious Order dedicated to the I ulate Conception. Unfortunately, however, she is one of the obscure. Perhaps it is because her distinguishing virtues we tience and self-effacement that her cult is so little known, for quiet virtues are more disconcerting than inspiring to our ous jet-tempoed age. Yet for that very reason she is truly a "Sa Today."

Beatrice da Silva was the daughter of Ruy Gomez da alcalde of Campo Mayor and Ouguela, and Dona Isabel de M The old chronicles tell us that when the Portuguese wrested from the Moors in 1415, Ruy Gomez da Silva emerged as hero

nquest. The reward of his valor was marriage with the lovely Dona bel, natural daughter of Don Pedro da Meneses, commander of expedition and Portugal's most powerful noble. The marriage s singularly happy. Equal in nobility of birth and in nobility of ll, Ruy Gomez and Dona Isabel were bound together by a love at was firmly rooted and grounded in Christ. Both were completely voted to the Franciscan Order. A Friar Minor was always their aplain and confessor; and it was always from among the Friars at they secured preachers for their people and educators for their ildren.

Eleven children were born to them, all distinguished for solid tue and high achievement. Their fifth son, Juan da Meneses da va, who seemed destined for the most brilliant career of all, ddenly changed his course and became a Friar Minor and a saint. e is better known as Blessed Amadeo da Silva. And Dona Beatriz or catrice, their eighth child, followed her brother in the way of holi-

Ruy Gomez was knighted in 1420. He returned to Portugal for few years, then again took up residence in the fortress of Ceuta. It was there, in 1424, that Beatrice was born. She was a child of grace and loveliness. Spiritually precocious, she found contemplative prayer natural as play—and much more delightful. Christ in the Eucharist ttracted her powerfully. More than once her mother found her apt in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and had difficulty in calling the child to her surroundings. Her understanding of spirit-I things was far beyond her years, for not only was Beatrice unusualgood and unusually beautiful, but she was also unusually intelliat. The Friars who were appointed to educate her were always admiration of their little pupil, and their pupil always equally mired her beloved teachers. Beatrice remained in the care of the ars until she was about eleven, when the family again returned ortugal. These early years under the close guidance of the Friars Beatrice the spiritual formation that was to lead her to the aest perfection. At that time, when the doctrine of the Immaculate ception was still disputed, Beatrice learned the arguments of s Scotus and embraced them with all the ardor of her young t. Meditation on this mystery inspired her with a longing to ate the virtues of the Immaculate Virgin—especially her spot-

<sup>\*</sup>The most useful biography of Blessed Beatrice da Silva is that of Fr. Rogeria O.F.M., which is drawn from unpublished chronicles and other source mater

less purity, her modesty and humility, her silent life of hidden u with God, her patient waiting for the revelation of the Lord's pleasure in her regard.

The years spent at home with her family were happy year Beatrice. She lived the typically sheltered life of the young met aristocrat, secluded from the world and its influences. Her only cern was to please her sweet Lord and His holy Mother, and that she had but to follow the guidance of her confessor. Lift tranquil, uncomplicated, secure. Yet for all her seclusion, Be was not unknown. The fame of her beauty was already wides and if her prudence has not been as extraordinary as her beher parents might have had reason to fear for their exquisite. Even at that, Dona Isabel was apprehensive of what the world do to so magnificent a creature, and poured out many a pra Our Lady in her behalf.

Beatrice was about twenty-two when she was summoned court of Castile. The King, Don Juan II, having buried h Queen in 1444, fell blindly in love with Dona Isabel, daug Juan I of Portugal, and married her secretly. For person political reasons, there was much opposition to the marriage the Castilian nobles, and the Queen had to use every means to strengthen her position. Surrounded as she was by ex she needed a friend who would be both loyal to her and at court. She knew of no one better suited for her purpose that Beatrice da Silva. Dona Beatrice was related to the Queen mother's side, and her fidelity and prudence were beyond qu Without delay, the Queen summoned Beatrice from the it society of family life to the chilling formalities of the royal of Spain. Officially, she was to serve as First Lady-in-Waiting royal kinswoman; actually, she was to be the Queen's pawn Castilian chessboard.

Beatrice was presented at the Spanish court by her brother and half-sister, Don Duarte and Dona Leonor da We may surmise that the young woman, for all the good Fit taught her of contempt of the world, was not entirely unit by the glory that surrounded Don Juan of Castile and his if unpopular consort. The King was a man of no little cult althought well past his prime, he was still a formidable

To die in bed," he informed his knights, "is to die like an animal." The nobles followed the King in patronising the great artists of the ay, and in pretending some kind of culture, but at heart they were nen-at-arms. Valorous but undisciplined, quickly fired to love or ate, the Castilian nobles were dangerous men to cross. Into this ilieu of brocaded splendor and thinly veiled barbarism came the ure and lovely Beatrice da Silva. Her beauty was dazzling, and it as the sweet and gentle beauty that stirs soft desires. Her modesty and reserve only increased her charm, and her radiant purity but ade her the more desirable.

Beatrice played the role assigned to her with consummate udence and discretion. Dona Isabel honored her with absolute nfidence, and Beatrice, on her part, fulfilled her sovereign's every ish as perfectly as possible. She won over most of the nobles, too, ut eventually her success with the unruly courtiers took on a angerous turn. Stunned admiration slowly gave way to ardent aportunity. Rejected suitors grew sullen and malevolent. Jealousy roused suspicion. There were insults followed by challenges, and here was bloodshed and death. The situation was getting out of and, and the Queen's enemies were turning it against her. Then he King himself, in his fondness for Beatrice, overstepped the ounds of prudence, and the harassed Queen, alarmed and confused she was, gave credence to slanderous reports about Beatrice as an aprincipled woman, hiding her true character under a false show innocence. Whatever else the Queen might tolerate, she would no one supplant her in the heart of the King. At this point the onicles become somewhat obscure; but it seems that one night na Isabel requested Beatrice to accompany her to a remote part he palace—apparently Tordesillas. No suspicion crossed the mind the innocent Beatrice until the Queen paused before a large coffer and commanded her to enter it; then she realized what Queen meant to do. We do not know whether the terrified girl forced into the coffer, or whether she unresistingly stepped into her sovereign's command. The chronicles say only that she ned her innocence and pleaded for her life. But the Queen nmoved. She locked the coffer and left her cousin to die.

If life at court had ever at any time held the least appeal for ice, it certainly vanished as she lay helpless in the suffocating

darkness. The time she spent in the service of the Queen had be her nothing but heartache and remorse. Now, if she had to di would at least die as she had always wished to live—as a spot the Eternal King. Calling upon the Immaculate Virgin to wher pledge, she vowed perpetual chastity. No sooner hap pronounced the words than the darkness of the coffer was illum by a vision of the Immaculate Queen holding the Christ-Cheher arms. Beatrice fell into ecstasy, and she was made to under that she would live to found an Order dedicated to the Immacunate Conception. The habit of the Order was to be white, like the the Virgin herself was wearing, with a sky-blue mantle like This was the promise, but the time and place of fulfillment we revealed.

Three days passed. Then, quite unexpectedly, Don Ju Meneses came to court to visit his niece. It was an awkward sit for the Queen; but there was no point in subterfuge. She con the truth-or a part of it: Beatrice was dead and her body l secret place ready for burial. The Queen herself conducted Juan to the coffer, and with her own trembling hands raised There lay Beatrice; but she was far from dead. She was in fac alive after three days in the coffer than on the horrible night had been forced into it. We are not told exactly what explain the Queen tried to offer Don Juan. Probably none-for she r that Beatrice had been kept alive by divine intervention, a thought of God's wrath struck her with terror and remorse. B herself made no accusation. In fact, to prevent possible scand resumed her place at court as if nothing had happened. As decency permitted, however, she petitioned the Queen for from the royal service.

Beatrice left Tordesillas sometime in 1453 and made to Toledo. She was accompanied by three of the court ladic sizeable escort of armed men. The company had not gone for two Franciscan Friars appeared on the road and signalled. At first Beatrice feared that the Queen had changed her much had sent the Friars to summon her back to court; but drew near she saw that they were strangers to her. One of addressed her in Portuguese. The Friars' message was some surprising. They had come to tell her that she must not we

In her vocation; she would, in time, become the foundress of an Order dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin. Above all, she was to persevere in the Seraphic spirit as she had done since childhood. Only after the Friars had vanished from sight did Beatrice recognize them as the Seraphic Patriarch himself and her beloved countryman, Saint Anthony.

At that time in Toledo there was an ancient Cistercian monastery called Santo Domingo el Antiguo, where the Rule was kept with exemplary fidelity. It was a well-known stopping place for the Iberian nobility, and Beatrice sought hospitality there. When she understood that God willed her to remain for a time in this monastery, she asked the nuns to accept her as a lay member of their household.

For the next thirty years Beatrice lived in the holy seclusion of Santo Domingo. Shortly after her arrival she began to wear a veil over her face. This, so the old writers tell us, was for a threefold purpose: to atone for the many tragedies her beauty had caused; to atone for her personal sins-for like all saints, she regarded herself as the vilest of sinners; and to prevent further disasters. To the end of her life no one, neither man nor woman, looked upon her face. Only at night, when she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, did she raise her face unveiled to her Beloved. Even among the exemplary Cistercians, the holiness of Dona Beatrice shone like a star. The nuns loved her, and she loved them in return, but she would never yield to their entreaties to become one of them. Although she observed the Cistercian Rule with the utmost perfection, she would not profess it, nor would she wear the Cistercian habit. She wore instead the plain garb of the ordinary middle class woman, and did the ordinary work in the monastery—quietly, unobtrusively, but with great love and joy in the Lord. This long sojourn in Santo Domingo was the trial by fire that was to prove her heroic patience. She had the promise, confirmed by supernatural occurrences, that he would found a religious Order. Yet year followed upon year, and to further sign was given her. She took no steps of her own, however, but rather accepted this long trial as a means of annihilating the ast vestiges of self-will, that Christ might be fully formed in her. Thus she was content to let patience have its perfect work.

Finally, in 1484, the time of probation was ended. Beatrice

was again visited by the Immaculate Virgin who told her the had come for the founding of the Order, and that the means we soon be provided. A day or two later a royal visitor was annour and Beatrice stepped into the arms of Queen Isabel the Cath daughter of the former Queen Isabel. It was the new Queen visit to the all-but-forgotten Dona Beatrice. Remembering the st cousin's beauty had made at court (Isabel had been a child the about three or four), she commanded her to raise her veil. Be obeyed—and the astounded Queen gazed into the face of a year-old woman that was as strikingly beautiful as a young. The Queen was convinced that the beauty she had looked was something quite beyond the natural. If the loveliness of face reflected the loveliness of the soul that vivified it, her c was surely a saint and she, the Queen, would be her servan client.

Before the end of 1484 the Conceptionist Order was for Queen Isabel gave Beatrice one of the ancient Moorish pala Galiana for her monastery, and the neighboring church of San Twelve young noblewomen joined Beatrice, among then niece, Dona Felipa da Silva.

Life in the beginning was difficult. The nuns observe Cistercian Rule because Beatrice knew it best, having kept thirty years, and because she feared that the Rule of the Clares, which she would have preferred and which was later ad was too rigorous for the delicate young noblewomen who we first daughters. The nuns could pronounce no vows, however could they wear the religious garb, until the Order was approve a Papal Bull of Confirmation. It was not until 1489 that the le for document was signed-the famous Bulla miracula of Int VIII. According to the chronicles, the Archangel Raphael, to Beatrice was deeply devoted, appeared to her in the guise of senger from Rome, telling her that the coveted Bull would soo her possession. Then came the report that the ship bearing the had been wrecked at sea and the entire cargo lost. The nur heartbroken, but Beatrice accepted the news with unruffled pa She had waited half a lifetime to found her Order; she could a few months longer for its approbation. Calmly she went about usual business. Opening a certain chest in which she ke monastery documents, her eyes fell upon a strange parchmen

It was the Bull, miraculously saved from the sea and deposited safe and sound in the monastery. The Queen, rejoicing fully with Beatrice and her nuns, ordered a fiesta to celebrate the miracle and a solemn procession through the streets of Toledo.

