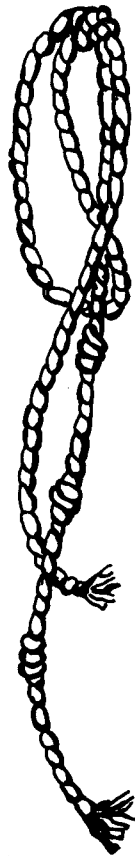


OCTOBER, 1992

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



ARTICLES

CELAM IV AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION 259

Charles V. Finnegan, O.F.M.

LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING 271

Anthony M. Carrozzo, O.F.M.

**PROPHETIC MINISTRY AND THE
EDUCATIONAL LEADER 282**

Gregory Hartmayer, O.F.M. Conv.

FEATURES

**REFLECTION: HOW A LAY SISTER WAS LED AMONG
MINISTERS OF THE ORDER 257**

Janet Gianopoulos

**HOW THE MINISTER OF THIS BROTHERHOOD MADE A VISIT
TO SAN DAMIANO AND UPON MOUNT SUBASIO 278**

Hermann Schalück, O.F.M.

**POETRY:
ST. FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN 270**

SHARED SHADOWS 277

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

BOOK REVIEWS 287

Volume 42, No. 10

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

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

Cel2: Celano, Second Life of Francis

Cel3: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

Legend of Saint Clare

Process of Saint Clare

Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Editor: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Om- of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

Editor: J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Com- Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Reflection: How a Lay Sister was Led Among Ministers of the Order

JANET GIANOPOULOS

During the Lenten season in 1992, on a Sunday in New York, the lay sister from the Province's development office went to meet with the General Minister of the whole Order of Friars Minor.

The Lord led her among a handful of brothers to eat the things set before them in the friary. She was seated at the right hand of the Minister, a tall brother from Germany who now works from Rome.

Her Provincial Minister conversed with the young brothers, all in habits (she was the only one not in brown), while the General Minister, who said he was shy, quietly ate a sandwich. The sister wondered if St. Francis may have had "shy" moments. She slowly started talking with the soft-spoken Minister visitor — he had been out West, to a peace demonstration at a nuclear test site, and he told of his journey to her hometown named for St. Francis, to a church where many are fed and receive clothing. She sensed that it warmed him to talk of the poor, and said it was too bad the Minister would not be visiting our friars in Philadelphia in a forgotten neighborhood, as the poor Christ said, "I was hungry and you gave me food, naked and you clothed me." (Matt 25.)

The sister told the Minister brother that she had the fortune of going out and meeting many of the brothers in the Province. She stayed with released inmates at the friary in Buffalo and went where Christ "was in prison and you visited." One prisoner, noticing a picture of St. Francis on her shirt, had asked what the words "Pax et Bonum" meant, and it gave her great joy, in Attica prison, to say, "Peace and Good."

The sister's heart was encouraged, since the friendly brother Minister seemed filled with care about the tears of the poor. Indeed, he soon announced with energy, "I'm ready," to begin a planned interview.

The General Minister, the General Definitor of English-speaking provinces, the Provincial Minister and the lay sister went upstairs into a room with books and pleasant sunshine and comfortable furnishings. The sister looked at the kind General Minister and said she had been looking forward to this. She silently prayed that the Holy Spirit abide here, and the spirit of holy Father Francis and the people who love him.

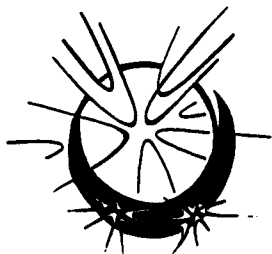
As questions were posed, and the man who had said he was shy seemed drawn to contemplate and answer, it gave the sister great joy. And while she had expected to speak with him alone, it came to be that the beloved Provincial Minister was also in the room, hearing his brother speak about poverty and St. Francis. Her heart sang inside, talking with the successor to St. Francis, and learned theology experts, and she hoped the Provincial knew she wished him peace.

When the Provincial announced that the hour had come, he and the Definitor left the room. The time had been generous but brief and the sister knew she would miss the tall visitor, who seemed invigorated as he paused in the sunny room. He took her hands in his large ones and a great warmth flowed; and she said he was truly the successor to St. Francis. She wondered how many would share communion and solidarity with this brother, whose order of St. Francis serves a hungry world of bombed churches and people's daily struggles for survival, where many institutions are shelter from simple needs. She was touched by his peace and simplicity and knew he would be in her prayers.

When they walked outside, the day, and her newly-met brother, seemed like special gifts. She could see more clearly how someone could give up the world with Francis. How holy and beloved, how peaceful, delightful, lovable it is to have a brother like this!

In praise of Christ. Amen.

Janet Gianopoulos April 5, 1992



Art for this issue by
Sr. Marie Monica Borden, O.S.F.

Celam IV and The New Evangelization

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

It is nearly impossible to exaggerate the challenges facing the bishops of Latin America as they meet this October in Santo Domingo for their Fourth General Conference (known for short as CELAM IV). Pope John Paul has established the theme of the meeting: NEW EVANGELIZATION — HUMAN PROMOTION — CHRISTIAN CULTURE. "Jesus Christ yesterday, today and always (Heb. 13:8)."

The bishops will meet precisely as pastors of their people, and not as experts in sociology or the economy or even in theology. To fulfill their role as pastors they will need the help of experts in those fields, as Vatican II recommended.¹ The input of theologians and sociologists at the last two general conferences of the Latin American episcopate (at Medellin in 1968 and at Puebla in 1979) proved extremely valuable, just as did the contributions of the periti at Vatican II. Obviously, to fulfill their role, theologians and other experts need to be guaranteed their "lawful freedom of inquiry, of thought and of expression."² The first Synod of Bishops (1967) saw "the need to recognize the freedom belonging to theologians so they can carry on new research and perfect the traditional patrimony of truth." Pope Paul VI gave his own personal assurances about this when he addressed the first meeting of the International Theological Commission in 1969. He even spoke of "the two primacies (sic): that of scholarship and that of authority" both of which "support the faith in different ways."

Readers of The CORD are already familiar with the important and informative articles on the "New Evangelization" by Fr. Charles Finnegan. This particular article provides us with the necessary background for understanding and appreciating the importance of the October meeting of the Latin American bishops in Santo Domingo. With typical objectivity Fr. Charles describes the history of the tensions which will be operative at this meeting which has powerful implications for the future of the church in Latin America.

The Antecedents

The Latin American bishops have a long tradition of meeting to discuss common concerns. In the colonial period three provincial councils were held in Peru and four in Mexico. In 1899 Pope Leo XIII convoked the Latin American bishops to a continental plenary council (the first in the history of the church). This meeting, held in Rome, was attended by thirteen archbishops and forty bishops, and dealt mostly with questions of ecclesiastical discipline.

In 1955, on the occasion of the international Eucharistic Congress held in Rio de Janeiro, the Latin American bishops met "in conference." Pope Pius XII convoked the meeting and appointed the Vatican's Cardinal Piazza as president, who affirmed that the "conference had no precedent or anything similar to it in the contemporary church." In his written message to the assembly, the Pope encouraged the bishops towards a greater unity and coordination of their efforts. He also encouraged them to "adopt new methods in their apostolate and open the way for new paths . . . to better adapt themselves to the demands of the present times." The Pope called attention to the importance of the lay apostolate, and ended his message by reminding the bishops of the importance of christian social action, absolutely necessary "because of its intimate relation with religious life."

