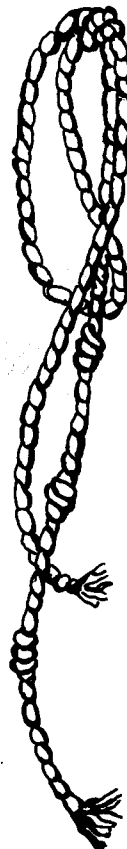


MARCH, 1992

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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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

1st Celano, First Life of Francis

2nd Celano, Second Life of Francis

Celano, Treatise on Miracles

Legend of Saint Clare

Process of Saint Clare

St. Clare's Flowers of St. Francis

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

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

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

How the Friars Held Their Chapter of Pentecost in Faraway California

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. Shortly after the feast of Pentecost 1991, about 150 ministers, servants and delegates of the Fraternity of the entire world arrived on the shores of California, on the Pacific Ocean, to hold a Chapter in accordance with the prescriptions of their Father and Brother Francis. They chose the city which bears the name of Saint Diego of Alcalá (1400-1463). This is where the first missionaries of the Fraternity, led by Junipero Serra, had begun the evangelization of this region and of its inhabitants. The friars, faithful to their origins, but also open to the signs of the times, full of gratitude and with a pure heart, wished to reflect on the 500 years of evangelization in the two Americas and themselves to begin a new stage in the propagation of the Gospel in all cultures. After having listened in the first week to various reports, and after having recounted to one another the signs of the growth of the kingdom of peace and justice, but also of the thorns and the thistles (Gen 3:18) of this so hard kingdom of earth (Mt 13), they were all worn out and sought, after the example of their Father and Brother, consolation and inspiration from simple and exotic beings in the Balboa Park Zoo and in the famous "Sea World" of San Diego's Mission Bay. Some admired the intelligence of the dolphins and the docility of the whales, which move forward with extreme rapidity and in this are also an example for the ongoing formation of the friars. Others, especially those who are concerned with finance and new forms of fund-raising, lingered before the kangaroos who can make great leaps with their pockets

Fr. Hermann Schalück, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, gives us in his inimitable style his reflections on the General Chapter at which he was elected to office. Readers of The CORD have continued to express appreciation for the depth of franciscan insight reflected in his writing. We thank Fr. Hermann for taking time out from his numerous responsibilities to share his experiences with us.

empty, or else they "contemplated" the many-coloured birds of heaven, who do not sow but reap just the same (Mt 6:26). Still others stopped fraternally by the lions, for, according to the word of our Brother Francis (2 Cel 194), the brothers who draw their knowledge and their missionary vocation from poverty and the contemplation of the divine mysteries, are comparable to a "raging lion attacking everything with ardour." And did not the Lord Pope himself, in his letter to the Chapter, solemnly reaffirm the bond between poverty, contemplation, applied study and mission? Others again strolled by some simple doves and cunning serpents (Mt 10:16), and by the falcons who once wakened Brother Francis to invite him to profound prayer (2 Cel 168).

After these visits, all the brothers returned invigorated and filled with new ideas to their cells, to their coetus groups and to the "Aula Magna" which the Lord Bishop of the place had put at their disposal.

2. The day of the feast of Saint Anthony, under the presidency of a Cardinal of the Roman Church, a new minister and servant of the whole Fraternity was elected. The lot fell on a brother who until then had been at the Curia of the brothers in Rome as a Transalpine, but had also visited many times the surrounding areas. He was so astonished and disconcerted that he asked in all confidence to be reassured and counselled by the Lord Cardinal, to know what all this signified. The latter, full of goodness, took him by the hand and spoke to him this word of Oriental wisdom, "Every long and difficult journey begins with a first small step", and the words of Scripture, "The Spirit of the Lord comes to the aid of man's weakness" (Rom 8:26), "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves" (Heb 12:6), and much will be forgiven to those who give proof of much love. Upon this, the brother minister, full of confidence, took the oath of loyalty and hope, and promised to love everyone and to obey all the brothers. He also abandoned the name Transalpinus and took henceforth the name "Hermannus Universalis". He immediately named a private secretary by the name of Arminius Romanus, who began that same day to take notes.