But Beatrice had not long to enjoy her new happiness. The third and last apparition of the Virgin warned her of approaching death. "My daughter, ten days from now you shall come with me; for it is not the will of my Son, nor is it my will, that you should enjoy on earth that which your soul desires." It was the last trial of her nationce and self-effacement-she would not even live to be called Mother and Foundress of her Order, nor would she see it firmly established. But Beatrice, as always, met the test with a joyful fiat. She soon fell ill of a fever, and knowing that death was near, she begged her confessor, the Franciscan Bishop of Guadix, to allow her to be clothed in the habit of the Order and to pronounce her vows. Her request was granted. Then, when the Last Sacraments were to be administered, the veil that still covered her face had to be removed. All twelve nuns and six Friars Minor were present at her bedside when the veil was raised, and all testified that the face of the dying Servant of God was of marvellous beauty. There was no sign of age, nor even of approaching death. The great dark eyes were luminous with a heavenly splendor, and the smooth skin seemed to radiate a soft ethereal light. Then a brilliant little star appeared upon her forehead and remained clearly visible until she drew her last quiet breath. It was August, 1491.

The process of Blessed Beatrice da Silva was begun in 1638; she still patiently waiting, after some five centuries, for canonization.

Sister M. Frances, S.M.I.C.

## SEEKING OUR FATHER WITH MARY

Our last in this series of Marian meditations based on the itings of the Seraphic Doctor Saint Bonaventure happily coincides the the month in which we will sing of the Mother of God—"Mary I Virgin has been taken to heaven," there to reign as Queen, wown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the nd of God.<sup>1</sup> There are many facets to Our Lady's queenship,

and that displayed by Saint Bonaventure in his third interpretate of her name is particularly pointed to our age.

For she is a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness.

Wisdom 7, 25-26.

Saint Bonaventure proposes that we best imitate our Ble Mother as Queen if we ourselves become rulers. Rulers of senses, our passions, our every thought, in order that we might according to the dictates of reason, thus obtaining our own salva and the edification of our neighbor; for it is by so acting that indicate our desire for and merit the praise and glory of God self.<sup>2</sup> It would seem that we best appreciate Saint Bonavent tripartite admonition if we consider it directed to what for was the virtue of virtues—holy purity, which is the first pillar we needs be raised by any soul which would make itself a temp God. Indeed it is impossible in his mind to attempt the wor sanctification without this virtue.<sup>3</sup>

Saint Bonaventure's words are particularly meaningfu us if we but recall that our holy Father Francis had uncommon for that purity which should be maintained in both the inner the outer man. It is deeply significant too that the place which Francis loved more than any other place on this earth, the preservation of the Angels—was built-up by him chosen as the spot to begin, perfect and consummate his mis on this earth precisely because of his reverence for the heat messengers of purity, and especially because of his burning for the all pure Mother of God. If the most beautiful title our Saint confers on his and our Father is Amator castitatis—of chastity—we know that in giving us the Queen of Heavel the model of purity, Saint Bonaventure does no more than of to us the wish of our Seraphic Father for his brethren.

If the flame of holy purity has grown dim in these our cold days, it is because we do not appreciate deeply enough the brilliant example given us in Mary's being taken up to heaven to be its Queen. And it is particularly the Franciscan heritage to see that her emblem, the *fleur-de-lis*, is emblazoned on the standard of the world, for she alone is the *Lily* of this Valley. It is our sacred duty and seraphic trust to reawaken the hearts of men to the salient truth that the *Flower* of manhood, Jesus Christ, stemmed forth from the virginal decor of her who this day is led to the throne of heaven, a most beautiful Virgin. <sup>5</sup>

Without in any way depreciating the honest efforts of sincere men and women who seek to free men's minds from illness, it is up to us to tell the victimized of the less scrupulous to rise from the analyst's couch with its plush enticements to release the libido to false love and get down on their knees and release their hearts to true love. It is for us to silence the disgraceful din of a world gone mad with egos and libidos, and intone the litanied praises of her who reveals the thoughts of many hearts to God alone. This charge becomes more real to us if we but realize that the silent but centuried motto of Franciscanism is amor, and love cannot be but it proceeds from a pure heart.<sup>6</sup>

The world is waiting for us, and God knows that we need have no fear in coming to it. All the world is crying for its Mother—its Queen—to whom it can pour forth its heart. The very evil of the day proves this beyond doubt. If woman is today glorified as a goddess it is only because man is searching for that woman who is the Mother of God.

In going to the world with the message of purity, Saint Bonaventure would have us prepare ourselves well lest we be contaminated by the very vice we are commissioned to destroy. For him our hearts are our homes, our castles, but it is the castle that is well fortified that does not have to fear attack. And what is the fortification of our hearts? The wall of chastity and continence, enclosing and defending the heart against the unceasing and bitter onslaught of satan. In a word, Saint Bonaventure reminds us that our love is totally God's, and nothing, above all love, is able to come

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Bonav., De Assumpt. B.V.M., sermo 5 (IX 699b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Bonav., De V Festiv., Festiv. 2 (VIII 91b).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Bonav., De Donis S.S., collatio 9 (V 501a). <sup>4</sup>Bonav., Legenda S. Francisci, c. 2, par. 8 (VIII 509a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Bonav., De Ann. B.V.M., sermo 2 (IX 660ab).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Bonav., Sent. II, d. 38, dub. 2 (II 895a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Bonav., De Sanctis, de S. Bartholomaeo, Ap. (IX 572a).

near to God unless it be pure. Nothing so unites us to God as love of purity, and it is because she was all pure that our Mos Mary, was so especially and singularly loved by God.<sup>8</sup> Even as t was nothing between the heart of Mary and the heart of Go there can be nothing of this world between the heart of those invoke her as Queen and the heart of the King for whom she re It is in imitating Mary then that the Franciscan heart become true heart of love, and its love will burn and beckon to men precand only in so far is it is fed on the fuel of holy purity.

The cry of the world is the glorification of the human and the human body will be glorified, but only according to design in eternity. The assumption and enthronization of Lady in heaven is a great reminder to us of this eternal design in earth she was chaste enough to become the incompreher Vessel of Election, beautiful enough for even God to take hum onto himself therein. She is the Lily of the Valley, the Mystical only because the garden of her soul was cultivated in purity is the Queen of Heaven only because she reigned totally for Gothis earth. Realizing this we may pray to her with all our hear

O Virgin, Queen of the Order of Friars Minor, give us saints by following you, heaven's Glorious Virgin, in the ho of purity, and the purity of holiness. Give us to know th following you we will become precious to God—saints, ar following the world we are only made children of Eve—evi vile. Guide us in keeping the will of Our Father in heaver let us forsake not the law of you, our Mother—that we be all and beautiful in the eyes of heaven and earth. Open your lips to the sons of men, for we would hear you speak of the great twhich lie in store for the pure of heart.

As all your words are just, and there is nothing wicked no verse in them, give us holy tongues that our mouths may me truth, and our lips hate wickedness. Give us the pure words of Magnificat, on our lips and in our hearts when we are before and turn us from any compromise, any word, with the serpent enticed poor Eve in Paradise. Let us realize the venomous effects

unchaste words—vain babbling—which rots the heart of speaker and listener alike.<sup>11</sup> O most upright among all women, who hatest every wicked way, deliver us from any speech which betrays a double tongue, corrupting and corroding the most pure vessel which God would have us be.

Mother most Pure, give us learned thoughts in which you are present to overcome the temptations which beset us. Teach us that evil thoughts are an abomination to God himself who thinks towards us only thoughts of peace, and not of affliction. Give us to know that by thinking on you and God, who so triumphantly willed your glorification in heaven, we can conquer all the wiles of satan. Lead us to follow in the path that you have traced to heaven; keeping in mind all the good and beautiful things said of you, ever pondering them in our hearts.

Mother most Chaste, show us the beauty of giving the very substance of our being for love of God, and teach us to despise it as nothing. Under your patronage may we cast off all the subtle and not-so-subtle influences of the world, which insidiously draw us away from integrity. Let us inspire great love among our people for your singular purity, so that once again a great legion of Mary men and women may fall behind the ensign that leads to heaven. Pattern our hearts to your own Immaculate Heart that they may be all embracive, totally inclusive, as they go out to reconcile men to God. With your seal upon our hearts, they will be closed to all encroachments; with your seal upon our arms may men know us for what we are—friends of God—made such by you. Teach us in the fight against the allurements of the world and of the devil that love is truly strong as death—and death a pleasure rather than to compromise the angels' very boast. Finally, O Queen of our Order, give us to shine with Seraphic candor before all men that they may know that the lamps of our hearts are fed with the flames of blissful dedication.

Guided by you, O Queen of the Universe, may we, on that day appointed for us to fall asleep, come to that Jerusalem whose atreets are all paved with the white and clean stones of the chaste generation and awaken to your smile—who so loved us here on earth. 12

William J. Manning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Bonav., Ibid., De Sancte Agnete, V. et M., sermo 1 (IX 503a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Bonav., De Assumpt. B.V.M., sermo 5 (IX 695a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Bonav., De donis S.S., collatio 6 (V 485b).

Bonav., Ibid. collatio 9 (V 502a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Bonav., Opus. II, Soliloquium, c. 4 (VIII 62a).

# THE SEED OF FRANCISCANISM

It happens frequently enough during the span of one's lifet to be jolted out of a comfortable complacency into trial and prob Perhaps a particular situation considered well under control awry, or something taken for granted becomes a luxury because its sudden scarcity, such as water during a drought, and then is struggle for what really should be within easy reach. It justifiable complacency on the part of man when, having empl the normal precautions against mishap, he feels sure of second whereas it is a false complacency when there exist limp re arguing for its presence. As Franciscans, it is quite possible guilty of a false complacency concerning a subject that should as close and as familiar to us as our weak human nature. Po that is the very reason why Franciscanism can be taken so must granted-its accoutrements surround us every day-and it until we are, for example, asked by a youth, "Father, wi Franciscan?" And, "Father, what's the difference between a F can and a Jesuit or a Dominican?" that we may find ourselve ing for words to express an idea or ideal which has suddenly quite hazy and elusive. We may find, too, that our answers from what it should be and that whereas we really should to to the youth a full and vivid picture of what a Franciscan leave him with a miniature and uncertain impression. If any appeal on the part of the youth for the Franciscan Ord basically an attraction for an individual pleasing personality. in black or brown, girded with a knotted cord. However, canism should not and cannot be made to depend for its and appeal, its force and ideal upon the slide rule of an indi attractiveness based upon each onlooker's norm of what does not meet with his fancy.

Franciscanism is one definite, concrete thing: it is a diand noble way of life lived by countless men and women that the world in the same spirit and ideal as one man live town called Assisi. It is at one and the same time a life a digious movement, propelled by a dynamic restlessness to above all creation to the Creator and finds therein the one source of life's meaning and fulfillment. As if in imitation

Divine Master's succinct summation of his basic principles: He who is not with me is against me—Without me you can do nothing— I am the Vine, you the branches— the Franciscan motivating ideal is contained in the brief exclamation, My God and my all! In it is implied all the mystical and ascetical writings of the ages: the 'how' of sanctity, the 'why' of surrender and immolation, the 'therefore' of salvation. It is the core of Franciscanism and the heartbeat of the Franciscan. Remove it, deaden it, substitute it, diminish it and Franciscan entity is either entirely lost or it assumes a split personality which attempts to function in an exalted mode of life without knowing why, and, therefore, suffers from a basic confusion that is only temporarily anesthetized by an overdose of work or play.

Franciscanism or the Franciscan vocation is a very particular kind of life. It is not Dominic, not Ignatius nor Benedict. It is Francis. "My Brothers, my Brothers, the Lord called me to travel the paths of humility and simplicity and with me all those who want to follow and copy me. Do not then speak to me either of the Rule of St. Benedict or of St. Augustin or of St. Bernard or of any other." (Spec. perf. c. 68)

The discerning adolescent who asks, what is a Franciscan? or the novice who is to be instructed in the school of Franciscanism can only be done justice to by a precise, sympathetic presentation-according to the mental capacity of the recipient, of courseof that which converted Francis Bernardone into St. Francis of Assisi. The fact that this little poor man of God is by far the most beloved saint in the church's galaxy of the canonized, not only mong Catholics but non-Catholics as well, should deter anyone from rroneously theorizing on the impossibility or impracticality of just categorization of Franciscanism for all seekers and questioners. Vithout any awareness of the ascetical process involved in the proaction of this Francis of Assisi, mankind has been attracted to m by one or more of the lovable qualities resulting from it, so at, for example, he has frequently been given the place of honor a flower or animal show in recognition of his love of nature. That s engaging love of nature was a consequence of his love of God fact that should be propagated in this age of seeking but not ling, of progress without peace, of fear without hope. This metism of St. Francis to draw such a variety of followers into

his camp is in itself the most compelling argument for the univerappeal of Franciscanism and the unblemished presentation of the basic cause of that appeal. It is not enough to say that Francis low God; it is why and how he loved him that is the life's blood Franciscanism. From this alone comes the beauty, the lovablen the magnetism, the appeal, the happiness and equanimity of Francanism. Not to accord it full justice is to extinguish a beacond darken a lighthouse.