Very importantly for the future of the Church in Latin America and beyond, it was decided at this meeting to create CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano = The Latin American Episcopal Council). This Council is not to be confused with the Latin American episcopal Conferences. The Council, at the service of the episcopal conferences, is composed of representatives of those same national conferences (chosen for two years), with the following duties: to study common problems of interest to the Church in Latin America; to coordinate pastoral activities; and, most importantly, to prepare the future conferences of the Latin American episcopate when these would be convoked by the Holy See. After consulting the bishops, Pius XII chose Bogota as the seat of the General Secretariat even though a relative majority of the Latin American bishops indicated Rome as their preference.

The creation of CELAM was due to the initiative of Latin America's most progressive bishops, such as Chile's Manuel Larrain of Talca, and Brazil's Helder Camara, then auxiliary bishop in Rio. They received strong Vatican support and encouragement (absolutely essential for the success of this venture) from the then Monsignor Montini, later Pope Paul VI.³

1968: Medellin — A New Way of "Being Church"

CELAM prepared the Second General Conference of the Latin American bishops, held in Medellin in 1968. This assembly was surely one of the most important ecclesial gatherings of modern times; its influence was felt far beyond Latin America. The assembly consisted of some 130 voting members, the majority of them bishop-delegates of Latin America's 22 episcopal conferences. Latin America's Confederation of Religious (CLAR) was represented by 13 voting members.

1968, the last year of the post-conciliar euphoria, was a time of great tension in the church, especially in Latin America. Military dictatorships were stomping on human rights, especially in Brazil. The ideology of national security, thanks to North American dominance, was imposed on entire peoples with frightful consequences, and Central America was largely controlled by the extreme right. In response, guerilla movements began to surface, and Camillo Torres, "the guerilla-priest," had died in combat two years earlier.

In such an historical context, the preparations for Medellin could only be fraught with strain. There was a good deal of tension between CAL (the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Latin America, established in 1958) and CELAM. The Vatican wanted tight control, and required its approval for the themes to be discussed, the presenters and experts, the time to be devoted to each theme and its discussion. At the last minute, four experts chosen by CELAM were denied Vatican approval.

The Medellin assembly took place then in an historical context of perplexity, and in some quarters, even of pessimism. In spite of that, the Conference injected new vitality into much of the Latin American church, and gave that church a very new direction. Its "Message To The Peoples of Latin America" calls for a "new evangelization . . . to obtain a faith that is transparent and committed." Thus the expression "new evangelization," used countless times by Pope John Paul II, was first used by the Latin American bishops at Medellin.

An early address by Alfonso Gregory, a Brazilian priest — sociologist, helped focus the Conference. He proposed that when considering the alarming phenomenon of violence that so plagued Latin America, the bishops should consider not only guerilla movements and "marxist" uprisings, but also the very real and savage violence that was so socially acceptable: the feudal-capitalist system that prevailed throughout much of Latin America, concentrating all the wealth in the hands of a few while millions lived in dehumanizing poverty. Gregory coined a term that, to his surprise, would become standard among many subsequent writers and

speakers — "institutionalized violence" — to describe the horrific injustice sanctioned by the ideology of state capitalism.

The participants at Medellin did not begin with a consideration of abstract principles, but with reflection on the reality of peoples' lives, and proceeded to judge that reality in the light of the Gospel and the Catholic social tradition. This led to some of the Conference's most prophetic pronouncements:

Present structures violate basic human rights — a situation that demands changes that are global, courageous, urgent, and profoundly innovative. It comes as no surprise that the temptation to violence is appearing in Latin America. A deafening cry rises from millions of human beings asking their Pastors for a liberation that comes to them from absolutely nowhere else. The Christian, called to live in communion, must find it in the basic community. [Our aim is] the formation of a greater number of ecclesial communities in the parishes, especially in the rural areas and among the urban poor. Above all, Medellin's vision was one of deep faith: The Church has sought to understand this historic moment in the light of the Word that is Christ. The mystery of humankind makes sense only in the Light that is Christ.

One of Ecuador's most outstanding bishops was Leonidas Proano, known affectionately as "Bishop of the Indians." His assessment of the Conference: "Medellin was a fundamental commitment to work for the construction of a community church instead of the vertical church we inherited with its pyramid of power." Until Medellin, the Latin American Church had been allied to the oligarchies and ruling classes, often calling on them to practice "charity" towards the poor. In espousing the cause of the poor by calling for radical changes in socio-economic structures, in giving an impetus to Liberation Theology, and in making basic Christian communities a pastoral priority, Medellin represents nothing less than a new way of being Church. A five-centuries-old way of "being church" in Latin America died at Medellin, and a new way, more evangelical, was born.

Obviously, such momentous change would not be greeted with universal applause. To be sure, Medellin was enormously encouraging to the many bishops, priests, religious and laity who were committed to the renewal of the Church, mandated by Vatican II. But even within the Church there was opposition to Medellin, in some dioceses of Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and especially in Argentina and Colombia. In some instances, study of Medellin was forbidden in seminaries.

Medellin was seen as a threat especially to powerful elites, both inside and outside Latin America, who benefited from the status quo and were resolved to preserve it. Thus, the 1969 "Rockerfeller Report" to President

Nixon observed that the Latin American peoples' desire for change could endanger "national security" and U.S. interests in the region and, frankly suspicious of the changes fostered at Medellin, welcomed the growing influence of the military in Latin America.

Within CELAM itself opposition to the moderate and progressive elements grew after Medellin, reaching a climax in 1972 when, in what came to be known as "the coup of Sucre" CELAM was given a new directorate. Little by little the moderates and progressives were replaced by more conservative counterparts. One unfortunate result of this change in CELAM was the growing tension between CELAM and CLAR.⁴

Almost from the moment the Church in Latin America committed itself to the poor and their struggle for justice, it became a Church of martyrs.

In their "Message To The Peoples of Latin America," the bishops at Medellin spoke of "the beginning of a new historic approach in our continent filled with the hope of total emancipation — liberation from all servitude . . . We foresee the painful gestation of a new civilization." The Church's contribution to the "new civilization" was to be the "new evangelization." But Medellin called for radical conversion, as Bishop Eduardo Pironio, then General Secretary of CELAM, noted: "Medellin hurts because it demands radical changes and an abandoning of privileged positions." The Church was to pay dearly for sounding that call.

Almost from the moment the Church in Latin America committed itself to the poor and their struggle for justice, it became a Church of martyrs. Their number is legion: bishops such as Oscar Romero of El Salvador and Enrique Angelelli of Argentina; priests such as the six Jesuits killed in El Salvador; Sisters such as Ita Ford, Maura Clark and Dorothy Kazal, killed by the Salvadoran military on 2 December 1980; lay men and women by the thousands, such as the couple Felipe and Mery Barreda — leaders in the basic Christian communities in Nicaragua — who were kidnapped by the Contra Forces in December of 1982, held captive and tortured for four months and finally executed.

Inevitably the scenario was the same: those committed to the poor and their struggle for justice were perceived as a threat to powerful elites who were well served by the status quo and were determined to preserve

it. Those calling for change were denounced as "subversive," "Marxist," and therefore fair game for the military forces who murdered them "in the defense of Christian civilization." A Church that proclaimed "good news to the poor," "freedom to captives," and "liberation to the oppressed," was denounced for engaging in "criminal activity." According to some Latin American scholars, by the end of the 1970's, incredibly, some 850 priests and religious had been murdered.⁵

1979: Puebla

CELAM's general secretariat was anxious to reverse at least some of the directions set for the Latin American church at Medellin when the bishops met again eleven years later at Puebla. That this attempt was not successful was due largely to two factors: the leadership of the Brazilian hierarchy, especially that of Cardinal Lorscheider OFM, and reality itself in Latin America.