3. After that, the assembled brothers continued the "camino real" of their own evangelization in the Pentecost Chapter, following in the footsteps of the great exemplary figures of centuries past. They decided upon a plan for the next six years, following which they would bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, under old and new forms, into the deserts and into the towns, into the centres and into the peripheries, even to the frontiers of the visible Church, for the building of the kingdom of a new order in peace, justice and respect for all created things and for all living beings. They recognized to what an extent the example of Diego was for them precious and timely, a simple friar minor, a superior, a missionary, a preacher and

a lay brother, who with great modesty and competence lived and preached the Gospel, not only in Spain and in the Canary Islands, but also in Rome at a time when the plague was ravaging there. In their very special loyalty towards the Holy See, they solemnly promised to reorganize their formation and their studies, in the spirit of the Lord Pope and of his paternal letter, and even to draw up a "ratio studiorum." In this theology would have a choice place as a "scientia practica et sapientialis," as a service of the poor and of their liberation, as a "speculatio pauperis in deserto" — just as the Doctor Seraphicus had already said in his "Itinerarium mentis in Deum." The brothers recognized the great value of music for the following of Christ and the formation of all the brothers and sisters of Saint Francis: a question not of training soloists so much as members of a world orchestra, who listen to one another, and who each in his own way and in obedience to a "conductor" makes his own contribution to the harmony of the whole. Did not a most famous Swiss theologian write that truth is like a symphony (Hans Urs Von Balthasar)? And are not man's singing and playing before God, as someone else said, "man's smile before God" (Joh. Seb. Bach)? Will not the Fraternity have need in the future of many more musicians, dancers, storytellers and singers to praise the Lord and to live and to spread his Gospel under new forms?

4. Towards the end of the Pentecost Chapter the minister of the whole Fraternity went on with two other brothers to spend 40 hours in the Nevada desert, to pray there and to encourage the brothers and sisters who there bear witness in favour of a culture of life and peace, and against a culture of war and modern arms. The brothers Ludovicus Vitalis and Alanus Gallicus, as well as certain sisters, informed them about this form of Franciscan evangelization. A certain sister Rosemary was astonished that the general and universal minister made his first pilgrimage to the desert and its surroundings and not to some sanctuary of renown in Europe. And at the common celebration of the Word and of the Bread, a brother of the Quaker community wished the visitor the peace of contemplation and even of sleep in his service in Rome and beyond, like that of Jesus in the midst of the storm on the lake (Mk 4).

5. After their return to San Diego, the brothers saw a happy ending to the Pentecost Chapter. The minister exhorted them all to set out on their homeward way with a new heart and a new spirit (Ez 11), and with eyes purified, in the certainty that a Fraternity which does not serve others does not serve any purpose, and that a people without vision is on the way to ruin (Pr 29:18). Finally he sent forth his brothers into their provinces and their fraternities, and he himself returned with his secretary to the holy and eternal city of Rome, to the curia of the friars minor.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Holy Companions

*Who calls forth my very best?
To whom do I give example?*

WAYNE HELLMANN, OFM CONV.

In choosing a holy way of life, we must choose to surround ourselves with companions who are holy! We need companions willing to join us on the spiritual journey. We cannot climb the mountain alone. To offer and receive nurturance for a holy life, which is heroic in Gospel virtue, is the nature of the bonding we realize in our profession. There can be no other authentic motive for joining the Order, nor can there be any other motive for remaining within it.

This feast of All Saints of the Order not only reminds us that we have successful companions, but, as today's feast dramatically demonstrates, we are also stimulated to bring that same success into our Franciscan lives today. The greater our knowledge and appreciation is of our heritage and examples of holiness within the Order, the greater is our possibility to realize the same in our own generation. This is, as any feast, celebrated to assist us in our self-understanding and to aid us in the clarification of our goals.