What makes Franciscanism unique in every respect is the that it is primarily concerned with Infinite Love. Hence is imbued with a glorious optimism that has its feet firmly plan not on solid ground, which is the false security of the world, in heaven, which is the security of the saint. Keenly aware of own infirmities, it nevertheless basks in the sunlight of God's m and love. "You are charity and love. You are joy and gladness." protect. You guard and defend. You are our eternal life, great wondrous Lord, God Almighty, Saviour merciful" (Op. 124).

Franciscanism emanates happiness because its gaze is focused on Infinite Happiness. As an archer aims his arrow to p the heart of the target, so does Franciscanism direct its atten on God. The archer studies his target, the distance involved. condition of his bow, the hazards to his success, such as wind shadows. Franciscanism studies God as love; it delves deeply the mercy and goodness of this Infinite Love; it measures the tance between man and his lover, recognizes the innumer gestures of God's love towards mankind, is aware of the evil haz that tend to thwart those gestures, and thus its heart is like arrow in constant flight upwards to Eternal Love. Actually, Franciscanism is the perfect application of the simple catech answer to the reason for man's creation: "Man was created to God, to love him and to serve him." And so, the discerning ad cent who seeks to know what a Franciscan is, and the novice who be instructed in his attributes, have their basic answer in the pose of man's creation. That is the seed that must be firmly carefully planted in the mind and heart of the questioner. daily living of that purpose with full intent and effort is the gri of the seed into a bloom of beauty. As long as the seed is nour and protected by a persistent concentration and appreciation

Infinite Love, it will unfailingly produce the reflection of that love.

Hence its automatic appeal to mankind, even without a knowledge of its cause; for it is love alone that decorates the world with true beauty: a world which otherwise would be unbearable in its bleakness. It was Infinite Love that redeemed the world and gave it the warm consolation of hopeful promise. Nothing less could have achieved such a conquest, and by nothing less than the embrace and requital of that love can eternal glory be reflected in the life of mankind. Franciscanism is the continual embrace and retaliation of Infinite Love, the consequence of which is an altruism of limitless charity. It is, therefore, patient, is kind, envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, endureth all things. (I Cor. 1-8) "I counsel, admonish and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about in the world, they should not quarrel, argue nor judge others; but they should be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle, and humble, speaking becomingly to all" (Rule, ch. III).

Love cannot do otherwise. These are all the tendernesses bestowed on a loved one, and Franciscanism is concerned with nothing else than its loved one, who is Christ and all mankind for whom he had so much love that he gave him the gift of his life. It is understandable on this basis that Franciscanism treasures every word uttered by Christ, and seeks to fulfill its every nuance. "The rule and life of these brothers is this, that they live in obedience, in chastity, and without property, and follow the teaching and the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ." (The Rule) If at any time it is preoccupied with sadness, it is only because it cannot be the perfect disciple and return Christ's love as completely as Infinite Love. Its own offering to God, therefore, is considered picayune in the light of Infinite Love which it continually contemplates, and, as a result, there is in Franciscanism a genuine humility. "I want this brotherhood to be called the Order of the Lesser Brothers." (Vita prima-38)

It is humble because it cannot return as much as it receives, and so, it is a lover who is ever trying more perfectly and more completely to retaliate the Infinite Love bestowed upon it from all eternity. But this humility is not depression nor is it the sadness of hopeless melancholia: these are contradictions of love, not a

consequence thereof. Rather, it is forever joyously overwhelme the realization that it is the recipient of supreme love, and it in the warmth of its undying fire. Thus, Franciscanism accent the positive: love, beauty, happiness, faith and hope, mercy understanding. It is as proper to man as his nourishment, for the life that he is meant to live: knowing God and serving his cause he loves him. When its fulfillment is achieved, it is as refre to mankind as the relief of a soft summer's breeze. That is Franciscanism cannot and does not limit its fold, but becke every man to realize the purpose of his creation and exist through one of its three Orders. Franciscanism, then, is at on the same time a gift to God and a gift to the whole world.

Fr. Celestine Regnier, O. F. M.

#### SUNDAY MASS IN MEXICO

It was the Fifth Sunday after Easter. I said Holy Mass o'clock in a little town of the Province of Jalisco. The Church signs of ancient glory. Built by the Franciscan Friars in the size century, it had been badly damaged by ruthless invaders; but, the firm hand and strong will of the present Pastor—a Friar modern type—the building showed definite signs of improvementally probably soon regain some of its pristine beauty and Meanwhile, the two Fathers and two Brothers attending it are out a miserable but contented existence in a few little rooms in the of the Church that were left them by the invaders.

The Church was crowded to capacity. What a gathering! It warm the coldest heart to see this motley but devout multitude knees in wrapt devotion and attention. There were peasar sunburned rugged faces, holding their large sombreros rever their hands. There were mothers, their heads covered with black some with a little tot on either side and a smaller one in the There were sturdy young men, dressed in shirt and trouse glowing eyes—forgetful of the world outside—were riveted up altar where they saw the only ray of real hope in this vast were

which they knew so little and probably cared to know less. There were young women, full of life and hope. Some of them were dressed in white in honor of the Blessed Lady, "La Virgen", as they fondly call her in whom they see the only true exemplar of all that is holy and beautiful in womanhood. And how right they are! Mary is the Queen of the only beauty contest they will ever know, and why should they desire anything else in this world and the next? Then there are small boys and little girls—crowds of them—sneaking their way through their elders so that they might be near the place where the Great Miracle, as their mothers have told them, will take place. Some are bare-foot, others in rags, but their dark gleaming eyes are a spectacle for men and angels. What little space there is left in the aisles is eagerly occupied by men and women who, instead of walking, prefer to make their way on their knees toward the Altar of their living God.

There is deep and reverent silence; even the little ones in the arms of their mothers seem to sense the sacredness of the hour. When Holy Mass begins, the organ starts and the best violinist in town (which is not saying much) renders the accompaniment. They play a merry tune; they even try a classic melody. It is all the musicians could gather; and the people love it. I have an idea that the Lord above loves it too. Then the children, and those that can, sing a hymn to "La Virgen". The rhythm is poor and rather irregular, and the voices are untrained, but their hearts are tuned to the Son of Eternal Love, and that is all that counts.

Before Mass the old tower bell was rung. It sounded as if someone were banging a hammer against a worn-out brass rail. Still the people loved the sound and understood its full meaning. At Consecration, the old and only Time-Keeper in town banged again and the altar boys chimed in with numberless smaller bells. And with what gusto they swung their instruments up and down, up and down, as if saluting a great Prince. And, I mused, are they not doing exactly that? Instinctively, I was reminded of the children's Hosannahs when the Saviour entered Jerusalem, sitting on an ass. And to make things realistic, a lonesome donkey waiting outside for his master moanfully joined the chorus. True, the Mexican loves noise, and I daresay the Lord does not despise it. After all, it is the widow's farthing.

When Holy Communion came, the whole church seemed to be in motion. They thronged from all sides, old and young, the few of higher tanding and the many more whose poverty was apparent. Most beautiful of all were the parents with little ones on either side. One mother held a sleeping baby in her arms. A father received with great devotion

while the little one in his arms looked earnestly, following the S Host to his father's lips. He seemed to say: "Why does dad not d this white precious Morsel with me, as he always does?" To me incident was the most powerful lesson in Parent Education that I ever witnessed. All the while I could not help thinking of the scenthe Gospel where the poor, the sick, the afflicted and the chithronged to the Good Master of Nazareth to receive help, consol and joy of heart.

Yes, the Holy Gospel of that very Sunday told the whole story the Exegesis that we have learned, and all the books of Ascetical Spiritual Theology have failed to equal the true interpretation could be witnessed on that morning in this little town hidden among the rugged mountains of Mexico. The Gospel was that of § John 16: 23-30, where Our Lord says to His Disciples: Amen, amen, to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to The text was read to the congregation in the soft musical language Spain, and all eyes fastened on the priest's lips. Did they underst Yes, they understood, far better than many words have ever been un stood in our most famous lecture halls or in our most celebrated me politan cathedrals. It was the perfect setting for the Latin saying: ad cor loquitur (the heart speaks to the heart). Here the very we that came, two thousand years ago, with crystalline sincerity f the great Heart of the Saviour of mankind, flowed straight and each as if they were being uttered by those same sacred lips at the very ment, into the hungry hearts of these simple Mexican people. But, at all, are they so simple? It would seem that their simplicity surpasses the wisdom of the wise; and that this humble folk of a down-trod nation has indeed chosen the best part which will not be taken away

For some time after the words spoken by the Apostles on the occasion lingered in my mind: Now thou speakest plainly, and do not speak in parables. Now we understand that thou knowest all thin and that thou hast no need that anyone tell thee. By this we belie that thou hast come forth from God. It was not telepathy, but the sign of what was before me and all around the Altar that impressed me, me than ever before, that the words of the Divine Master are spirit and indeed. God bless—He cannot help but bless— the people that st believes in all simplicity and humility, in the truth of our Holy Fair Thanks be to God that this people, in spite of or because of its crupersecutions, has not yet learned to draw from the cisterns of mode unbelief or make-belief, but still quenches its thirst at the fountain

wing waters. Here is an eloquent example of what our Holy Faith really Here indeed the Heart of the Master speaks, in a language more poweral, penetrating and convincing than all the world's learning, to those hat seek Him and love Him, even the least of His brethren.

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O. F. M.

# A FOUNTAIN IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

St. Bonaventure-Sermon IV on the Assumption

The little fountain which grew into a river, and was turned into a light, and into the sun, and abounded into many waters, is Esther, whom the king married and made queen (Esther 10, 6). The eminent nobility of Our Lady so far surpasses the bounds of our understanding that words become insufficient to describe it. So it is that the Holy Spirit, who filled her with the charismata of virtues, when speaking through the Prophets and other teachers in Holy Scripture, praises her in many ways, sometimes through clear phrases, at other times through figures and metaphors. Thus our text, although it is said of Esther in a vision, applies in a deeper and more complete way to the Blessed Virgin since Esther in name and in deed foreshadows Our Lady. The name Esther means both "prepared in time" and "raised up for the people;" Esther was the wife of Assuerus, the prince of monarchs, and became queen when a young girl. In this she typifies the Blessed Virgin who was prepared in time, raised up for her people and espoused to the King of Kings in order that she might become the Mother of God. Thus this text is applied to her for here she is shown as full of grace and appears under the figure of the fountain, the river and the light, and is thus praised because of the graces she received.

You must understand that the Blessed Virgin is called a fountain by reason of the origin of all good things. This origin is principally from God, then through Christ; thirdly, it overflows into the Blessed Virgin, and thus she is called a fountain; lastly, it is said of any person who pours forth to others what good things he has received from on high. The name of fountain belongs primarily to God the Father: As the

favorably on the humble. It is no small praise, then, to say of the Blessed Virgin that she was a small fountain, small by reason of her own self-evaluation; she was indeed great but small in her own eyes, for her greatness consisted in despising great things.

A FOUNTAIN IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Secondly the Blessed Virgin is compared to a living fountain because in no way is she wanting in sanctification; she is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus. That is living which has in itself the principle of its own conservation: hence a fountain is living insofar as it flows continually. Because of her unceasing devotion and her continual communion with the origin of all sanctification, the Blessed Virgin possesses an unfailing sanctification. From her flows continually the works of sanctification because she is continually full. But when a font ceases to produce, it loses its worth as a source. What kind of fountain are we? There are some men who are foolish enough to refuse to accept anything and communicate it to others. Others are worse, for like misers they refuse to share what they have received; while the proud do not feel they have received their learning from God and yet they wish to teach others: They are fountains without water and clouds tossed with whirlwinds, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved. As lacking doctrine they are like fountains without water; when they propose fantastic arguments they are like clouds tossed with whirlwinds; and just as clouds generate not tranquility but a storm, so they with their foolish reasonings generate a tempest. If you have understanding, instruct your neighbor; if not, put your hand over your mouth. You should not make yourself a teacher of that which you do not know. I would call myself a fool if I were to attempt to take another's pulse, since I have not studied medicine.