The situation of the peoples of Latin America was much worse in 1979 than it had been in 1968. "Every Latin American who is not blind is dissatisfied with this society," said a bishop-delegate from Venezuela. "Yet it is we [the Church] who more than anyone else have created and shaped it. Even today, nearly every influential person in Latin America, in or out of government, is an alumnus of our schools." Similarly, Venezuela's "Bishop of the Poor," Parra Leon warned: "Latin America will never forgive the participants of Puebla if they let themselves be overcome by fear and fail to denounce precisely the situation of injustice, oppression, falsehood and lies to which the powers of this continent have submitted the Latin American people."

Puebla confirmed the directions set at Medellin, and in some instances went further. Puebla's final document reserved a very harsh judgment for the doctrine of national security: when "understood as an absolute ideology, it is incompatible with the Christian view of human beings." Some other important texts:

ABSOLUTE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST. "Human beings, by virtue of their dignity as images of God, merit a commitment from us in favor of their liberation and their total fulfillment in Christ Jesus. Only in Christ is the true grandeur of human beings revealed. Only in Christ is their more intimate reality fully known. Being pastors, we speak to human beings and proclaim to them the joyful news that humanity has been assumed and exalted by the very Son of God. **GOD IS PRESENT AND ALIVE, IN JESUS CHRIST THE LIBERATOR, IN THE HEART OF LATIN AMERICA. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.**" (Emphasis added)

SOCIAL INJUSTICE. "Viewing it in the light of faith, we see the growing gap between rich and poor as a scandal and a contradiction to Christian existence. The luxury of the few becomes an insult to the wretched poverty of vast masses. This is contrary to the plan of the Creator. . . . The Church sees [in this injustice] a situation of social sinfulness, all the more serious because it exists in countries that call themselves Catholic and are capable of changing the situation."

MARXISM AND CAPITALISM. "In its most rigid expression, the free-market economy is still the prevailing system on our continent. It has increased the gap between rich and poor by giving priority to capital over labor, economics over the social realm. Fear of marxism keeps many from facing up to the oppressive reality of liberal capitalism. One could say that some people, faced with the danger of one clearly sinful system, forget to denounce and combat another equally sinful system."

URGENT NEED FOR ECCLESIAL CONVERSION. "We are still far from practicing all that we preach. For all our faults and limitations, we pastors too ask pardon of God, our brothers and sisters in the faith, and humanity. We want not only to help others to self-conversion, but also to be converted along with them, so that our dioceses, parishes, institutions, and religious communities will provide an incentive for living the Gospel rather than being an obstacle to it."

If Medellin represented the baptism of Latin America's "new evangelization," Puebla was its confirmation.

1992: Santo Domingo⁶

It is planned that Pope John Paul II will open the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Santo Domingo, on 12 October of this year, precisely the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landfall and the beginning of the evangelization of the Americas.

Given the enormous complexity of the many questions the bishops will be facing, it is not surprising that the preparatory stage for CELAM IV has been at least as stormy as the preparations for Medellin and Puebla.

In February of 1990 the CELAM Secretariat released its "Elementos para uma reflexão pastoral em preparação da IV Conferencia Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano" (dated 31 August 1989). It represented the outlook of the neo-conservative and restorationist movements. It considered "modernity" to be the Church's great adversary in Latin America. Secularization, with the danger of secularism ("the principal enemy") was seen as the Church's great challenge. The Church cannot control the modern culture that is largely derived from the French Revolution and the

Enlightenment. Unable to control it, the neo-traditionalists consider it an adversary. They see the need to regain control over culture to create a new Christian culture and see this as an indispensable role of the new evangelization.

CELAM's "Elementos" compared modern culture to the prodigal son, and had no hesitation in pointing out the path to be taken: the restoration of authority. Thirty-seven pages are devoted to this theme! There is no mention of participation in decision-making. Everything depends on "authority." Theology's role is to exorcize from culture the "three anti-authority rebellions": that of Luther (against the Pope), that of the French Revolution (against the monarchy), and that of Freud (against the father of the family).

Obviously, this document represented a serious departure from the priorities set by Medellin and Puebla. Many critics pointed out that Latin America's great challenge is not secularism, but the extreme poverty in which, according to a U.N. Study,⁷ 270 million (sic!) of Latin Americans live and die. Medellin and Puebla called for a "preferential option for the poor" and CELAM's "Elementos," while mentioning that option, gives it much less importance."

CELAM IV represents a struggle for the soul of the Latin American Church. . .

The document invited criticisms and these were not long in coming. They were published as a *prima relatio*. The CELAM secretariat then published a second text in April of 1991, entitled "Documento de Consulta — Nova Evangelização, Promoção Humana e Cultura Cristã." Again, criticisms were requested. The comments of almost the entire Latin American episcopate were gathered together in a *secunda relatio*.⁸ Some of the bishops' comments and suggestions:

1. There is a great interest among Latin American bishops in the new evangelization, thanks to the Holy Spirit and the bishops' contacts with their people, especially the poorest.
2. The documents prepared by the Secretariat do not represent the generally accepted thinking of the Latin American bishops.⁹

The bishops propose as the fundamental objectives of CELAM IV:

1. To celebrate Jesus Christ and the message of the Lord Jesus, Crucified and Risen, the center of the life and mission of the Church.
2. To continue and deepen the directions given by Medellin and Puebla.

3. To plan the evangelizing mission of the Church in Latin America, with the rich experience of the past, and with awareness of the profound changes taking place today.

Time and again the bishops insist on maintaining the preferential option for the poor as a priority: "Alongside Jesus, the main thread of the document should be the issue of poverty; therefore the preferential option for the poor should continue to be the structural criterion of the life and mission of the Church in Latin America, and not just a spiritual criterion. In consequence, the challenges of culture, modernity and the movements (charismatic and others) should not replace this, but situate themselves in relation to it, so that the option for the poor gives unity and inspiration to pastoral activity." The bishops trace this option back to Vatican II, "the most important ecclesial event of this century." They also call for a strengthening of the episcopal conferences and speak of "an ecclesial magisterium . . . which represents the Latin American magisterium." The bishops reaffirm the value of Liberation Theology, "born out of evangelization and the tasks of human promotion on our continent." They emphasize the importance of basic Christian communities, "notable expression of the option for the poor, and the most powerful evangelizing structure for the present and the future." Rather than a single "Christian" culture, as the Secretariat's texts seemed to call for, the bishops insist that Latin America is multicultural, and point to three main strands: the cultures of the native peoples ("in this fifth centenary all they have to celebrate is their 500 hundred years of resistance"); the Afro-American culture; and the dominant Western culture.