This feast applies for us, in a concrete way, the Catholic understanding of the "communio sanctorum" which is articulated in our ancient creed. Holiness is a shared reality! The very Spirit of the Lord, which makes us holy, is that unique divine "communio" of persons. It is this divine communion of persons which reveals that our God is a God of continuous

Fr. Wayne is Minister Provincial of the Conventual Franciscan Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation. He holds a doctorate from the University of Munich (Germany) and has taught at St. Louis University and at the Franciscan Institute. This article was originally a letter he wrote to his franciscan brothers. We are very grateful for the opportunity to share it with our readers.

diffusion of shared and connected love. In other words, without the grace of shared fellowship with the holy men and women of our Franciscan life and heritage, we do not have a chance to know the God who has called us to live within that divine communion of holy persons.

Those great men and women, who were instruments for passing on to us the possibility of our Franciscan vocation, are not just our past. They are our future! It is only with them, and through them, that our vocation will one day be complete. With these saintly brothers and sisters, we will enjoy the presence of God who, in the eternal vision, called them and calls us to share within the Church the same vocation and way of life.

Likewise, and in the same way, we are the future of those who will be called after us. Thus, in our feast today, we celebrate our past in communion with those who have gone before us; we celebrate our present with those who support us in virtue and holiness now, and our future with those who will yet follow us in our way of life. In God's own good time, all will be brought together into the fullness of the eternal "now". In today's feast, we already begin to taste the fullness of that joy!

Holy Things

*What "things" do I treasure?
Why?*

The notion, "communio sanctorum", has a depth of meaning. It can refer not only to the "communion of the saints", but it can also express our "partaking in holy things." If we are to share in holiness, we must cultivate "holy things." These have been given to us and these connect us to the holiness of others — past, present and future. As Christians we share the "holy Word", and, particularly, as Catholics, we share "the holy cup" at the "holy table."

As Catholic Christians, bonded in communion with the saints, we live and we are rooted in a shared experience of "holy things" and "holy practices". We are the keepers of the holy symbols! This fosters our openness to the transcendent and to a deep mystical communion with God and with each other, in a manner which is far beyond the immediacy of the visible order.

From the women and men whose feast we celebrate today, we receive, in our own life as Franciscans, a beautiful bounty of "holy things." Are we not to accept and integrate them and pass them on to those who will

follow us? Were we not to do so, it would be a grave and sinful injustice, especially, toward those whom the Lord may call to come after us.

The Rule

What is it?

Does it form my conscience?

As friars, our primary "holy thing" is the *Rule*, approved by Pope Honorius III, on this very day. It is our sacred text! It is a "holy thing!" It has been publicly read, reflected and commented upon, discussed and lived, by friars across the ages. Especially, on this feast, as we renew our profession, the Rule unites us and draws us ever deeper into a practical and a mystical communion.

Our increase in "communion of holiness" demands the cultivation of our own "holy things." I am not so naive as to maintain that an individual or specific thing can make us holy. Quite frankly, the interior life we are committed to share cannot be cultivated unless we express, concretely, in a real human experience and in a real conscious discipline, our shared and sacred symbols. Otherwise, we are caught up in the superficial, and we spin our wheels in an empty abyss.

Dress

What does it speak?

Style or symbol? Status or simplicity?

Our Franciscan habit is a "holy thing!" In the human experience, dress is a primal symbol. Dress speaks more about our attitude toward others with whom we live and work than it does about what we think of ourselves. The concrete practice concerning when and where we wear the habit can very well be determined by local circumstances, but the habit does visibly connect us with our shared heritage, life, and mission.

Our province chapter's desire to request the grey color for the habit indicates our appreciation of the habit's significance. The wearing of it is not to be thoughtlessly or conveniently disregarded. Rather, the discipline of this "holy practice" of wearing the habit is to be consciously cultivated among us.

Living and celebrating our communion with the saints and with each other does not come easy! It takes deliberate effort to overcome the many negative and powerful influences and the determined materialistic values of our contemporary Western culture. Our sacred communion with each other and with the saints demands deliberate, constant, and conscious cultivation of our own "holy things" — both as Catholic Christians and as Franciscans.

What we extend to and share with each other is precisely what invites new brothers into communion of heart and mind.

Effort

How do I spend my energy?

To what is it directed?

If we so choose, we can make the necessary efforts. We can overcome the spiritual sluggishness and the unsteady sense of purpose that so often plagues our province and custodies. We can free ourselves from the hollow excuse: "...the demands of ministry prevent me from developing more deeply and more consistently an appreciation of my Franciscan life and vocation."