Thirdly the Blessed Virgin is compared to a sealed fountain because of her integrity: A garden enclosed. My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up. The closed garden and the sealed fountain thus mentioned together show that if one wishes to have the virtue of chastity he must also have the charm of modesty. These things have closed the garden of the Virgin: She who was fecund remained a virgin; a closed garden because she was intact, unstained and undefiled; a sealed fountain for she had been closed to man. The Scriptures call her twice a garden enclosed because she possessed the strictest self-restraint and the most beautiful modesty. If anyone is pure, he does not give nimself to the filth of vice. Such self-discipline restrains the taste, guards the sight, and closes the hearing that it may restrict the sense of touch which so often brings out the brute in man.

hart panteth after the fountains of water so my soul panteth after the O God! From this fountain as from the first source we receive talen graces and whatever else we possess. Thus Saint James says: Every be gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Fath of lights; and the Psalm: For with thee is the fountain of life. God indeed the fountain to which all good men hasten and which all evil despise, as Jeremias says: For my people have done two evils: t have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to the selves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. This found channels His tributaries and streams through Our Lord Jesus Channels who is called a fountain flowing from heaven to earth. He flow heaven as the Uncreated Word; for The Word of God on high is fountain of Wisdom. He flows on earth as the Incarnate Word: He shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst fores But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain water springing into life everlasting. It is characteristic of a stream it rises as much as it descends: so too this fountain, as it descends the womb of the Virgin to receive flesh, so it ascends likewise glory above the choirs of angels. He is the fountain to which Christian must run to drink the waters of graces: You shall draw waters with out of the Savior's fountains.

The third fountain, into whom the Word of God overflows, glorious Virgin of whom it is said: A little fountain grew into a river. The Blessed Virgin is compared to a little fountain, a li fountain, to a sealed fountain and to a fountain that overflows in full stream.

I say first that she is compared to a small fountain because of prerogative of humility. In the vision of Mardochaeus, the little tain grew into a river. The smallness of that fountain is merely extended for it increased interiorly: He who humbles himself shall be exa As much as one exalts himself and is carried away with himself glories in himself, so much is he found wanting, corrupted and bro low. But anyone who humbles himself as did this small girl will greater in the kingdom of heaven: for although she is the Moth God, she wished to appear small in her own eyes. This is the begin of the Christian vocation, as Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish thin the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and weak things of the world hath God chosen, and the things that not that he might bring to naught the things that are. God thus

Fourthly, the Blessed Virgin is compared to a fountain flowing a full stream because of the liberality of her mercy: In that day shall be a fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabi of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and of the unclean we The fountain which is thus open is the Blessed Virgin who purge frees the Saints from sins committed and from the concupied which lead to sin. Hence we read in Joel: A fountain shall come from the house of the Lord and shall water the torrent of thorns, the of sinners. For there are many who although they are like thord made chosen trees through their trust in the Virgin. For there is a sinner so thorny and hard that will not become a holy tree if he to Mary. If we fly to her, we will receive her mercy. A figure of is in Genesis: Eliezer the servant of Abraham said: Behold I star the well of water, and to Rebecca: I ask you, young maiden, for a of water. She answered: Drink, my Lord, and I will also draw to camels. Though this surprised him, we find her a figure of Our for as often as we ask her help, she will give us to drink: To him thirsteth, she says with her Son, I will give of the fountain of the of life freely. Let us go to her!

Fr. Vincent de Paul Sullivan, O. F. M. (t

#### THE MODERNITY OF SAINT CLARE

Has the virgin saint of seven hundred years ago, she who seforty-one years of hidden life in the cloister, a message for the accrestless people of the twentieth century? Are not the monasteric Poor Clares today an outmoded remnant of the past, anachron in our present day of speed, industry, and efficiency?

Clare's one desire was for God; her one concern was for And God remains the modern need, the One Who alone suffice Clare so well knew. Because Clare was convinced that in Go things realize their final end, she is unquestionably "up to day modern with a greater modernity than the achievements of indue economy, and politics which collide with the Almighty because attempt to remain outside Christianity. Clare wanted God all therefore, she embraced the universe. The activity of moderns with

wes remain only peripheral to the center which is God is less real and intense than the activity of Clare which sprang from the very enter of all things: God.

From Clare, we can learn to pray. Prayer is the opening of one's wn being to God; but it is God Who does the greatest work-even ll! Man's part, though important, is relatively very small. To open ne's soul to God, to watch and listen for His word, is to be as wakeul to the needs of the hour as Clare was, and yet as unperturbed as he. The pinnacle of her inmost longings glowed with the Divine ight as, opening her heart fully to the torrents of grace and perevering unshaken and firm in her vigil of prayer, she lovingly rasped in their fullest meaning the content of the Divine whisperngs. Are we thus able to listen and to wait? Do we have time for God, or have we become deaf to His voice in the din and clamor of earth? Have we even lost the use of the organ which permits us to perceive the quiet voice of God? Do we open in prayer our inmost hearts or merely our lips and a limited space in our hearts? Like Clare, do we give Him the "glowing pinnacle of our inmost longings''?

The prayer of Clare always turned on Christ. Like that of Francis, her prayer embraces most particularly the Sacred Humanity of our Lord which supplied her spirit with an unfailing stimulant for contemplation. "The Son of God has become our Way; and our Holy Father Saint Francis, His true lover and follower, has taught us that way by his word and example." With Jesus, she suffered and endured; with Him, she loved and felt compassion; with Him, she longed to be united in her prayer. And Clare tells the people of today that our Divine Lord likewise wishes to be the power and force in our own lives. But what does Christ signify to us? Do we feel with Him, and does His life lay hold of ours? Do we endure all things for His sake? Is He real to us, or shadowy and elusive?

Clare's flight from her castle home to the Portiuncula, where francis and his Brothers received her with burning candles and led her to the altar, is symbolic in her life. She gave fierself entirely to God. "To God alone, Clare desired to consecrate herself, making of her body a living temple, and zealously endeavoring to make her oul worthy, by the practice of virtue, of being wedded to the great King." God alone was the end of her striving; He is the All she

asked. And consecrated virginity was her choice because she wisk to make herself a living gift to God, free from all earthly bond to be His alone.

Are God's interests our concern? Do we long to possess In spite of earthly interests and duties, do we cherish virginity strive for such measure of it as God asks of us?

Alone! Renouncing all things, can the renouncer yet not his own will? But Clare made a gift of her very self and was, it turn, enriched by Christ. "You have taken with all your beit Bridegroom most noble, our Lord Jesus Christ. The King Himself unite you with Him in divine union where He is enthroin eternal light." "Great things have we promised, greater still promised to us." "She who has renounced all may prepare for await divine wedded union with the King." When Clare speat Christ as her Bridegroom, she almost invariably regards Him at Lord of Glory, though still remaining united with Him in the tery of His Passion. Her flight to the Portiuncula was the jobridal journey of her soul toward our Lord.

We today prefer to look at sacrifice, renunciation, and pen in their narrowest limits. Clare put them in correct perspective look first of all to what we give rather than to what we receive could we only recognize God hidden in every circumstance of life and realize that we can advance toward Him by these very circumstances, then our pilgrimage on this earth could also be made the note of joyous expectation.

Finally, we should learn from Clare of the single thing we our anxious concern. When, in the first monastery of San Dams there was no food for the Sisters, Clare sought assistance from She commanded one of the Sisters to divide the one small pier bread in the monastery into fifty tiny morsels, and then she tu to God in prayer. The bread was so multiplied that each of fifty Sisters was satisfied.

Clare lay seriously ill in her narrow cell when the Saracen of Frederick II invaded Assisi and threatened the convent of Poor Ladies. Yet she roused herself and had the Blessed Sacran brought to her in the Pyx. She prayed. And the voice of our from the Sacred Host Which she uplifted in sight of the en

spoke in clearest tones: "I will always watch over you." The enemy fled precipitately in fear.

Clare shows us how the people of our day lead cramped lives within the narrow confines of their anxiety for their physical needs, whereas the only worthy anxiety is not fearful but a constantly trustful one in the loving provident Hand of God our Father. From Him alone she expected—everything! Her lighthearted freedom from anxious care for physical needs sprang from her primary concern for the things of the soul—she who had elected poverty for her body in order to emulate the poverty of the poor Christ. "O blessed poverty! for those who love and embrace her, she hides eternal riches!" Is our anxiety more for our body than for our soul? Does it consist more in seeking after temporal security than the security of God's Paternal Hand? Is our anxiety such that we expect God to serve us, rather than ourselves to serve Him?

Genuine Christian concern looks beyond self to others. Clare enclosed herself within the cloister in order to be an intercessor for the needs and sufferings of the universal Church. "This little flock our Lord and Father has gathered together in His holy Church through the word and example of our holy Father Saint Francis." Clare's narrow cloister demanded a wide field for her soul. She would help to bear the burden of the universal Church. "I regard thee as God's auxiliary and a support for the frail members of His ineffable Body." As Francis supported the tottering pillars of the Lateran Church, so Clare and her Sisters would support Holy Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. She knows that, even in her narrow cloister, her task is apostolic. Her little flock is not for herself, but for the Church whose Vicars and Cardinals confided their anxieties to her.

Do we regard ourselves as divinely called co-workers in the Mystical Body of Christ? Do we live for the Church, suffer for her and feel concern for her always? Or do we esteem mere external activity greater than sacrificial prayer? Is our interest in the Church's welfare merely territorial and personal? Or do we understand also that the silent, nameless sufferers of the world, the apparently useless, the aged and confined, can be valuable contemplatives for the support of the Church?

VOL. NO. 10 11 12 11 1954

We see that this woman of the thirteenth century is modern than we had realized, just as are the silent, hidden, we strange monasteries of her daughters. She shows us that no extended progress, no mechanical or industrial art, no fashions or multiple of accomplishments are the things of greatest value—but only entire gift of self to God. Clare calls to us of today: take God sely! Let Him be your greatest concern, your most burning an

Lothar Hardick,

Rev. Mother M. Immaculata, P.C.



#### FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

UNDER ANGEL WINGS: The Autobiography of Sister Maria Antonia. Transl. by Conall O'Leary from the original Portuguese. Paterson: Saint Anthony Guild. 1953. Pp. xviii 214. \$2.00

This is the simple, beautiful story of a soul, Cecy Cony (1900-1939), who became Sister Maria Antonia of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity (Stella Niagara). Written under obedience, the autobiography covers only the first twenty-one years of her life, and is supplemented by a sketch of her years in the convent. A fuller study of her interior life, so much desired after one has read her ingenuous self-revelations, is promised in the future.

"Under Angel Wings" is a most apt title, since it emphasizes the extraordinary place Cecy's Guardian Angel had in her life: for over thirty year carly 1905 until 1935, she waa aware of his presence and ever of his protection and very definiance. Certainly as Religious, we brought to realize the need of to and reliance on our Guardia, who is too often forgotten in a Cecy will teach us too the need fice and mortification, of constance and care, especially in small which too easily turn our hearts fr

The English translator has a The Cord correct a statement of face. The cause of Sister Maria has not been officially introduced (as stated therein); but preparabeing made for such a step. The biography will soon appear in and Dutch and perhaps in Italian.

#### OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

All of us, priests and religious alike, labor for the extension and firm establishment of the kingdom of God according to the mire of our particular calling. A greater or lesser field of labor ils to the lot of the various vocations, for to each one of us grace is even according to the measure of Christ's bestowal (Eph. 4, 7). Each hust exercise the function committed to him, ministry, in ministerng; or he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhorting; who shows mercy, with cheerfulness (Rom. 12, 7-8). The welleing and increment of the Mystical Body to which we belong depend on the full and healthy functioning of every member. The first function is our personal sanctification, as the Apostle puts it, to practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ (Eph. 4, 15). If then, we are to contribute our share to the building-up of the Body of Christ, it will be achieved only if we pursue our own sanctification and if we are devoted to prayer. In the present conference let us consider this from the viewpoint of the priesthood, for it can thus be more clearly illustrated, though, with due regard to difference of vocation, the following re**flections** are equally applicable to religious.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of priests are full of real for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. This is as it should be. It is the natural instinct of a Catholic; in the priest, it is manifestation of the grace of ordination which is dynamic: you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and wen to the very ends of the earth (Acts 1, 8). In fact even today, as preading and defending the Gospel message many suffer even to onds, as a criminal (2 Tim. 2, 9). We realize that there is so much be done: there are holy souls looking for direction and encourageent, and the lukewarm who need to be led to fervor, and lapsed atholics to be reclaimed to Christ, and the multitude of non-Catholics who are wandering about in utter spiritual darkness. We would the to bring them in from the highways and byways and say trimphantly to Christ.