On the basis of these and other suggestions of the episcopal conferences, the CELAM Secretariat, under the leadership of the new Secretary General, Brazilian Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, prepared the "Working Document" which was to serve as the basis for the bishops' discussions in Santo Domingo. The Vatican informed CELAM that it reserved to itself the right to veto the document in whole or in part, and appointed Mexican Bishop Javier Lozano as a kind of censor. The text was modified somewhat to make it more acceptable: references to Archbishop Romero and the six slain Jesuits of El Salvador as "martyrs" were eliminated and the self-criticism of the Church was toned down. As required, the Secretariat submitted this new text to the Vatican for approval in March '92. After a two months impasse and some further modifications, the "working document" was released by the Vatican. While the basic Christian communities are reportedly not given the prominence they enjoyed in the original document, the preferential option for the poor remains intact. The text also preserves a key insight of Liberation Theology: the Church's main challenge is to recognize "liberation and the total realization of the human person . . . as the central preoccupation of

cultural, economic, political and social activity." It insists on "the new faces of poverty" expanding on Puebla's list.¹⁰

A final note. The Pope has appointed three Presidents for CELAM IV: Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican Secretary of State; Santo Domingo Cardinal Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez; and Archbishop Serafim Fernandes de Araujo of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. For the first time, a second secretary general has been appointed: Chilean Bishop Jorge Medina Estevez (a signatory of the "Declaration of the Andes" — a manifesto against Liberation Theology), who will serve along with Bishop Assis.¹¹

CELAM IV represents a struggle for the soul of the Latin American Church, just as did Medellin and Puebla. Can the Latin American Church count on the support of our prayers and our lively interest?

Endnotes

¹Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 62.

²Ibid.

³The history of CELAM is instructive for many reasons, but is beyond the scope of this essay. I am unaware of any CELAM history in English. The French publication "Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religions," 1986 (62/1), pp. 93-105, published an interesting sociological/historical study on CELAM. The "Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira," 1987 (47), pp. 655-665 published a Portuguese translation of that study.

⁴For some interesting observations on this cf. Penny Lernoux's "The People of God," p. 353. In the first years after Medellin there was perfect agreement between the two Latin American Conferences: of Bishops and of Religious. When the CELAM Secretariat (to be carefully distinguished from the Episcopal Conferences) appeared to be moving away from the priorities set at Medellin, CLAR held fast. CLAR represents the 45,000 male and 310,000 female religious of Latin America. One of Brazil's most respected bishops, Dom Ivo Lorscheider (repeatedly chosen by the bishops as President of their conference) explained: "For years now the presidencies of CLAR and CELAM have not followed the same path. It was not so in the past when Cardinal Lorscheider (his Franciscan cousin) was President of CELAM." (SEDOS, 9 October 1990)

The Pope has already decided that "this spirit of renewed communion between bishops and religious in Latin America will be one of the topics for study and reflection at the fourth general conference of the Latin American hierarchy scheduled for 1992." (Letter to Latin American Religious, "Toward the Fifth Centenary of the New World Evangelization," 29 June, 1990) In his address to Brazilian priests (13 October 1991, in Natal, Brazil) the Pope told the members of religious institutes that their pastoral work had to be inspired by their particular charism, but then added emphatically: "It must however be entirely subordinated to the guidelines and direction of the Bishop with whom you work. The pastoral charge of the faithful of every local church, in all its dimensions and levels, is not up to your religious superior, but is entirely and exclusively the responsibility of the Bishop." (*L'Osservatore Romano* [English ed.] 2 October 1992, p. 8)

⁵Cf. Penny Lernoux, *op. cit.* p. 95

⁶For the information in this section I depend largely on the talks given at the twelfth meeting of the OFM Conferences of Latin American Provincial Ministers held in Lima, Peru, from 3-10th of May, 1992. I am especially indebted to the conferences "Hermanos Menores En La Nueva Evangelizacion: Ante La IV Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano" by Fray Benjamin Tapia OFM (Peru) and "Perspectivas da Nova Evangelizacao na America Latina" by Frei Nilo Agostini OFM (Brazil).

⁷Cf. *Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira*, Marco de 1992, p. 136.

⁸After admitting that the previous consultation document had taken almost no account of the comments from the episcopal conferences, Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, CELAM's new secretary general, called a meeting of the secretaries general of Latin America's 22 conferences in February of '92 in Bogota. From this came the *secunda relatio* — the most important of the preparatory documents thus far because it was a faithful reflection of the general thinking of Latin American bishops.

⁹Some specific objections: the documents prepared by the CELAM Secretariat do not have a concrete audience in mind; do not take into account the lived experience of the people; use language that is incomprehensible even to the ministers of evangelization; maintain a vision that is excessively Western; and represent a real break with Medellin and Puebla.

¹⁰For further information see *The Tablet*, 20 June 1992 p.789f and *The National Catholic Reporter*, June 5 and July 31, 1992.

¹¹For some background, see Penny Lernoux, *op.cit.*, pp. 149f.



ST. FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN

I often think it humorous
that you should calmly walk
through armed and dangerous
ranks of men so you might talk
with that seeming perfidious
enemy, the Sultan. An invidious
task you set yourself to bring
him to Christ, Miriam's Son:
a great prophet in his mind,
God's Son in yours. Allowing
for such differences, what can
be further said?

You kept your head
and walked back through blood
and death, through mindless war
and carried only the sweet scar
of realizing that he was a good
man: sincere, courteous, polite.
That thrown gauntlet to fight
his priests by fire-walking
was less challenging than talking,
listening, sharing, giving.

Not as powerful as forgiving
the violence that lay bleeding
the earth in two names invoked
as reason, cause, just and right.
There is a moment, Francis, when needing
to listen is stronger than being choked
by ignorance and intolerance:

You meeting the Sultan is a chance
for us to reflect on the violence
that turns men and women from other
possibilities of hope, and the dream
of justice, brotherhood, and peace

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Love and Understanding

Anthony M. Carrozzo, O.F.M.

On such a splendid occasion, it might be best to avoid the signs of our times for they could easily take the spirit of hope and renewal out of an event such as graduation. The burning and looting of Los Angeles; the presidential debates that seem to make us more and more concerned about the future of our country since they are going nowhere beyond blame and name-calling; and the newly found missionary vocation of a loved but all too sinful Irish bishop are all signs that make us suspicious and cynical about our times. However, there are at least hints of optimism: the simple and moving plea of Rodney King encouraging us to get along; the demands of ordinary people like you and me that politicians forget politics in order to work together for solutions to inequality, crime, and racial antagonism; and the subtle ways in which clergy are finally admitting to our lay brothers and sisters that we too are weak and fragile, preaching out of our weakness rather than our strength.

On such a significant occasion, we might be tempted to skirt such events and hints to speak in melodious and imagined ways about a future filled with hopes realized and dreams fulfilled. Yet an urgent concern confronts anyone graduating from a Franciscan institution in 1992. After all, you have spent four years studying and learning, giving many hours to philosophizing. You will continue on this educational journey by learning the way of theologizing. The thought must occur to you — as it often has to us: what good is learning in a world full of turmoil? Will it help us to minister in a world of confused values and diverse principles?

Fr. Anthony Carrozzo, OFM, is provincial minister of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. He delivered this paper at the commencement exercises of St. Hyacinth College and Seminary in Granby, Massachusetts on May 24, 1992. Fr. Anthony has had articles published in various periodicals including The CORD. We share the conviction of Fr. Daniel M. Pietrzak, OFM Conv., president of St. Hyacinth's, and the entire student body that Fr. Anthony's address deserves to be shared with a broader audience.

Specifically, we can no longer simply take education for granted and so we must raise an even more personal concern: what is the role of learning for a contemporary Franciscan friar who must lead a people aware of and frightened by the signs of our times?

The Franciscan Rule of Life is the only religious rule that commands its members to be in touch with and respond to the signs of the times. In the Rule of 1223, Francis of Assisi insists that we be concerned with times and places and climates, willingly adapting our way of life and ministry to the needs that arise at various times, in diverse places, and in cold climates. This principle of social analysis was operative in the Order from its earliest days, though the Spiritualists resisted it with all their moral outrage. Pope Honorius III who approved the Rule also dispensed from it for the sake of mission, allowing the wearing of secular garb and permitting the use of money.