The grace of this Feast of All Saints of the Order offers us motivation and vision! One concrete way to move forward, in effort toward the cultivation of a deep communion of life in the shared and practical experience of "holy things," is to give conscious, concrete, and deliberate efforts to reaching out and sharing our life with new brothers. Vocation efforts are effective to the extent that these efforts reflect a renewed appreciation of our own life and heritage.

Vocation efforts must be efforts which are experienced in a shared communion of brothers — holy and committed to "live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hospitality offered to potential new brothers is only the overflow of our hospitality to one another! What we extend to and share with each other is precisely what invites new brothers into communion of heart and mind. This, either way, is not always convenient.

Personal Prayer

From whence is it drawn?

How is it shared?

Within the Order, we have received a tradition of devotional prayer. This, too, is a "holy thing." This form of prayer is obviously to be integrated around the centrality of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Hours, but, graciously, this rich tradition of prayer also forms a part of who we are in our history and heritage.

One feature of Franciscan devotional prayer acknowledges that Mary is central to our communion with the saints. Marian prayer can foster our affective and contemplative prayer stance. In our Province, dedicated to Mary, Consoler of the Afflicted, the practice of singing the "Ultima" is dear to many of us. Within the Order, the scriptural prayer of Mary's choice for God, the *Angelus*, has been promoted and prayed by the friars for generations. Within the context of the Liturgy of the Hours, we Franciscans have promoted the Marian antiphons at the conclusion of Evening Song.

St. Francis simply could not see that a choice to follow Christ could be made or lived apart from the choice of the first Christian disciple, Mary, the Gospel woman. In communion with her, we find the deepest root of our own intuitive desire for the transcendent. With her, we learn what it is to be open to God and to ponder holy things in our own heart. With her, we find, thereby, the deepest meaning of our communion with the saints. She is central to the very feast we celebrate today! With her we yearn to conceive and bear the Word of God!

Chapters

Are they opportunity for conversion?

What witness do they give?

In an area of practical fraternal life, our chapters are "holy things." Thus, we are to surround them with celebration and with holy ritual. Chapters are the extraordinary and symbolic expression of our ordinary communion of life. The celebration of this feast, and all Franciscan feasts, particularly, Advent and Christmas, are "holy things." Our Constitutions are a "holy" and visionary expression of our own contemporary generation of friars. They state the current understanding of our life. The Constitutions express a marvelous communion of hearts and minds, flowing from recent General Chapters.

To share our life with potential new saints for the Order, invites us to radical inconvenience. It is an inconvenience which should be the sweet burden of each and every local community, because the responsibility for fostering vocations rests not alone on the individual friar but on each community as community. Only communion among ourselves prophetically cultivates a new and radical "communio sanctorum!" Our work to foster communion among "holy persons" and to express this in "holy things," brings us into the future joy of new brothers.

To those friars who have labored with me to the end of this letter, I extend "thanks!" It is to you that I proclaim our passion to invite and to share our life with new brothers to be an accurate indicator of our own desire and commitment to enter into the mystery of what we celebrate in today's feast.

As we renew our profession, I invite you to join me in revitalizing three important facets of our lives: communion with "holy men and women;" visible and shared expression of that communion in "holy things;" and, finally, the purpose of it all — an imaginative invitation to the future, namely, new brothers to join us in witnessing the first two. "Thy Kingdom come!"

☆ ☆ ☆

LA VERNA IN STAINED GLASS

(Tau Center Chapel, Winona, Minnesota)

If you look prone, Francis, it's really we who are,
So upside-down this end-of-century sphere.
Your head's haloed in sea-blue, amethyst,
Its tonsure neat. Grey robe, cord, cut of glass.
Knife-edged, a God-shape, in Ulysses' shroud.
Your left hand holds it off, that speeding Cloud,
Your right hand welcoming blood-bright agony.
Fixed by its human gaze, your heart-shaved face
Irradiates into an amber star
As Brother Sun gives new intensity.
This artist's mountain scene — a half-abstract
Wild dream — is valid in a stranger way
Than words your holy friar managed to say.
How many forms exist to translate fact!
Help me, O saint, translating wish to act.