Lift up thy eyes round about and see, They are all assembled, they shall come to the Thy children shall come from afar, And thy daughters shall be borne on the hip. Then shalt thou see and be radiant (Isa. 60, 4).

You have a consuming zeal, for the harvest is great at laborers few, but you must take care lest the zeal "consume That is, do not let it absorb you to your own spiritual harm the detriment of the very work you undertake for the sake of The sanctification and salvation of souls is a supernatural Accordingly, it is God's work and must be done in God's wa field is God's field, the building is his building. We are his the channels through which the heavenly graces are conveyed Do you not think that God wants us fashioned into fit instrum the accomplishment of his works? If we are the dispensers mysteries, should we not live in that world of mysteries? H we speak the words of God if we have not often talked wit How can we lead men on the way that leads to God if we had often walked with God? How can we inflame the hearts of me a longing for God if we have not looked upon the face of Go a fountain that is not fed by the heavenly stream can give no

It is true that we perform supernatural wonders throuse Mass and the sacraments; but there is a vast field which we leave untouched unless we are filled with the Spirit. By our hood God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor in order to perfect the saints..., for building up the body of (Eph. 4, 12). Therefore, we stand in need of heavenly unct need power to touch hardened hearts, and prudence and will guide such that are tempted and bewildered, and words of to console the afflicted, and strength to fortify the weak, and of life that we may call forth tears of repentence, admonishing man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col. 1, 28).

To accomplish this we must be men of prayer. Let us the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus, who we ful to him who made him (Hebr. 3, 1). He who needed no began his ministry with a protracted prayer of forty days. after we read that he passed whole nights in the prayer of Gethat he rose very early in the morning and went into the

aces to pray. Throughout the Epistles of his great Apostle we ad the ever-recurring refrain, nocte ac die obsecrantes—sine interissione orantes. St. Peter gives us the two preoccupations of the uly apostolic man when he says, we will devote ourselves to prayer ad to the ministry of the word (Acts 6, 4). Thus you see the source the tradition—Christ and his apostles.

We must follow their example with zeal and perseverance, herwise we shall be working like mere men at the accomplishment supernatural works and we are bound to fail, for without me you not nothing (Jn. 15, 5). Certainly there is a tremendous out-put work, but are the fruits commensurate? In view of the energy spended, should we not expect a far greater return? Applying the assage to spiritual illnesses, do we not see around us a repetition of the scene at the Pool of Bethsaida, a great multitude of the sick, blind, lame, and those with shrivelled limbs, waiting for the moving of the water? (Jn. 5, 3). And who was it that stirred the healing waters of the pool? An angel of the Lord used to come down at certain times into the pool, and the water was troubled (v. 4). Not an organizer, not someone in a fury and frenzy of work, but an angel of the Lord. And the pool was stirred and the sick were healed.

We must not fall into the fallacy of thinking that we have so much to do that we simply have no time to pray. St. Paul was commissioned by Christ to carry my name among nations and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9, 10)...in many more labors, in prisms more frequently...in journeyings often...in labor and hardips, in many sleepless nights... Besides those outer things, there is a daily pressing anxiety, the care of all the churches! (2 Cor. 11, 29). Yet St. Paul prayed night and day. Now, can we imagine the we have no time to pray? Not satisfied with his own tireless yer, he asks the Colossians to pray for him that I may openly ansunce it (the mystery of Christ) as I ought to speak (4, 4).

Perhaps we let ourselves succumb to a mere natural love of work to an ambitious drive. The end-result will be that we shall beme spiritual extroverts, strangers to ourselves and to God, and refore we cannot be the fragrance of Christ for God (2 Cor. 2, 15) cause God wants our apostolic sweat to be sweetened will cense of prayer. Furthermore, how can we be intercessed.

throne of mercy for our people if we are not well known around throne? How can we pray for the power to remove the speck our brother's eye if we are not concerned about the beam is own eye? How can we enlighten others if we ourselves are not lightened?... Down to this very day,...the veil covers their (2 Cor. 3, 15).

Therefore, let us always ask ourselves: "Am I really among who count on their prayer, their visit to the Blessed Sacratheir Mass above all, to give to their eloquence its power of If not, I may be a noisy tinkling cymbal. I may resound round solemnly like a cathedral bell, but I'll just be hollow brass tolling bell. I am not a channel of love and mine is not the irre eloquence of the friends of God" (Chautard, The Soul of the A late).

Therefore, we must never make the tragic mistake of give the practice of intense prayer. Rather, bring every difficulty discouragement, every project, every problem to Christ in By our prayer and in our prayer we must lead all our specharges to Christ. In his presence we must pray over them, we pray for (them) unceasingly,... that (they) may be filled we knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom and underst (Col. 1, 9). Then we shall have blessing on our work and from the Most High: This is a lover of his brethren, and of the of Israel; this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for Holy City (2 Macc. 15, 14).

We have been speaking of prayer, not of methodical med. We might indeed be too tired, too confused to meditate, be too tired to pray. Not too tired to kneel or sit quietly in the co of Jesus and go over our problems, our personal needs wit to ask him for light, for zeal, for holiness; to acknowledge that unprofitable servants except he bless us and our work; to tell he we truly love him more than all else. And should we be to even for that, then we can kneel or sit before his tabernach because we love him and want to be near him. The rumor of is not required, for intimate friends can converse intimatel without words, as a mother converses lovingly with her winfant.

We must first live our own spiritual life; we must sanctify ourlives. And, if we must pray for others, we must first pray for ourlives, for we too are mortal men, we too are exposed to danger.
Imon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may
it you as wheat (Lk. 22, 31). We must have constant recourse to
in Lord. From him we can have all things since he is the plenitude
igifts and virtues, for it has pleased God the Father that in him all
illness should dwell (Col. 1, 19). He is our fountain-head. We must
rink deeply of his Sacred Heart, for, in truth, streams of living
ater gush forth from him, as the Scriptures say.

Let us do this. Be fervent in spirit. persevering in prayer (Rom. 2, 12). We shall have a rich blessing, for if you abide in me, and if my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you (Jn. 15, 7). If my words abide in you. . ., therefore our Lord expects us to unite our will to his to pursue holiness, to disentangle our hearts from attachments, to strive after greater purity of intention. Then at last, the veil shall be removed and we shall look steadfastly on the beauty of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Then we shall be true, effective apostles. For the effectiveness of our ministry does not depend on our words or works, but on the faith and love that are within us. . "Manent tria haec: verbum, exemplum et oratio; maior autem horum est oratio" (St. Bernard).

The divine word is infallible. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. . If you abide in me, and if my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you. In this is my Father glorified, that you may bear very much truit, and become my disciples. . These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full Jn. 15, 4. 7. 8. 11).

Fr. Silvano Matulich, O.F.M.

# THE SORROWFUL MOTHER

Saint Lawrence of Brindisi: Sermon VI on the Vision of Sain

There are many who think they speak to the Virgin's presaying that she felt no sorrow during Christ's passion. They ce that Mary's certain faith in the resurrection and her perfect. God made her one with God in spirit and in will; and it was will that Christ should suffer by submitting to His passion and

Such men almost thrust the Blessed Virgin into that sect of the Stoics, who resolve perfect virtue into a morbidability to natural passions. Can we say that Mary was so sensel foolish? Shall we attribute to her a breast of granite, a heart of so that she did not feel that grief which shook heaven and earth rent rocks, opened tombs, and raised the bodies of the dead? that there was in Mary a faith so perfect that, had there beer she, like Abraham, would have immolated her only and below as a sacrifice to God and crucified Him with her own hands would have obeyed, had God so decreed, though the immolated her Son would have crushed her soul with grief and crucific own motherly heart. . .

Many women followed Christ to the hill of Calvary, mo and lamenting Him with bitter tears, as Zacharias had foretold shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son and the grieve over him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the born. In that day there shall be a great lamentation in Jeru There shall be, the prophet says, a plaintive mourning, suc customary in a family at the death of the firstborn son. Scrip wont to express the greatest grief under this figure, as Jeremia fies: Make thee mourning as for an only son, a bitter lamen While many women mourned and grieved over Christ, did His er alone remain with tearless eyes? Did she alone feel no sort her firstborn and only Son was slain before her very eyes with ling cruelty? No! No! She cried out in her travail as she brough forth again and was in the anguish of delivery. It was there be the cross that she suffered the bitter sorrow and excruciating pa delivery.

Mary bore countless sufferings for the sake of Christ from

ment when she brought Him forth. Even before His birth, in fact, grieved over the suspicion of adultery which had arisen in her band Joseph who, because he did not wish to expose her to reband, was minded to put her away privately. Later, when the time her delivery was at hand, she suffered the heartless inhospitality men at Bethlehem. She turned away from the homes of all; found not one kind host, not even one who would accept money. Ince there was no place for her at the inn, she was forced to take fuge in a stable in order to flee the affronts of the night. There, in the company of animals, she brought forth her Son, the Firstborn and only-Begotten Son of God, and laid the tender Infant in a manger.

Mary suffered much at her Son's painful circumcision, when she we her sweet and tiny Infant suffering and crying as a result of the wound inflicted. She experienced great sorrow on the day of her purification and the presentation of her Son in the temple at Jerusalem, when she heard from Simeon the prophecy that her Son was to suffer grievous and bitter persecutions. She was afflicted with great anxiety when, through the angel's revelation, she learned that the wicked Herod was seeking to kill the Child, and it became necessary to flee into Egypt. She endured intense grief at the loss of the Child Jesus in the temple when He was twelve years old: Thy father and I have been seeking thee sorrowing.

But these were only the beginnings, the prelude and foretaste of future sorrows; we have not yet touched the sword that pierced her soul. When Christ, after He had been baptized by John and had vanquished Satan in the desert, began to manifest Himself to the world by preaching the Gospel and working miracles to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, then began a merciless persecution. Mary was aware of the evils that warred against Christ. She knew that her fellow citizens, unable to bear the stinging censure of their vices when they heard Christ preaching in the synagogue, had angrily dragged Him out of the city in order to cast Him headlong from a mountain. The knew that He had fled this mortal persecution of the Jews, and walked about in Galilee, because the Jews were seeking to put him to death.

Mary was aware that they defamed, dishonored, and ridiculed thrist with many abusive names and insults, that they branded the

Only-Begotten Son of God, their true Messias, with many calu She knew that they often wished to rush upon Him with stone the leaders of the Jews, out of their intense hatred for Him promulgated a decree of death against the Author of Life.

But the sword of keenest sorrow pierced her holy soul Judas turned traitor and delivered Christ into the hands of th when, after the horrible scourging, she saw her Son condem the most shameful and infamous death of a robber; when Him crowned with thorns and carrying His own cross, led b robbers to be crucified on the hill of Calvary; when, final saw her Son hanging between heaven and earth, nailed to the and heard Him speak to her, for: There was standing by the Jesus his mother; when she gazed upon Him-dead! O unspe sorrow! When David, whose heart was as the heart of a lion. of the death of Jonathan, he could not restrain his tears. He to weep inconsolably and lament with tear-chocked voice: I gri thee, my brother Jonathan, exceeding beautiful, and amia above the love of women. What bitter tears did Mary shed! How was the grief that shattered her breast! Can a woman forget her so as not to have pity on the son of her womb?

Well may it be said of the Virgin: Weeping she hath we the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to concern her among all them that were dear to her. And she can justly priate to herself that verse: The Lord hath made me desolate, with sorrow all the day long. If Paul can say, on account of his ing love for Christ: With Christ I am nailed to the cross. It is not longer I that live, but Christ lives in me, with how much more can Mary?