... what is the role of learning for a contemporary Franciscan friar who must lead a people aware of and frightened by the signs of our times?

To read the signs of the times demands more than astuteness. After all, there is a real danger of confusing adaptation with assimilation. We must adapt our way of life and mission to the best instincts and values of our culture but we must also constantly and courageously battle against being assimilated into our culture thoughtlessly and foolishly. This demands wisdom that arises ever so slowly from prayerful and contemplative study, reflection, and dialogue both with living and deceased wisdom figures. It demands that we be students of the Word of God and discerners of the presence of God in our world. Graduation changes our status, to be sure, but we must remain students until we can say with Francis: *It is good to read the testimonies of Scripture; it is good to seek the Lord our God in them. As for me, I have already made so much of Scripture my own that I have more than enough to meditate on and revolve in my mind. I need no more; I know Christ, the poor crucified one* (2 Cel, 105). Francis is not speaking of memorization but rather of identification.

We find a wonderful example of this art of learning in the Franciscan presence at Santa Croce in Florence where the friars identified with Christ, were in touch with the needs and concerns of the people there, and

developed a ministry to respond to these needs. The friars, moving from the rural beauty of Assisi to the urban splendor of Florence, attracted the **populo** to their church. The artists and artisans, shopkeepers and professionals frequented the church to hear the friars preach. The friars quickly discovered that their ability to preach "for the instruction and edification" of the people as required by the Rule meant that they must first become aware of the needs and concerns of the Florentines, quite different from the needs and concerns of the Assisians. Once they were able to make this transition, they preached fearlessly yet with examined and chaste words uniting the Gospel way of life to the city way of life. Clearly the friars were learned preachers, learning being the handmaid of their preaching.

Even the more scholarly friars at the University of Paris, under the guidance of Saint Bonaventure, saw the importance of learning at the service of preaching. Recall the letter that Saint Bonaventure composed to silence the doubts and concerns of Roger Bacon. Roger, with a passion for knowledge and an admiration for the friars, could not reconcile the life of the friar with the life of the scholar. Struggling for a solution, he sought the advice of Saint Bonaventure who wrote an extensive and exhaustive response, asking *For whom does it befit to teach the Gospel than those who profess and observe the Gospel?* (14) and indicating that *The Rule sets forth clearly that the friars have the right and duty of preaching. To my knowledge, this is not found in any other Rule. Now, if the friars are not to preach fables but the words of God... They must read [and study]* (6). This sentiment is echoed by John Paul II in a letter to the friars minor last year in which he reminded us *The mandate de paenitentia praedicanda calls for a serious intellectual preparation, both in the human and sacred sciences* (7).

It becomes clear both in Florence and at Paris that learning was not seen as an end in itself by the friars. Nor was it seen as a means to power and prestige, even though our spiritualist brother Jacopone da Todi attacked philosophers and theologians as the corrupters of the Order: *That's the way it is — not a shred left of the spirit of the Rule! In sorrow and grief I see Paris demolish Assisi, stone by stone. With all their theology they've led the Order down a crooked path* (CWS, 31). How remote such a sentiment is from those profound words of our father Francis in his Testament: *And we should honor and respect all theologians and those who minister the most holy divine words as those who minister spirit and life to us.* No doubt there were — and still are — friars who sought an education for its own sake or to lord it over others. Today such friars speak incessantly of their "careers." However, the vast majority courageously struggled "in sanctitate et doctrina," searching for holiness and wisdom. This search was for the sake of ministering spirit and life to the Church.

While apostolically oriented, this search for wisdom has a contemplative aspect. The student becomes the disciple by participating in the mysteries he is contemplatively studying. This educational process is primarily affective rather than purely intellectual. As one of my more articulate and wise predecessors Thomas Plassmann stated so beautifully, Franciscan education does not center upon the "Ego" but rather upon the "Sursum Corda." (Cf. FEC, 11, 3), which in turn echoes those memorable words of Saint Bonaventure in his opening paragraph to the *Itinerarium*: *[Do] not believe that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavor without divine grace, reflection as a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom* (Itin. 4).

The Franciscan loves so that he might understand. This is the secret behind Francis' advice to a minister who is having trouble with one of his friars: *Love him in this and do not wish that he be a better Christian*. The learned friar-preacher, realizing that *God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son*, does not condemn the world that he reads with a contemplative and affective glance. Rather, in the Spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Bonaventure, he challenges good people to become better by presenting the best: the Kingdom of God where we live according to Gospel values and attitudes. At Florence — and in our cities today — Franciscan preaching, reading the signs of the times, must appeal to the emotions of our hearers through concrete and practical language so that they may be moved to action, to be different in behavior. To accomplish this, we must not only be philosophers and theologians, social analysts and psychologists, but also students of the liberal arts, who possess the vision of *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam* where music and art, plays and poetry are all at the service of evangelization.

Generally at moments such as this, graduates are challenged to go out and seize the world and make it better. My challenge, however, is quite different. It is simply this: accept the enormous responsibility of the Franciscan heritage to understand the world through learning so that you may truly proclaim the encouraging Word of God to a people often discouraged by the signs around them. To do this you must remember what you have already learned and deepen that knowledge through the contemplative experience of theology. This is the Bonaventurian integration of the arts into theology.

Roger Bacon must have mulled over the message of Saint Bonaventure because he is not only listed among the forerunners of the modern scientific method but also among the franciscan friars. One of his more famous

statements is: *Without experience, nothing can be known sufficiently*. He opted, then, not for the masculine way of learning which is formal, competitive, and abstract but for the feminine way which is more reflective, shared, and experientially based. Again, we are confronted with the aggressive way to knowledge and the contemplative journey to wisdom. As Franciscans, we follow in the footsteps of Anthony of Padua whose learning was franciscanized so that he was able to preach profound theology through images and stories. Thus he gently moved his listeners from personal experience into the redeeming events of the life and ministry of Jesus. In this he was a faithful follower of Francis of Assisi, who Celano tells us: *Although the evangelist Francis preached to the unlearned through visible and simple things, in as much as he knew that virtue is more necessary than words, nevertheless among learned people and persons of greater capacity he spoke enlivened and profound words* (2 Cel 107).

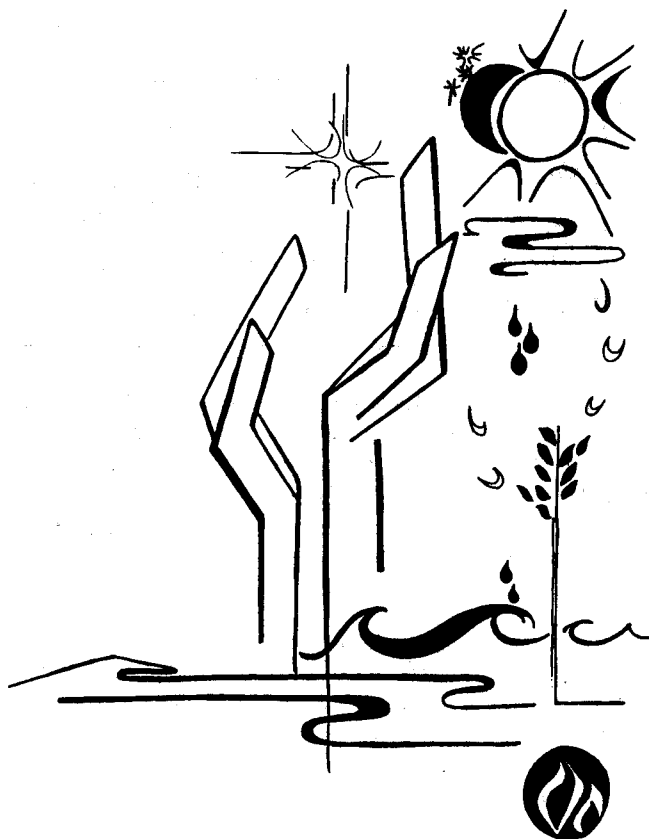
... in the Spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Bonaventure, he challenges good people to become better by presenting the best: the Kingdom of God where we live according to Gospel values and attitudes.