Sister Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.

The Province of Saint Francis in Vietnam and the Work of Evangelization 1975-1991

GUY-MARIE NGUYEN HONG-GIAO, O.F.M.

The province has been pursuing the work of evangelization these last ten years in a new context.

Following the events of May 1975, a communist regime of the Soviet type spread throughout the entire country which, despite the efforts deployed to recover from the ruin caused by the war, remains one of the ten poorest countries in the world.

With a congregation of five million people facing a population of sixty-five million, the Christian Church, already a minority, felt even more lost in a society which was declared atheist and under a totalitarian regime. More than the diocesan clergy, the members of religious orders thus saw their means of life and action narrowed.

The province was forced to abandon charitable and scholastic endeavors and divide the friars of six communities into seventeen fraternities which were given other work. Certainly, the allotment of personnel and the disassembly of regular structures posed new problems. However, the situation comprises factors which are favorable for evangelization.

In the first place, stripped of privileges and prerogatives, the Church becomes closer to the people and becomes better understood. Like any

The author, Provincial Minister of the Friars Minor in Viet Nam, presented this official report in French to the General Chapter at San Diego in June of 1991. Readers will be inspired by the uniquely Franciscan creativity of the Vietnamese friars in responding to the Spirit-given call to evangelization.

The CORD thanks Beth Reiter, a French major at St. Bonaventure University, for her translation into English.

Christian, the Franciscan continually sees himself impelled to the purification and the deepening of his faith.

As early as the first few years, a spontaneous movement of conversion to Christianity took place. The same was happening even in the midst of the reeducation camps, for, having lived in contact with their prison-mates, a great number of whom were priests and Christians, soldiers and government officials of the old regime began to request baptism.

Actually, on the high plateaus, certain ethnic minorities converted. There are people who came to baptism thanks to their listening to the religious programs transmitted from abroad, the Vatican radio, the Manillan radio, and the radio Source of Life.

Generally speaking, eighty percent of the people profess religious beliefs, despite the official public declaration of the Marxist ideology. This is why religious policy, well-known as being restrictive and even repressive, was able to be pragmatic. It is this social and political context which marks out for us the paths of evangelization.

Paths of Evangelization

1. Entry point into the new society.

It is known that orthodox communists accept religion only as a given fact and tolerate it as an irrational need of the people. So it is the Church must not expect that the regime will help it to become integrated in the new society, but it is up to the Church itself to obtain a place which would be acceptable for the authorities if it wants to actively continue its mission there. There is an enormous temptation for a minority Church like our own to live on the fringe of society with a conscience satisfied at being a martyred Church. The Vietnamese Church did not succumb on that point but rather declared itself attached to the nation and ready to bring its sincere collaboration to the reconstruction of the country. Commitment and service are two words which are keys to the bishops' pastoral letter of July of 1976.

Fortified by this spirit and in agreement with other religious families, the Franciscans participated in different organizations and activities which were encouraged by the government wherever the opportunity was offered to us; in other words, agricultural and craft cooperatives, the Red Cross, the Association for the promotion of Education, senior citizen clubs, socialist days of work, and neighborhood meetings.

These entry points permit us to be legally present in a society which doesn't tolerate any rivalry. After one or the other initiatives made as early as the beginning of the social upheaval, we chose to establish our brother-

... the witness of life constitutes the main part of our practice of evangelization.

hoods in rural zones often neglected by the secular clergy. There especially, and everywhere in general, manual work was for a long time the privileged means by which one might share the fate of the poor, to become close to them, to insert ourselves into their way of life.

In the course of examining the entry points, it appeared that if, in principle, they do not favor religious institutions, the Communists willingly tolerate those who can be useful for the country and close to the people. It is thus that our seventeen brotherhoods took under their charge about twenty parishes, mostly in the rural zone, where the friar priests work in different ways.

2. Testimony of the life.

The language which proves to be the most understandable and always acceptable even amongst non-believers is that of charity, of humble patient service, good neighborly actions, and sharing the lot of the local community. Whatever comes from this experience, the witness of life constitutes the main part of our practice of evangelization. For there where the account of the word as the explicit proclamation of Christian doctrine is not allowed outside of the walls of the places of worship, there isn't a possible dialogue other than that of a practical daily life.