If Christ, then, lived in Mary, could Christ suffer any which His Mother did not suffer with Him? Yes, Mary bo sufferings of her Son, though she herself was weighed down sorrow; she grieved with her Son, but she herself was burdene bitter grief. So great was her anguish that she had to be conso her suffering Son. Looking down upon her and then upon Christ said to her: Woman, behold thy son. Yet those very opened a new fountain of sorrow in the Virgin's breast! For, a vof the heart pains most when it is touched. Hence, the Virgin

ake no answer to Christ's words, for her heart was, so to say, laden and knotted with sorrow. She answered not at all, because her grief and robbed her of the power of speech. . .

Mary stood by the cross, sustained by her strong faith that Christ ould soon rise: There was standing by the cross of Jesus his mother. remarkable posture! Rather, O divine miracle! Mary stood with er body, but more with her soul, with invincible faith. She stood in mazement, marveling at the divine charity with which God so loved he world, at the divine mercy and justice which punished sin in order to induce the salvation of the sinner. She stood in astonishment ther Son's divine obedience to the Father, His divine courage gainst the demons, His infinite patience in enduring the utmost tornents.

Mary stood beneath the cross, lost in wonder at the divine mystery of human redemption. She stood, an example and model to the entire Church of invincible patience in bearing adversities. . . With a noble and wonderful strength of soul, Mary drained the bitter chalice which God had set before her to the very dregs, while she said with her Son: Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? If it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; yet not my will but thine be done. Not as I will, but as thou willest. In all things Mary was like to her suffering Son in courage and strength of soul.

Christ has suffered for us and has left us an example that we may follow in His steps. His Mother, Mary, has also suffered. With her Son she has given us an example, that as she has done, so we also should do. We should have this divine model, sculptured for us on the hill of Calvary, ever before our eyes. We should gaze attentively on it, that we may imitate both Christ and His Most Holy Mother with every endeavor. Let us think of her who endured such contradictions from sinners, and our souls will not grow weary nor faint on the path of virtue and the way of salvation. May Mary be to us always an example of unconquered and unconquerable patience, of invincible virtue, of indomitable zeal, so that no affliction, no creature, will ever separate us from the love of Christ.

Vernon Wagner, O.F.M. Cap. (transl.)

# FAR AND FROM THE UTTERMOST COASTS. . .

It was March ninth of the year 1440. Dusk had just descer when, with eyes alight and a smile that was other-worldly, France Ponziani answered the beckoning of her guardian angel and lowed his lead into eternity. This final summons of her heaven tendant brought to a close a guardianship which had been vit to Frances for over twenty years. True, such a visible protection which she was checked in her faults (at times even to a slap of cheek), encouraged in her good deeds, and very specifically guardian in her search for perfection, was a most unusual grace; but it only one among many such in the life of Frances of Rome. The that makes her life so significant, however, is not so much the laness with which the good God showered these exceptional gon her, nor even the gifts themselves, but rather her almost scalous correspondence to such graces; and that from a very early for in regard to her spiritual life Frances was definitely precon

Born in 1384, and, as was then the custom, baptized or very day of her birth, Francesca Ponziani was early introduced ways of holiness by her parents, who were the nobly descended Bussa and Jacobella dei Roffredeschi. Before she could even nounce the words distinctly, she was saying the Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary every day; which practice, begun at her mo knee, was to be a daily devotion till the day of her death. Sca was the little one able to walk when she became her mother's panion on her daily visits to one or other of the churches of R and by the time she was six years old, she was following a pl life that was far beyond her years. Of course, in the fourteenth tury, children had to grow up quickly, and many girls at the six were sedate little ladies, able to take over quite a few household chores. But Frances was much more than just a little lady. She was a bright and gay little girl—growing more tiful each day-filled with an almost passionate love of God, an bued with an uncommon charity. Already, she refused to meat or wine, eating only bread and vegetables, and drinking water. When she reached the age commonly defined as the reason, Jacobella entrusted the spiritual direction of her only

the saintly Don Antonio di Savelli, one of the Benedictine monks Mount Olivet, then in charge of Santa Maria Nuova, her mother's avorite church. Every Wednesday the little Francesca made her contession to him, asking his advice about her tasks, her studies, her prayers, and following his directions very precisely even in the most trivial things. Many times he had to refuse her the permission she sought for some of the penances which she wanted to perform, but recognizing in her a soul apart, Don Antonio occasionally gave his consent to austerities which would undoubtedly be considered much too severe for an ordinary child of her age.

Don Antonio had been the sole confidant of her desire to enter a convent, so that when her father informed the twelve-year old Francesca that all the negotiations had been completed for her marriage to Lorenzo dei Ponziani, and that the wedding was to take place immediately, he was appalled at her reaction. She pleaded; she wept; she begged him to dissolve the agreement. When he refused, Frances declared that no power on earth would induce her to consent to this marriage, or to any marriage. It was her first rebellion and Paul Bussa was at first stunned, then volubly furious. Frances was just as vehement; she was not going to give herself to any human bridegroom; she was going to belong to God-she was His already except for the actual vows. Thinking that perhaps her attraction for the religious life might be just a passing whim, the normal attraction of any pious Italian girl for convent life, her father sent her from him. She immediately made her way to Don Antonio, who, much to her surprise, counseled obedience to her parents in this regard, pointing out that the sacrifice of her own will would be even more pleasing to the dear God than the fulfillment of her natural inclination. And strong as this inclination was, Frances accepted the priest's judgment as the indicated will of God for her. After spenda few days in prayer for the strength to make her sacrifice genously, she begged her father to forgive her, and expressed her illingness to obey.

The wedding was everything that fourteenth-century Rome ould expect at the union of two such wealthy and socially promint families as the Bussas and the Ponzianis. In the long drawn-out remony, and during the days of feasting and rejoicing, Frances

conducted herself with such an appealing dignity and char grace, that none of her in-laws suspected what it was costing he had made the sacrifice of her personal longing and was never to utter a regret—she really meant to live her life as God want to live it, not as Frances wanted.

This child-bride was definitely born to become a saint, was her distinctly unusual correspondence to all grace that ma one. Very soon after her wedding Francesca found in the Order of St. Francis one of those special graces, and from it the strength to fulfill the many obligations placed upon he marriage to the handsome young aristocrat was a happy one on a mutual respect which very soon deepened into a beautifu She was most assuredly blessed, too, in the person of Vannoz wife of Lorenzo's older brother. In this sister-in-law, Frances a friend with similar tastes, and with the same yearning for and His service which claimed her own soul. Together the about following a daily schedule of meditation and prayer we very worldly, very sociable household where both of them the beck and call, not only of their respective husbands, but a in-laws as well.

Since Lorenzo loved to see his beautiful Francesca in clothes and precious jewels she was happy thus to have an op ity to delight him, although at the same time she invariably hairshirt beneath the splendid robes. Most anxious to comply thing which she felt duty or propriety required of her, Fran draw a line; she refused to stay up late at nights-just as cus in those times as it is today-nor could she be persuaded cards or attend the dances. Because of her "early to bed" able "early to rise" and thus spend much time in prayer bet rest of the household was astir; for in spite of all the distract her new and busy life, the little wife remained faithful to early habits of piety. As before her marriage, her Wednesda to Don Antonio at Santa Maria Nuova continued and, in a every Saturday there was a private conference with a very learned Dominican, Don Michele, an intimate friend of her in-law.

Such an unusual manner of life attracted the attention,

hany instances, the censure, of Roman society, a reaction which was be expected, inasmuch as her piety served as a reproach to the ionscience of the worldly. They called her a fool, a hypocrite, a anatic; they ridiculed her; they went so far as to suggest to Lorenzo hat he should put a stop to his wife's eccentricities. Fortunately, lowever, Lorenzo was not a man easily influenced by public opinion. He loved and really appreciated his young wife far too much even to insider interference. Noble character that he was—though not utstandingly spiritually-minded himself—he recognized in Frances true sanctity, and venerated her for it. Both his father and mother ad come to love and esteem his young wife, as had his brother Palzzo, who was delighted at the friendship between her and his own rife; in fact, even the servants of the household were captivated by her and felt drawn to God by the holiness of the life of the teenge wife of Lorenzo.

Then mysteriously Francesca was stricken. For over a year she was unable to walk. For long periods of time she lost the power of speech and the pains which she suffered were so intense that at times it seemed she must die from them. Yet no one could discover the cause of it all; her illness defied the medical knowledge of the day. Her father, desperate and inconsolable, blamed himself for having insisted on the marriage; Lorenzo and his family were grief-stricken. The Ponzianis thought that the illness might be due to some diabolical influence and in order to remove the so-called spell secretly admitted a witch to her room. Dying, as she appeared to be, the power of speech suddenly restored, Frances cried out, "Begone, thou servant Satan. Do not ever dare to enter these walls again." Then she fell ack unconscious and remained so far into the night. Toward morng when Vannozza, broken-hearted and weary with watching, rew herself on her own bed and fell asleep, Saint Alexius appeared Frances in a vision. After identifying himself-it was the eve of s feast-the Saint explained that he had been sent by God to ask she preferred to be healed or to die. Characteristically, Frances swered that her only wish was that the Divine will be fulfilled, which the Saint informed her that it was God's choice that she be tored to health and spend her life for His greater glory. Then, ving spread his mantle over her, the Saint vanished, leaving her

completely recovered. At once Frances arose, dressed without tance, then awakened Vannozza to tell her of her cure and to her companionship on her visit of thanksgiving to the chut Saint Alexius.

Frances returned to the busy life of the Ponziani hous more reconciled to her marriage, and determined that the ous grace that had been bestowed on her should produce last sults. She explained to Vannozza that now God expected m them than heretofore; and together they resolved to be much severe with themselves in the observance of the commandme be more exact in their obedience to their husbands, and to to their confessor in every single detail of their life. In or have a secluded sanctuary when they managed to find tin quiet prayer, they furnished for themselves two oratories whatever crucifixes and sacred pictures they could find-one little unused attic room, and another in a cave at the end garden. Their fasts and abstinences became even more rigoro with such a lack of display that even those who habitually at them scarcely noted it. Satan noticed it, however, and began series of attacks by which he attempted to check the progr their heroic way. Frances was the one at whom these attacks especially aimed; he caused her strange sufferings, dealt her revealed his presence to her in various horrible forms, yet never permitted by God to deceive or to injure her, nor to in with her manner of life. Along with all these hours of Frances and Vannozza were most conscientious in attending to household duties; yet they found time practically every day to a few hours at the hospital of San Spirito, nursing and consoli sick, and aiding the most needy with alms.

Francesca and Lorenzo were blessed with three childresons and a daughter; the eldest, Giovanni Battista was born in Just a year later, at the age of seventeen, Frances took over, death of her mother-in-law, the management of the great hout though she felt that Vannozza, as wife of the eldest son, should become mistress of the palace, yet she agreed to assume the sibility when Vannozza joined her insistent voice with those men of the family. And their confidence in her ability was no

aced; in the government of the household she was firm yet gentle, and to the servants she was much more the mother than the mistress, ursing them in their sicknesses and zealously guarding both their piritual and temporal interests.

Not long after Francesca had assumed this position in the famky, Rome was visited by a terrible famine and the home of the onzianis was besieged by the poor. At Frances' orders no one was urned away empty-handed. During this siege the family was witness two striking instances in which God showed His approval of His elf-sacrificing little house-keeper. One day Lorenzo came upon rances and Vannozza bearing out of the granary a measure of corn which, they told him, was all they could find after searching through he straw for several hours. While Frances was explaining, Lorenzo planced beyond his wife into the granary and saw, not the straw through which they had sifted minutes before, but instead forty measures of bright yellow corn. The awe which such a miracle inspired in him, however, did not prevent either Lorenzo or his father from becoming violently angry when they discovered that the cask of wine reserved for the family had been drained to the last drop by a desperate Frances when she could no longer endure the entreaties of the destitute. Unabashed by their reproaches and confident that God would provide, she calmly suggested that they go with her to the cellar to see if, perhaps, God in His mercy might have refilled the cask by that time. And He had!

In the face of such evidence, Lorenzo was possessed of an even greater reverence for the gentle little wife he loved so tenderly; and, recognizing the fact that her deference to his wishes was in reality a great restraint on her spirit, he told her that henceforth she was free to follow the dictates of her heart—told her that she could be certain that whatever she chose to do would have his approval. How ell he knew his Francesca! Making no conditions, he was confident hat neither he nor their son nor anyone who had any claim on her me or attention would be made to suffer because of this release, or that was not her kind of religion. In that regard especially rances often expressed her sentiments, saying that a married wommust leave God at the altar to find Him in her domestic cares. he was overjoyed at such understanding and sympathy in her hus-

band, and her first act was to replace her lovely expensive with a robe made of a coarse dark-green cloth and to conviewels into alms for the needy.