In order to accomplish such an awesome task, the Franciscan must acknowledge his poverty, for study arises out of poverty of spirit and poverty of mind. No longer clinging to answers to questions our people no longer ask, we must search with them for the wisdom to understand the mystery of God's presence in our times, following the advice of Vaclav Havel: *We must try harder to understand than to explain* (NYTS, 3/1/92). Perhaps Catherine de Vinck puts it best:

*For this is the poverty you chose as a bride:
To deliver yourself willfully to the needs of others,
Leaving behind the shelter of your own identity,
Renouncing the protection of your own boundaries,
The prudence that requests endless explanations
And strives to contain and defeat the ardor of love.*

Poverty and learning are not at all at odds then, for poverty is a new way of being with people and learning is a franciscan way of serving these people.

Our times are complex and challenging; our franciscan response must be contemplative and intelligent. Our call to repent from the growing gap of inequality among us, the escalating violence in our homes and streets, the racial antagonisms that harden in the face of this inequality and violence, and the ideological blocks that make conversation impossible and confrontation inevitable demand that we preach reconciliation — not a cheap and easy reconciling of warring factions but a demanding and lasting peace that arises from our belief in traveling the Gospel way. We can only do this if we accept our ministry as learned preachers. I pray you accept this challenge and prepare yourselves well for it.



SHARED SHADOWS

When you kissed the leper your shadow
side knew that defeat was not far away;
my shadow side still battles endlessly
with me — it is a cold, friendless
thing which always promises tomorrow
things will be better, another day
another chance to live the *forma* in
the spirit I promised. But battling
with shadows is as exhausting as battling
armies in Perugia, or confronting fathers
or even being challenged by the brothers,
it would be easy for me to simply give in
and kiss no leper, confront no shadow
and hope it would disappear to nothing:
but then if you climbed off your horse
acknowledging a crazed impulse to know
the truth of truly belonging and loving
then confronting shadows in the course
of knowing them in order to defeat
the dark side of all you were is a kiss
worth shaping, worth knowing, worth making.
In doing this, perhaps one day my feet
may stand on some mountain, my heart miss
a beat in the night air and be taken
into the court of heaven where shadows
are no more and in their place true love

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

How the Minister of this Brotherhood made a visit to San Damiano and upon Mount Subasio

BR. HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

After spending some months in Rome, the Minister decided to visit San Damiano once more. He felt a greater need than ever to return to the origins of Franciscan life, to the living example of St. Clare and St. Francis, in order to derive therefrom new impulses for the mission of the brotherhood in all cultures today. Following the mind of Brother Francis (LP 106) he sought counsel even from the youngest novices, asking them in what manner our past may have a future, and which signs of the times the Brotherhood ought in this to follow with particular attention. In all this his plan was to beg the Lord to enlighten him creatively and in a salutary manner to comfort him in the time of his own novitiate in the service of the whole brotherhood.

In that place, which Brother Francis had built up with stones and in which he himself had become a living stone in the history of God's relations with humankind (1 Cel, chap. 8) and which even today serves the formation of new Brothers, he read in the "Capita practica ad Anatolium" of the Church Father Evagrius Ponticus a passage about the noonday devil, the vice of "acedia": as the Brothers had complained to one another in the Pentecost Chapter, this is even today for many friars an obstacle on the way of the following of Jesus Christ, of "ongoing formation" and of the "new Evangelization". This is what he read: "The demon of acedia, who is

Readers of The CORD will recognize the author who has contributed many such splendid pieces over the past several years. As General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor he continues to serve his Franciscan sisters and brothers by sharing with us his personal and insightful reflections. In this he models in an unusual way how our every day experiences provide a rich source for our spiritual growth.

also called the noonday devil, is the most pernicious of all. He attacks the Brother at the fourth hour °10.00 a.m. and lays siege to him until the eighth °2.00 p.m. First, he makes the sun seem to move only with great labour or not at all and makes the day seem to last for 50 hours. Then he prompts him continually to look out of the window and jump out of his cell to see if the sun is still far from the ninth hour °3.00 p.m. and look around to see whether perchance another Brother might not be coming. Then he implants in him an aversion for the place in which he lives or against his whole way of life or against manual labour. He goes on to suggest the idea that all love among the Brothers has vanished, and that there is no one left to comfort him. The demon depicts life as going on for a long time and makes present to him the burdens of asceticism." The Minister reflected at length on these words. He also read in the Legend of St. Clare how at the time of the Poor Ladies in San Damiano "there was no place for acedia, because idleness was cast out by their burning fervour in prayer and in service of the Lord" (LegCl 20). He thanked the Lord for always having shown to the Brothers in moments of stagnation and crisis the way forward by means of contemplation, poverty and solidarity with the poor (SacrCom 55).

The Minister of all the Brothers therefore resolved to summon soon to the Portiuncula all those Brothers who in each Province are responsible for "formatio permanens," in order to confirm the entire Brotherhood in fidelity to its origins and to the signs of the times, and to win back that missionary dynamism which still in today's world proceeds from contemplation and poverty. This congress should be placed under the motto: "The only constant thing in the life of the minors is that they must be constantly changed and converted to the Gospel of Jesus."

Looking from the garden of St. Clare out over the wide vale of Umbria and especially towards the Portiuncula, our pilgrim became aware that, as the Pentecost Chapter had likewise repeated with emphasis, the Brotherhood is called to new forms of evangelization. The Brothers must learn to know and to love the thousand flowers which God makes blossom and bloom in the garden of his world, the signs of The Spirit and of The Kingdom in the various cultures, continents and religions, in the history of peoples as in the hearts of the poor, which must become more and more the protagonists of their own liberation, sacraments and signs of Christ, prophets of the Kingdom to come. He had an intuition that the secret of the Brotherhood's inner and outward growth lies in its capacity for sharing, in its courage to listen, and at times also to speak a prophetic word.

The new "Ratio Evangelizationis" for the whole Brotherhood, which the Pentecost Chapter had likewise requested, would have to speak of the

"internationality" of the brotherhood and of its mission. For, with no little surprise, he read that this was how it was even in the beginning: in the mission to Germany brothers coming from several nations were sent out from the Portiuncula. They came from Umbria, Tuscany, Lombardy, from Teutonia, Swabia, Hungary, 12 clerics and 13 laics all told (Jordan of Giano 19). England, too, back in 1224, at the time of Pope Honorius, was an "international project," with 4 clerics and 5 laics, among whom there were indeed Englishmen, but also Italians, Lombards, Frenchmen and even a diversity of Brothers from the Transalpine regions (Eccleston).