We believe that we see certain analogies between the Saracens, of whom brother Francis speaks, and the orthodox communists. The sixteenth chapter of the RNB remains current for us; we take it as a principle source of inspiration in the work of evangelization. It concerns living a Christian and Franciscan life with an open mind and heart, in every way full of humility and patience, ready to be subjected to annoyances and humiliations without ever ceasing to do that which is good. To live with and not against life.

Speaking one day of the pastoral orientation of his diocese, a Vietnamese bishop told me that he was opting for a Church of the Epiphany, which simply acts by the truth of its being and the warmth of its presence. There is something there which represents the method adopted by the province. Is this an efficacious method? It is difficult to respond in few words. In any case, it is a method which our situation seems to demand. Moreover, it is not a small matter that in these places where God is blasphemed,

fought, and denied, that there are believers who sing His praise from the bottom of their heart.

3. The service of man as an integrating part of evangelization.

In 1987, the provincial chapter voted for the program: The Franciscan announces the Gospel today in the society and Church of Vietnam. Among others, the communities, using their real possibilities as a basis, each established their project of sharing with the poor of their area. Given the meager means, the projects aim less at the improvement of the living conditions of the poor than the new awareness of the brothers concerning the problems of the people in their surroundings. Projects are only able to be very modest: to help in repairing some classrooms, to offer a bicycle to a family, a plow or a corner of a garden in the community, to open a small workshop where the young come to learn sewing, hairdressing, and the crafting of simple bamboo household implements.

For three years, since 1988, the government has been encouraging charitable activities without dropping surveillance. On our side, thanks to the aid that our brothers abroad bring to us, the human development to which we devote ourselves more actualizes the work of evangelization officially recognized and sanctioned by us. We do not make of it a simple means of pastoral and missionary work but, thanks to the efforts deployed in this field, we benefit from the part played by authorities who are billing to simplify our insertion into new zones. The summer of 1989, a new Franciscan community established itself in a new economic zone, an event which is rare for all of us religious. The process was long. First came the construction of two classrooms for children's instruction, then, in agreement with the local authorities, the clearing of about fifteen acres of land for needy families, then the authorization to build a chapel and a public meeting room; from then on, every Sunday, three friars from the community would go to various points of the region, organizing liturgical celebrations and catechetical sessions. Thus it is by the human development, combined with the pastoral and missionary work, that recently the brothers of Nhatrung returned to a village of Montagnards, forcibly abandoned since the liberation of 1975. Already a young brother who is a nurse, whose professional training was supported by the local administration, comes once a week to insure that there is medical care there; no one forbids him to speak of God to his patients.

On religious holidays, these Christians travel many kilometers on foot in order to come as early as the evening before to our parish which is the only one for this vast region. We have set up for them a shed to spend the night, dug a well of decent drinking water, and provided what is

necessary to prepare their meal. It is in this way that the ties between the brothers and the congregation become more and more profound.

Conclusion

The mission of evangelization forcibly places us on the route of kenosis, along which the practice of love and service for one's fellow man, as a Friar Minor, passes through the conversion to Christ's humanity, by forgetting the idea of self. It is by the eventual light produced by a positive meeting or not between the Vietnamese life and the Franciscan spirit that the particular context has been favorable or unfavorable for the work of evangelization.

Actually, the Vietnamese society is opening progressively but necessarily to the exterior world. If one is still unaware of how far perestroika will go, one already notes that a freer life, which will be less austere and uniform, is on the horizon. Whatever the future of the nation may be, the experience that we have acquired comprises positive lasting elements. In my opinion, a double question poses itself to the province:

- how to live in full consciousness certain evangelistic and Franciscan values the practice of which was more or less obligatory until now?
- how to seriously transmit these same values to the young vocations who haven't had these same experiences which we have lived during the past sixteen years?

This is precisely the same problem that our brother General John Vaughn reminded us of at the time of his short but precious visit which he bestowed upon us at Hochimin city during the last days of 1990.



BARGES

Day and night they float north and south,
Being pushed to their destination.
Slow, persistent speed they sail,
Such as my contemplation.