When Frances was twenty years old, her second son, Gi Evangelista was born, and, in the truest sense of the word, his mother's own child, a child in whom the gifts of God we perceptible. Evangelista was just three years old when little was born, a creature of loveliness, whom her mother guarde more carefully than she did her two boys. It was Francesca that some day Agnese would take the place in God's service the denied her mother.

The Rome of Frances' day was a Rome of turmoil, of pla counter-plots, of anti-popes and false popes, while the true po in exile. Understandably, confusion was widespread and to added the suffering wrought by the troops who frequently the city in the interest of the anti-popes. Because of their low the Church and to Pope John XXIII, the Ponzianis were a family. Lorenzo was in command of the supporters of the cause, in 1409, when, in a particularly fierce street fight, stabbed in the back-mortally, it seemed, for his apparently body was carried home to his wife. She offered her dear one's God, if it was His will to take it; yet, feeling a tiny pulse cheek when she embraced him, she immediately set about him body and soul. The time she had spent nursing the sign taught her many things, which now she hopefully applied to enzo, meanwhile whispering to him acts of love and contrit forgiveness, and of trust in the mercy of God. It was another of love and devotion, for Lorenzo recovered, although he feel the effects of this wound for the rest of his life.

The following years were years of pure anguish to **K** with one misfortune after another befalling those she loved. Lorenzo's brother Paluzzo was taken captive by the troops anti-pope sympathizers, they demanded her eldest son as **k** and after an attempted flight with the child in which she was by her confessor, Frances, with only a momentary natural gave her son into their hands. Then she went directly to Maria Nuova and pleaded with the Blessed Mother. It can we

nagined what her joy must have been when Battista was returned her while she was still at her prayer. The soldiers had given him p because they found that every horse on which they set him reised to move, and they feared a supernatural influence. The next ear Lorenzo had to flee from Rome, of necessity leaving his wife nd family behind. Again Battista was taken from his mother by the roops after they had plundered the palace, burned the farms belongng to the Ponzianis, and slaughtered their flocks. Francesca and vannozza, with their children somehow managed to exist through he next few years which saw not only the devastation wrought by he troops, but the even more widespread sufferings that resulted rom the dreadful famine and the black plague which followed it. vangelista, dearer to his mother than all else on earth, was stricken. He was only nine years old, yet while Francesca held him in her arms and sought to ease his sufferings, he, in turn, with words of heavenly inspiration prepared his mother so well for his death that when he finally smiled up at her and breathed his final sigh, she did not grieve.

Like the Little Poor Man whose Third Order she had joined early in her teens, the heart of Francesca was deeply touched at the plight of the suffering; like him she now had nothing of her own from which she could supply food and clothing and other necessities for them; like him, too, however, she gave what she had to give, herself in a whole-hearted, loving, Chirst-like service. In what was left of the palace, Frances set up a temporary hospital into which she and Vannozza gathered as many of the most stricken and destitute as they could house. These they lovingly nursed, and for the provisions which they needed went out into the public places to beg. Many of their plague victims were unexpectedly restored to health, for at this time God bestowed on Frances another of His special ifts, the gift of healing. While using it as she knew He meant her to, he resorted to an ingenious subterfuge to conceal her own instruaentality. Whether it was the plague or a mangled foot, or a severed rm, she applied some of the salve-her own concoction of oil and ax-from a little jar which she carried with her at all times. The sults were the same-healing. Those she was not permitted to cure ere prepared for death with the tenderest of care.

Just a year after his death, Evangelista, with an angelic panion whose splendor far outshone his own, appeared to h lighted mother. After warning Frances that her heart's desir not to be fulfilled in Agnese, for she, too, was soon to be tak introduced to her the archangel whom God had charged wit guidance for her remaining years on earth. For over twenty year angel in the form of a beautiful child was visible to France to her only, as he carried out his commission of guardianshi

For days after this visit from her favorite son, Frances we her daughter fade and droop until heaven finally claimed her her own health gave way. She became dangerously ill. In the of contagion, everybody but Vannozza deserted her. They be her for exposing herself unnecessarily by taking the plague-st into the palace. For several months she hovered between lift death, then suddenly was restored to bodily health only to be jected to a most terrifying spiritual experience. In several we she was led by her angel down the awful paths of hell with it searing sights. The experience proved so appalling that she never able to speak of them without growing pale and tremble

Then at last, in 1414, peace came back to the Eternal Cit brought to an end, for the time at least, the suffering of the anis. When Lorenzo returned, he brought with him Battista, no only child left to him and Frances. With the restoration of their erty, Frances now had the wherewithal to increase her alm good works, and Lorenzo gave his whole-hearted acquiescence mere presence in the patched old green gown, which she had wearing for so many years, worked wonders in effecting converthere was something irresistible about her words; her gift of rethoughts, greatly increased since she had acquired her angel panion, enabled her to turn many back on the path to God.

When Battista married, there was daughter-in-law troub. Mabilia, although she had been his parents' choice, const. Battista's mother intolerable; she labeled her conduct scand. After awhile, however, God by a visitation of sickness saw change Battista's wife from a vain, mocking, haughty young girl a gentle and affectionate daughter. Then as Mabilia graduall sumed the cares of the palace, Frances began to have hopes of be

le to carry out a long-cherished plan to form among the friends ho had accepted the challenge of her example a kind of union or nfraternity, the members of which, while living at home, would cep a special rule of prayers and spend their leisure hours in visiting e sick and poor. When she talked it over with her husband, he ld her that she was at liberty to do as she pleased about it, provided ly that she did not deprive him of her beloved companionship. rancesca must have smiled at his thinking it necessary to make uch a proviso, for she truly loved Lorenzo. So on the feast of the ssumption, 1425, a group of ten dedicated themselves to the serice of Our Lady under the title of Oblates of Mary. The following ear, the little band made a pilgrimage to Assisi, going on foot and begging their way, so timing it as to reach Our Lady of the Angels on August second. As they came in sight of Assisi, weary and almost fainting from fatigue, they were welcomed and cheered by the words of a little Friar. Because of the radiant light which her angel shed on the Friar, Francesca understood that it was Saint Francis himself. After blessing the women, he offered them pears from a tree which grew by the road and then he was gone. At the shrine itself, Francesca was promised in a vision that she would have the help and protection of heaven in all her undertakings.

Upon their return to Rome she found that Don Antonio had died. After much prayer, she placed herself under the guidance of Don Giovanni Mattiotti. He was a very good man, but in spite of all that he knew of Francesca Ponziani, he was inclined to discourage her, in fact, to snub her unmercifully. This was another grace which the did not fail to utilize to the full, and which, in the way she reacted to it, perhaps more than any other single thing in her life was a proof of her real sanctity. Since she had been encouraged by a vision of carry out her hope of having the Oblates live together as a congretion without vows, Francesca, with the half-hearted aid of Don Gionni, acquired the Tor degli Specchi—so named because of a wer which was formerly on the same spot. In the pontifical bull by which they were canonically established on March 25, 1433, the congregation is designated the Oblates of Tor degli Specchi. While Francesca, the foundress, remained at home with her husband, Agnese de Lelling and the congregation is designated the Oblates of Tor degli Specchi.

Lellis was installed as the superior.

During these years, Vannozza died in her arms, and fol her death spiritual favors seemed to rain on Frances and her gation. From then on, her visions became so frequent the seemed almost to live in heaven while her gift of prophecy wintensified. Like Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena her, she was charged by Divine Providence with instruction averting the new schism which threatened the Catholic work clergy of Rome regarded these as the dreams of a neurotic when Don Giovanni conveyed to them the instructions given the Blessed Mother in a vision. Then Don Giovanni, dri Frances, took the matter up with the Holy Father, who immessent word to Rome that these instructions were to be carried the letter. Because this was done, the schism was healed for

Francesca's married life had lasted for forty years when zo died; and she felt that her task in the world was accomthat she was free now, after all these years, to retire to a c She appeared at Tor de Specchi in penitent's garb and aske admitted as a servant. It is a particularly striking fact that she actually joined the Oblates, she, who had lived in daily with God and Our Lady, with His angels and saints, insisted ing a general confession of the sins of her whole life to the ass group of Oblates—she really and truly believed herself to be unworthy of women. The others, overjoyed at having their for with them at last, and armed with the orders of Don Gi compelled her to assume the office of superior, in which she acted for a short time only. Sorrow, work, and penances had their toll, and Frances was failing. Having been warned in a that her end was approaching, she wrote to a friend in Sien had made her promise to summon to her deathbed, that better make haste if he wished to see her alive. She did not a moment, however, when Mabilia sent for her to come to the when Battista had a sudden and severe attack of illness. time she got to his side, he had recovered sufficiently to be danger, and it took persuasion to keep her with them for of the day. Toward evening she insisted on starting for Specchi, for she was beginning to feel very weak and ill. On t she stopped at Santa Maria Nuova, hoping to have a talk wit cowanni; but he was struck by her extreme and unusual pallor. Ecoming alarmed, he bade her go back to the palace, at least for the light. She complied, but with great disappointment, for she knew hat this was the end, and she had so wanted to die in her little cell to Tor di Specchi. The next morning she was too ill to leave her ed, and during the next few days was strengthened and comforted by heavenly visions, while making careful preparations for death. The pleaded with all those gathered about her to help her on her way to heaven. On the seventh day of her illness, just as she had forold, the summons came to find her, as always, ready and willing.

The people of Rome called her a saint as she lay on her bier; the Church declared her a saint in 1608. Both declarations were made centuries ago, to be sure, yet there is a timeless message in the life of Frances of Rome for those who in the midst of crowding duties and social claims are trying to keep very close to God: My grace is sufficient for thee.

Sister Maura, O.S.F.

# PRAYERFUL PSALMODY TO GOD

I set the Lord always in my sight: for he is at my right hand, that I be not moved. Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced (Ps. 15, 9). Whether Priest or Religious, should not this be our pious posture of prayer when we present ourselves daily in spirit before the throne of God? The words may vary, it is true, but the prayerful disposition should be similar. Perhaps we are privileged to recite His Psalms, either in choir or privately, refore Him in the Tabernacle: So in the sanctuary have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory (Ps. 62, 3). Or it may be that we are following the Gospel injunction, praying to God in perforal privacy: But when thou prayest, go into thy room, and closing thy door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee (Mtt. 6, 6). Or possibly, for some good reason,

we must fulfill our office in the sight of men. Exercising proper dence with regard to time and place, we can pray with the Ps I will praise thee, O Lord, among the peoples and I will sin thee among the nations (Ps. 107, 4). But in whatever circums the prime point is to persevere in prayer, with our soul withoughtful upon God: I set the Lord always in my sight (Ps. Not only will this promote the pure purpose of being intent God but it will foster the dictate of Saint Francis to benefit since they will realize that we are men and women of God: will bring forth thy justice as the light, and thy judgment noonday. Be subject to the Lord and pray to him (Ps. 36, 6f.

For those Priests and Religious who have a solemn d perform the prayer of the Divine Office, the Psalms are often of as the burden of the day. And, under one aspect, this of obligation cannot be denied. In this sense, the Psalter beck heavy burden. But in looking toward God, our pure purpo suades us to accept His advice: Come to me, all you who lab are burdened, and I will give you rest. . . Take my yoke upo and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and y find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden (Mtt. 11, 28ff). When Christ calls (among others) this labor my yoke and my burden, it should be a reminder for us the Divine Office is also a work of God. At times, work at it we But who among us so-obliged will not admit that the grace of usually bears the greater part of the task? At least we expre attitude of hope for His assistance many times in the Psalma soul waiteth for the Lord: for he is our helper and protector ( 20); My God is my helper, and in him will I put my trust ( 3); The Lord became my helper (Ps. 29, 11). As a matter Holy Mother Church prescribes that we usually call upon God beginning of every hour to help us perform our work: Atten my help, O Lord (Ps. 37, 23). But even those not solemnly to this burden, will still feel its weight in their freely-offered E Whether it be the Divine Office or some so called Little Office ever wills to recite it can find it a task. But admitting our of offering and keeping the Lord ever in our sight, should we not posely pray for that fervour of spirit experienced by the Psal y heart grew hot within me: and in my meditation a fire shall me out (Ps. 38, 4)?