So the Minister decided to send brothers in the near future in the same spirit to Uzbekistan, to Armenia, to St. Petersburg and to Moscow, to Scutari in Albania, to Burkina Faso as well as to Mongolia. And he understood ever more clearly that the brothers would have to learn languages as a sign of the universality of salvation, and not only the better known ones, but also Quechua and Urdu, Bavarian and Hindi, Chinese and Arabic, as a sign that God's loving kindness is already present in all cultures, and that it matters not from what race or tribe one comes, but rather that one should be able to see God's image in every man and woman, each being able to meet the other with sentiments of peace, as "minores".

And when it came to the time of noon, the Minister slowly climbed up to Mount Subasio, to do penance and to pray in solitude. In the presence of the Lord he remembered all the brothers and sisters who bear in their hearts concern for creation as their contribution to the life of the world (Jn 14). On the heights of the Carceri, where the shrubs become ever barer, he read this verse from a poem of the Indians in the Andean highlands:

"The earth is full of heavenly signs,
and many a bush aflame with God's spirit.
But only one who can see with his heart
removes his shoes.
How many sit around
and look in the bushes
for nothing more than a few berries."

Is not all of creation, the Minister asked himself in that hour, like a colorful garden, or like a musical score with a multitude of known and unknown melodies and harmonies, all inspired by the Spirit of God? Does not someone who pollutes and destroys the earth destroy himself? And he perceived more clearly than ever before that the earth can become for us only what we are for it. For only someone who protects and loves the earth protects himself and builds his own future.

When he had reached the top of the mountain, the Minister rested a while in front of an old gnarled oak, which seemed to him like a symbol

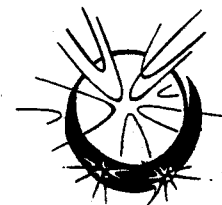
at once of the groaning of creation and of the music of the universe. And he prayed in the simplicity of his heart, not so much for himself as for the whole brotherhood on its way toward the third millenium, this prayer which the Spirit suggested to him in that hour:

"Most High, Almighty, Good God,
let our life be like a tree.
Give us roots that reach deep into the earth.
Let us grow into a robust trunk
which stands erect in its rightful place.
When storms rage, may it not fall
even though it should sway.
May its leaves, after every winter, turn green again
as a sign that you give a hope and a future
to everything created
as also to our Brotherhood in all the world.
And in due time, let us bear those fruits
which your Spirit alone can produce:
a conversion forwards, respect for one another,
peace in our hearts, the impatience of the young
and the wisdom of the old, humor, creativity,
patience with ourselves and with others,
knowledge of our limitations, trust in the Spirit of God,
present even in our world of today."

Then the Minister of the Brotherhood returned from San Damiano and from Mount Subasio back to Rome, to the place called the Curia on the modest Gelsomino hill.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit Frater Arminius Romanus,
a secretis Ministri Universalis, tempore Quadragesimae
A.D. 1992



Prophetic Ministry and the Educational Leader

GREGORY HARTMAYER, OFM CONV.

"The church must propose an education that makes people agents of their own development, protagonists of history, not a passive, compliant mass, but human beings able to display their intelligence, their creativity, their desire for the common service of the nation. Education must recognize that the development of the individual and of peoples is the advancement of each and all from less-human to more-human conditions. Persons being educated must find in education a view of development as something in which they must be involved. They must not expect everything to be done for them but must lead the way, each one contributing to the transformation of Latin American." The late Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, who gave his life for the church and the people of his beloved country of El Salvador, spoke these words to his people on January 22, 1978.

The church in Latin America can and must play a vital role in recreating the "Moses movement." Walter Brueggemann, in his book entitled **The Prophetic Imagination**, contends that just as Moses intended to dismantle the oppressive empire of Pharaoh and present the formation of a new community focused on the religion of God's freedom and the politics of justice and compassion, so too, the modern prophet of today must do the same. Each of the Old Testament prophets played a vital role in criticizing and dismantling the "royal community" and the "royal consciousness" in their attempt to bring about a prophetic ministry in a new world order.

*Father Gregory is Principal and Guardian at Saint Francis High School in Athol Springs, New York. He wrote this piece after visiting several school environments in Ecuador. His reflections upon his experience present challenging questions to Catholic education and especially to Franciscan educators. Following the model so powerfully expressed by Walter Brueggemann in **The Prophetic Imagination**, Fr. Gregory shares with us his own personal insights into the prophetic nature of his mission as Educational Director of a Franciscan High School.*

Jesus of Nazareth, "the prophet," practiced in a most radical form the main elements of prophetic ministry and imagination. He radically criticized the world around him and at the same time practiced the energizing of the new future given by God as seen in the resurrection.

Brueggemann presents a simple yet profound hypothesis: "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

Brueggemann maintains that the dominant culture in the American church is so largely encultured to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act. As a result "the royal consciousness leads people to despair about the power to new life. It is the task of prophetic imagination and ministry to bring people to engage the promise of newness that is at work in our history with God." The task is not an easy one. The task of prophetic imagination and ministry is to bring to public expression those very hopes and yearnings that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply that we no longer know they are there. "Hope is the refusal to accept the reading of reality which is the majority opinion; and one does that only at great political and existential risk." [Oscar Romero is a prime example of a person who accepted the challenge and task of prophetic ministry and evoked an alternative community that knows it is about different things in different ways.] He sought to penetrate the numbness of the poor and present a new future that can be believed in. Romero had an in-depth understanding of God's presence in his own life and in the life of others.

Among the many memorable experiences that I had in Duran, Ecuador, was a day that was spent at Nuevo Mundo Centro Educativo. The co-founders and co-directors, Patricia McLeague and Sonya Rendon have every reason to be proud. Pat and Sonya are presenting an alternative model of education to the one that is embraced by the dominant culture. Their model of education "brings to public expression those very hopes and yearnings that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply. . ." Education is a critical solution to the plight of the Third World. Nuevo Mundo provides a first class, private, Catholic education for the poor. But more importantly, it is paid for by the wealthy. The "morning school" enrolls 650 students in grades K - 12. These students come from families that can afford the \$50.00 per month tuition. Most of these students are chauffeured to school by a parent or professional driver. The majority of these students do not work and spend most of their day indoors. In contrast, the "afternoon school" enrolls the same number of students from families who cannot afford any tuition. These students are undernourished and impoverished. They are bussed to school after having worked all

morning at various jobs. These students are taught by an excellent faculty and make use of the state of the art facilities that are available at Nuevo Mundo. The beauty of this school is that it brings together two very distant worlds, i.e., the rich and the poor, with the hope and the goal of giving birth to a "new world" where these two sociological entities can learn from and live with each other. At Nuevo Mundo, the various members of the Mystical Body of Christ are beginning to recognize each other and are assuming responsibility for each other. As a result of this approach to education in the Third World, a new generation is emerging which is more altruistic and more mindful of the presence of God in each other. This model of education is an eminent challenge to the traditional, private Catholic schools in America whose founding Fathers would most certainly endorse.

The other Catholic schools which I visited are also making significant progress. They are providing a quality academic education as well as animating the Gospel values which serve continually to present an alternative model to the dominant values of modern society.

To a lesser extent, the Religious Education programs in the Campo provide an opportunity for young people to be exposed to the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. However, attendance, teacher preparation, materials and other limitations make it difficult to impact the students to the same degree as the Catholic schools. However, those involved in Catholic and Religious Education in these institutions can still be very proud of their accomplishments and should be encouraged by the results of their efforts. The Lord is surely working through them and the fruits of their labors will be great.