Sister Anna Rick

Two Mystics: Padraic Pearse and Francis of Assisi?

CLARE IMMACULATE MC DONNELL, O.S.F.

It is no simple task to distinguish between feelings, emotions, and moods. Magda B. Arnold has done this remarkably well, making use of accumulated psychological research and her own spiritual insights.

It was after reading her work¹ that I received from a friend returning from the grave-site of Padraic Pearse the poet's moving lyric, "The Wayfarer." I felt compelled to contrast its emotional mood with that of "The Canticle of Brother Sun" of Francis of Assisi.

"The beauty of this world hath made me sad," reflects Pearse. Why sad? I thought. To which no doubt Arnold would reply: The same sensation, the beauty of this world, can be pleasant or unpleasant for different persons. Emotions involve a double reference, both the object experienced and the self experiencing the object.

For Pearse the memory of particularly loved features of Ireland's fleeting beauty, "some green hill where shadows drifted by" or "children with bare feet playing upon the sands of some ebb'd sea" filled him with sadness and longing for the land that "will pass." The revolution in which he was engaged as commander-in-chief of the Irish forces was unsuccessful. He was arrested and executed at 3:30 a.m. on May 3, 1916. For his own-passing, Pearse offers no regret. In fact, shortly before his death, he wrote to his mother:

Sister Clare Immaculate is Assistant Professor of English at Neumann College, Aston, PA. She holds graduate degrees from both Catholic University and Penn State University. Her previous contribution to The CORD was entitled "In the Fields of Light" (December, 1989).

"I have just received holy Communion. I am happy except for the great grief of parting from you. This is the death I should have asked for if God had given me the choice of all deaths — to die a soldier's death for Ireland and for freedom."²

It surprised me at first to read the well known mystical authority, William Johnston, S.J. declare Pearse to be a false mystic. "Pearse," claims Johnston, "made the liberty of Ireland his idol. The great challenge for the mystic is to keep love unconditional and unrestricted, not conditioned or restricted by any object less than God. Christ was not born to set men free from national chains, or any chains but sin. Pearse confused patriotism with holiness."³ Because he chose in his fanatical love for Ireland to glorify blood and death, he went, I suggest, upon his way sorrowful. The mood of his lyric about fugitive beauty is one of sadness and despair.

This was not the case with Francis of Assisi. Although he too wrote in a time of crisis, in his last illness, a time of intense pain and suffering, the prevailing mood of "The Canticle" is one of joy. Transcending all negative feelings and emotions regarding his own personal loss of the beauty of this world, he exalts:

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
And all blessing,
To you alone, Most High, do they belong.

The Canticle is the product of contemplative and creative prayer by the saint of universal brotherhood. Francis exemplifies the true mystic whose life will continue to effect the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace. . . . (Galatians 5:22).

Pearse, though an idealistic poet and profoundly heroic, I concur with Johnston, has left a trail of continued violence and hatred that lived on in the civil war of 1922, the murder in the streets of Belfast and in the activities of the IRA in our own day.

THE WAYFARER⁴

The beauty of the world hath made me sad,
This beauty that will pass;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening,
Lit by a slanting sun,
Or some green hill where shadows drifted by,
Some quiet hill where mountainy man hath sown

And soon will reap, near to the gate of Heaven;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands
of some ebb'd sea, or playing on the streets
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me;
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy;
And I have gone upon my way
Sorrowful.

Padraic Pearse (1879-1916)

End notes

¹The Nature of Emotion ed. by Magda B. Arnold, Penguin, Baltimore, MD. 1968.

²See *The Wounded Stag*, originally published as *Christian Mysticism Today* by William Johnston, Harper and Row, San Francisco.

³*ibid.* 168

⁴From *The Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse* Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, introduction by P. Browne, 1917.



RETURNABLE BOTTLES

When cold air feels good,
when snow and ice hide in shadows,
the crossing of sharp words ring clearly.
Curses give voice to anger
that guard poverty's possessions.
Shards of glass gleam like snow
when moonlight beams.
A bramble of cyclone fencing,
a rose bush once well-pruned runs wild.
Cranes are at work downtown
while an emptied bottle of hope
rests on barren February ground.