Whether in Psalms or otherwise, prayer remains as the lifting of the mind and heart to God. Referring specifically as we are to e Psalms, it seems that many find mainly in them intellectual upt in prayer. For these persons, the affective part of the soul is not strongly moved as is the mind which contemplates the sublime oughts contained in the verses. Granting that a type of dryness ay be here involved, nevertheless such souls should persevere in eir preference. In fact, this mental appreciation of the Psalms as ayers to God is less likely to be the result of a false fervour in evotion. Lower emotions, for example, could hardly interfere in his lifting of the mind to God. On the other hand, neither should these Religious believe that their 'heart is not in it', when fulfilling their Office. For them, the will to devote not only the mind, but their whole soul to God, suffices. And who will dare gainsay that, noner or later, God will 'inflame their affection'? Perhaps David himself would advise them: Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord (Ps. 26, 14).

Lifting the heart as well as the mind to the Lord is a double task. For there are also those who grasp little or nothing of what they say to the Lord. For those who perhaps have had no opportunity to learn the Latin expressed in the Vulgate, any properly-approved Old Testament translation will give them an easy mode of comparison with the Psalms in English. This should be little enough to ask, since we suppose the Lord has given them already a spirit of heartfelt devotion for the Office. Each Psalm that they thus better understand should arouse their devotion immeasurably. They can then declare with the Psalmist: My heart hath been in awe of thy words. I will rejoice at thy words, as one that hath found great spoil (Ps. 18. 161f).

But to everyone of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ (Eph. 4, 7). Applying this to our varied abilities prayer, we should find that we can lift up our hearts and minds God in manifold methods through the Psalms. Taking the prayer of adoration, the Psalms offer a means for the creature to recognize the Creator, for the human servant to worship the supreme Majesty.

Surely, considering the awesome Majesty of God and our own dependence upon Him, can we not breathe forth to Him the ist's prayer of adoration: Blessed be the name of his maje ever: and the whole earth shall be filled with his majesty (Ps. Not only in His Tabernacle dwelling, but anywhere in the fof His universe, can we adore our God: Exalt ye the Lord of and adore his footstool, for it is holy (Ps. 98, 5). But the hol on the altar, where He dwells, welcomes us especially in our office of adoration: I will come into thy house; I will towards thy holy temple (Ps. 5, 8).

The Psalms may also prostrate us in penitent prayer befor A contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise 19). Real repentance, which signifies a complete change of a expressed implicitly by the determined declaration of the Phand I said, Now I have begun: this is the change of the right the most High (Ps. 76, 11). This conversion transfers and with a prayer of petition, when we contritely beseech God daily Psalm-prayer: Have mercy on me, O God, according great mercy (Ps. 50, 1). Or in the supplication of the sixth tial Psalm, where every son of Adam pleads for God to miserable state and to lift him up: Out of the depths I have thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. If thou, O Lord, will iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it (Ps. 29, 1-3)?

Is it not a wonderful privilege to be able to recite these formally as prayers? Is it not marvelous that the Holy Spirit? the author to formulate words wherewith our timid tongue become eloquent in His praises? In the words of the Psalmi heart hath uttered a good word: I speak my works to the kin tongue is the pen of the scrivener that writeth swiftly. The beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in the (Ps. 44, 2f). No wonder Saint Francis, as a troubadour of recommended that his clerical sons should have breviaries. He provided that those, who were for some reason impeded from the Office, should have another fulfill it for them. Implicitly, at he gave therein a testimony of his deep devotion to the Psalmi Canticle of the Sun alone, written in a like spirit, subscribe name in bold letters to every Benedicite, to each Psalm of the O

ry prayer, every poem, every song, every narrative of the Psalter st have warmed the heart of that Poor Little Man of Assisi, who loved to sing aloud the praises of his Creator.

From these last few thoughts, at least, we have reason for using Psalms as prayers of thanksgiving. Grateful for their prayers of oration, contrition and petition, we should cry aloud with the Imist: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all he hath ne for thee (Ps. 102, 2). Finally, searching for a sound spirit of votion to the Psalms, let us follow the fine direction given in the planation of the Rule (John Ilg, p. 64) where he quotes Saint gustine (Confess. IX, cc. 4 & 26): "Oh how fervently I uttered my roice to Thee, O my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those ngs of faith, those breathings of piety! How I was set on fire by em; and how I burned to have them recited throughout the unirsal world, that they might bring the human spirit to thy feet! now I wept over thy hymns and canticles! The words of them reamed into my ears, and with them came the truth into my heart; and piety grew warm within me."

Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.,

# THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT

Reflections on the New Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor

That a Friar should grow old with the years, Saint Francis might the should grow old in the should grow old in the start and lose his zest for the things of God, that the Seraph of Assist ould hardly allow. Even when ill in body and near to death he stirred maself to new life: Brothers, let us begin to do good, for up to now we we done almost nothing. Truly semper novus, semper incipiens, he pected his children ever to grow closer to Christ in the inner man by the trayer and the observance of the Rule and never to tire in the outward radiance of the spirit in the apostolate.

The Order itself, he knew, would grow older with the centuries and

undergo many tribulations and divisions. Yet even as its future vealed to him. Francis was assured of an inner vitality that wou serve his flock in existence and renew its inward vigor to keep it novus. If the Friars shared his spirit and followed his example, the would manifest a like newness in every age and clime.

May we not see an example of this in the new General Constitution of the Order of Friars Minor, revised over the past five years a into effect this past April? For they are, in words of Pope Pius X tined to adapt the Order to the needs of the day, not indeed by cit but by renewing the spirit and the mind of Saint Francis the deeper religious life and a more modern apostolate.

#### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As the primitive Rule and the statutes of the annual chapter 19) had grown into the Regula non-bullata (the so-called Rule of so the constitutions or decisions of later chapters were somewhat according to Salimbene, in 1239. The first set of General Constitutions or the form with which we are familiar, is the work Bonaventure and the Chapter of Narbonne in 1260; these becomodel and foundation of almost all later compilations.

The Order through seven centuries, with its various divisite families, has shown a remarkable vitality in revising its particulated to meet new needs and new situations, without at the same the stroying or abandoning the wisdom of the past. Thus the new Cations of Ultramontane Observants at Barcelona in 1451 are famintroducing specific times for mental prayer; those of Toledo, I accommodating the Order to the decrees of the Council of Trension has taken place whenever the laws have not corresponded partially, to the necessities of the inner life of the brotherhood outward apostolate.

Our modern Constitutions go back to 1897, when Pope I effected greater unity in the families of the Observance. Subjected some revision under Pope Saint Pius X by reason of the mode he introduced into the central government of the Order, they we brought into agreement with the new Code of Canon Law, appet the General Chapter of 1921, and published the following years.

But even this compilation was not altogether satisfactory; it complete or adequate to the needs of either the religious life forms of the apostolate. What the late Father Valentine Schalt to undertake, his successor, Father (now Bishop) Pacific Perant

le to begin, while the present Minister General, Father Augustin ninski, has brought the task to a happy conclusion.

With the permission of the Holy See, a special commission within the Order began in 1947 the first draft of new legislation. This was ansmitted to the Provinces in 1950 for suggestions and revisions. A second plan incorporating the results was presented to the Chapter of 1951, note the General Chapter is the highest legislative organ of the Order. Through committees and general sessions the Chapter reviewed the ork accomplished and then approved with certain modifications. Once the text was studied by the General Definitorium and a new comission of experts, and at last sent to the Holy See at the end of April 1952.

Deeply interested, the Sacred Congregation of Religious soon contituted a special commission of its consultors who again subjected the text to critical examination and inserted some very important changes before the final approval. Among these changes may be noted the following: an imposed passage of clerics to the lay-state (art. 106-107); the erection of custodies or commissariats directly dependent on the Minister General (337); the length of time between both general and provincial Chapters (386, Par 1; 458, Par. 1); the duration of the offices of Minister General and procurator general (352, Par 1), and those of the Minister provincial and custos (353, Par. 1); the introduction of general and provincial Congregations (410-12; 482-85) and of delegates to the provincial chapters or congregations (459, Par. 1, n. 4; 460, Par. 1).

According to the express desire of the Order the date of approval was fixed for July 14, the feast of Saint Bonaventure, 1953, to honor the author of the first of such documents. In their promulgation to the Order on October 4, the Minister General declared them in effect from the Feast of the Solemn Commemoration of Saint Francis, April 16, 1954.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE NEW LAWS

The new text presents a remarkable document drawn from many ources: Canon Law and the present-day norms of the Holy See; the alle and its many papal declarations, the traditions of the Order as emdied in the Constitutions and other documents of the past. In a few tances, as Father Capobianco points out, there may not be complete formity of style in the articles, but such a defect is limited to those mbers of preceding legislation which, because of their ascetical content, the carried over bodily (or almost so ) into the new code. We would to venture, the Minister General remarks, to call the text a completely-fect document, since all things human are by their very nature imper-

fect. Nonetheless, by reason of the careful and mature study that p their formulation and approval, as also of the many hands that at perfecting them—the Order as a whole, the General Chapter, t mittees, the learned consultors of the Sacred Congregation—th laws are far more perfect than any previous codification in the history and thus reveal a genuine step forward. Indeed, for this alone they merit high respect and reverence.

But to appreciate, reverence and observe to the full the and prescriptions of the new legislation, the General continues, of have the right approach. The letter of the law without the spit and only the spirit gives life. To acquire this, it should suffice the documents bearing on the promulgation.

First, in the Apostolic Brief giving specific approbation to text, Pope Pius XII declares that the Friars have contributed the Church when they have kept the Rule more exactly, and at the Constitutions of the Order, now and in the past, have provemost salutary aids to that observance. Therefore, after tracing the of the Constitutions from the thirteenth century, His Holiness sizes that the new text is intended to foster a deeper religious lift day and to promote a more useful apostolate. He therefore specific proves and confirms the General Constitutions and commands the servance by each and every member of the Order. By such paparabation, Father Capobianco notes, the new Constitutions become gether and singly, particular pontifical laws; by it their excell made more evident, while they receive greater efficacy and stabil

Again, in a special decree making known the papal approbate Sacred Congregation of Religious stresses the double purpose of legislation: a more fruitful religious life and apostolate in keepinew conditions in the world and new legislation on the part Church. One would not be rash in concluding that the text rethe most up-to-date directives for religious life and reflects most cally the mind of the Congregation and of the Church.

Lastly, in an Encyclical Letter marked by a deep tone of treciscanism, His Paternity the Minister General promulgates the all Friars subject to him and in fatherly fashion expresses his to their importance and above all as to the spirit which must to their acceptance and observance. "The Constitutions," he poi "offer better ways and means to a more perfect observance of the Rule: for they show the pattern of a truly Franciscan life and lead the hand, as it were, to the attainment of Seraphic perfection we



VOL. IV No. 10, OCTOBER, 1954

#### CONTENTS

R MONTHLY CONFERENCE 2	90
Fr. Silvano Matulich, O. F. M.	
E SERAPHIC ARTIST2	95
Fr. Alcuin Weiss, O. F. M., Conv.	
MRY'S MEDIATION IN FRANCISCAN TRADITION2  Fr. Geoffrey Bridges, O.F.M.	99
WO LITTLE SAINTS3	03
Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.	
SERMON ON SAINT FRANCIS	06
Saint Lawrence of Brindisi	
USSIAN SPIRITUALITI	310
Frs. Lyle Peyovich and Gregory Francis Smutko, O. F. M., Cap.	
LEMENTS AND SIGNS OF A VOCATION	315



The CORD, a monthly magazine specifically devoted to Franciscan Spirituality, published under the sponsorship of the Franciscan Educational Conference by The ciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., New York. Or: Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M., Assistant Editor: Sr. Frances, S. M. I. C. orial Board: Ignatius Brady, O. F. M., Columban Duffy, O. F. M., Thomas Plassan, O. F. M., Allan Wolter, O. F. M. Annual subscription, \$2.00. Entered as second matter on November 25, 1950, at St. Bonaventure P. O., New York, under, of March 3, 1879. All communications, whether of a business or a literary nature, ald be addressed to The CORD, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., York. Cum permissu superiorum.