As I recall my experience in Ecuador, as well as reflect upon Brueggemann's **The Prophetic Imagination**, I cannot help but mention Fr. Jim Ronan, a member of the Society of St. James the Apostle from the Archdiocese of Boston. From my observation, Fr. Jim is the catalyst at the Santa Marianita parish. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with Fr. Jim, especially witnessing his ministry to people in their sadness, and in their hopelessness, as well as in their joyful and spirited moments. He enjoys a special relationship with his people. He is truly a "Padre" to them and relates well with both the old and the young. My time in Ecuador was too short. I would have liked to have spent more time with Fr. Jim. I gained a great deal from our conferences throughout the two weeks. I was able to get a glimpse of his spirituality and I appreciated the brief talks we had on route to the Campo or late at night before retiring. Fr. Jim is a gifted priest, teacher and pastor. I feel privileged to know him and to have worked with him. He was a significant part of the Ecuador experience.

One of the questions that we discussed throughout the two week experience was how we would apply Brueggemann's thesis to our own educational philosophy. As the Educational Director of a Franciscan High School, I would first present the evidence for the need for an alternative model to the faculty. For it is the faculty who directly influence the students both in and outside the classroom. Together with the administration, the faculty can assist the students in formulating an "agenda for change" which will begin to address the issues that will effect the changes necessary to bring about a "school of passion" and a "school of wonder." This change in attitude is essential in order for an alternative model to be collectively accepted. The spirituality of the school must be authentic enough to influence every aspect of school life. The spirituality of the school must be the impetus and the motive for the school's altruistic response to the needs of the various segments of society both in and outside of school.

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.

The embracing of the alternative model may take many years to accomplish. But, as in the case of Nuevo Mundo, the process is Grace-filled and Spirit-filled. Those committed to the process, even though some may never live to see the process completed, have accepted "the task of prophetic ministry" which is "to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

I am willing to accept the challenge of prophetic ministry in the Catholic secondary school setting. I see the importance of teaching the young in order to bring about the change in attitude and perception which is essential in dismantling the dominant consciousness.

Msgr. George Niederauer, in the most recent issue of "Church" magazine presents the "Beatitudes of the Dominant Culture":

Blessed are those who own their own homes;
Blessed are those who go to college;
Blessed are those who can write their own ticket,
are self-employed, keep getting better jobs,
promotions, and more money;
Blessed are those who live on clean, well-lighted,
safe streets;
Blessed are those who know the right people, have
reservations, make wise investments, and can
afford nice vacations;
Blessed are the winners;
Blessed are those who are charming, clever, witty,
and can handle people well;
Blessed are those who get waited on in a store,
and don't have to wait on others themselves;
Blessed are those who can demand and get respect
for who they are, and for what they say and do;
Blessed are the young, the strong, the healthy,
and especially those who are sexually
attractive to one another.
Woe to renters, the unemployed, drifters,
oddballs, the sick, the old, and people who talk
out loud to themselves on the bus — avoid them
like the plague, because losing is catching!

This is the task and the challenge of prophetic ministry in
Catholic secondary education in America.



Book Reviews

Meeting Jesus. William P. Sampson.
San Francisco: Harper San Francisco,
1991, 164pp, \$12.95.

*Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M.,
assistant professor of theology, St.
Bonaventure University.*

Walter Bruggeman remarks in the foreword to this text, "This book will not please a lot of scholars" (iv). But, he may be jumping to a hasty conclusion. Having Joseph Girzone, author of the popular text *Joshua*, give his endorsement on the top of the front cover certainly does raise suspicion with the scholarly mind. The scholarship of that text leaves a lot to be desired. William Sampson, on the other hand, has done his homework. While the text could never be classified as a systematic theological treatise, it does rest on a careful reflection on biblical passages.

The author makes clear from the start that he intends to involve himself in the task of "inventing." Sampson wants to invent the "probable past" of Jesus, a past when Jesus was confronted by choices. The Jesus found within these pages bears a certain similarity to the Jesus of Kazantzakis' *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Sampson repeatedly draws on references from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and has Jesus face the reality of everyday life, a reality marked with questions of direction, purpose, doubt and suffering.

The significance of the questions which Jesus faces in Sampson's "invention" grows in complexity as the life of Jesus unfolds. In the final chapters Jesus is confronted in a radical

way with apparent failure, the threat of personal suffering and the harsh reality of his impending death. Earlier in the work Jesus faced the question of suffering in others and struggled to determine what it was that God was asking of him.

The theme of choice runs throughout the text. Sampson drives home his fundamental thesis — "We become ourselves in our choices" (102). With these few words the reader is powerfully reminded of the terrible responsibility of our human freedom. The author, in a very imaginative way, helps one to see the consequence of fully authenticated human freedom as the reality of Jesus. The point is one heard before, and one found in some of the best theological treatises. Sampson's rendition of this point makes it terribly personal.

Again one is reminded of the author's basic objective. He calls the reader to enter vividly into each biblical recreation, each moment when Jesus is confronted with a choice. Sampson intends that the reader become a participant in the event. To accomplish this task each chapter concludes with a "Prayer Exercise." Here he provides both means and material to help the reader become fully engaged with the choices every human must face in life. The reader who wants to be so engaged will be.

Certainly the work is spiritual reflection and not academic speculation. However, such reflection is not unknown to the best of scholars. In fact, such reflection may be precisely what constitutes some as the best. St. Bonaventure

comes to mind in this vein. He too engaged in "invention" with his spiritual treatise *The Tree of Life*. His goal was like that of Sampson, to have the reader be drawn into an event from the life of Jesus as an active participant. John Wesley attempted the same in his popular preaching.

Meeting Jesus with its twenty-four chapters can work well for daily spiritual reading over the course of a month or as a guide for a private retreat. Facing choices and remembering that we become what we choose addresses people in every moment and in all walks of life.

Natural Prayer, Encountering God in Nature. By Wayne Simsic. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991. Pp. vii-101. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by John Frambes, O.F.M., a long-time outdoorsman, alumnus of the Outward Bound Hurricane Island Program and lecturer at Siena College in Adirondack New York and Americana. John is also campus minister at Siena College.

"The silence of the woods forces you to make a decision which the tensions and artificialities of society may help you evade for ever. Do you want to be yourself or don't you?" This quote from Merton's *Contemplation in a World of Action* by Wayne Simsic in his chapter "Listening to Silence" is an indication that his book *Natural Prayer* is serious about the challenge nature places before those who are not afraid. Most people have places which are holy to them, where they

go to pray. For those of us who relish encountering God in nature, Simsic's book provides insight into what happens to us when we leave behind the protective and insulating shells of brick or glass or artificial noise.

Simsic weaves the thoughts of numerous writers, such as Dillard, Rilke, Heidigger, Pieper and classics from the East and Native American sources throughout his pages. In places his own words are poetry. Through all, one finds a deeply Christian spirituality. Irenaeus' theory of the recapitulation of all things in Christ and the Christocentric spirituality of St. Francis are strong themes providing the foundation of Simsic's search for God in nature.

The beauty of nature, its tranquility and tumult, its fecundity and its violence, may leave us awestruck and inwardly pleased at the primal sense of awe that we feel, but Simsic realizes that the romance of nature alone does not satisfy someone on the road to spiritual maturity. The love of nature draws us to human love as we perceive the intricate relationship of all creatures and are led to compassion. Likewise, awe and reverence for creation necessarily draw us near to God. Our experience in nature, however refreshing and magnetic, does not hold us separate from human society, but returns us with a mission. God's love experienced in nature prompts us to love him, to believe, and to commit ourselves to making incarnate in our own lives the divine love evident in Creation. We are converted to "participate in God's creativity" and compassion.

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