Michael Barrett, OFM

The New Evangelization VII: The Challenge of Inculturation

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

The fourth Synod of Bishops, held in 1974, was devoted to evangelization. That theme is such a vast one that there was considerable difficulty in determining how best to deal with it. The then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla presented a report that helped focus the discussion. He spoke of five major areas of concern, presented by five continents:

- "indigenization," today called **inculturation**, the African challenge;
- "the great non-Christian religions," the Asian challenge;
- "liberation," the challenge of Latin America;
- "secularization," with the danger of theoretical and practical materialism, as the problem in Western Europe and North-America; and
- "atheism," the Church's problem in countries living under Communist domination.

While the question of inculturation may have seemed in 1974 to be principally an African concern, subsequent reflection on missiology has shown it to be a major concern everywhere. As Pope John Paul II now says: "A Gospel which has not permeated a culture is a Gospel not fully proclaimed."

The "new evangelization" requires a "new missiology" and a new missiology can be created best by local churches that have the freedom to develop their own proper identity. Catholic unity needs to be distinguished carefully from stifling uniformity. That this has not always been done is made

This is the seventh in a series entitled "The New Evangelization." Readers will find this article of Father Charles most informative and provocative. He currently is involved in the ministry of the Franciscan Mission Service in Silver Spring, Maryland. Previously Father Charles served as a missionary in Brazil for almost two decades and as minister provincial of Holy Name Province (New York).

strikingly clear in a statement of Mexico's Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia: "We must admit with profound sadness and almost with shame that in the entire [American] continent in all [these five centuries] there has not arisen a single indigenous church." Mexico's Bishops' Conference now looks forward to "the creation of indigenous Churches rooted in Indian culture with their own organization, and able to provide for their own needs in terms of catechists, ministers, priests and bishops." (1) Many historians believe that the last successful attempt at inculturation by Catholic missionaries was that made by Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the 9th century apostles to the Slavs.

What Is Inculturation?

Inculturation can be described as

... the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a "new creation."²

Or:

[Inculturation is] the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them.³

Inculturation is not just the transfer of faith from one culture to another; it is not a one-way process. Cultures being evangelized already have their unique values before the arrival of Christian missionaries. The entire church is enriched when all peoples have the freedom to share their native genius with the whole church, and, on the contrary, the whole church is impoverished when any culture is not given this freedom. The Church not only "gives" when she brings people the gospel; the Church also "receives" much from the native genius of those people. Since all cultures present defects and even dehumanizing elements, all cultures need the liberating and transforming energy of the gospel to become more truly human. The Church needs the contributions of all cultures to become more truly catholic.

The recent Special Synod of European Bishops (28 Nov. to 14 Dec. 1991) said: "[We seek] to inaugurate a culture more profound, more Christian and therefore more human." In G. S. (*Gaudium et Spes* [43 and 44]) the Second Vatican Council spoke not only of the services the church offers the world, but also of the many benefits the church receives from the world. Among the latter the Council specifically mentioned "the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture." Similarly, in no. 58: "The Church,

conscious of her universal mission, can enter into communion with various cultural models, to her own enrichment and theirs too." That very open and respectful approach with its emphasis on mutuality is the heart of inculturation.

By itself, the word **inculturation** could be taken to mean the transfer of faith from one culture to another, a one-way process. For this reason some missiologists, precisely to preserve the reciprocal character of mission, prefer to speak of **interculturalization**. (4)

The Basis in Tradition

The first recorded use of the word **inculturation** in a theological sense seems to be by Fr. Joseph Masson S.J., professor at Rome's Gregorian University. Shortly before the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 he wrote: "Today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is **inculturated** in a variety of forms (*"d'une façon polymorphe"*).⁵ The first assembly of the Federation of Asian Episcopal Conferences in April of 1974 spoke of "an indigenous and inculturated Church." The introduction and popularization of the term is largely due to the writings of Jesuit missiologists. The first papal use of the word "inculturation" occurs in Pope John Paul II's *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), and its use by the official magisterium since then has been frequent.⁶

If the word "inculturation" is new, one can find the idea, or at least approximations of it, from very early times. Three patristic insights, repeated by Vatican II, have special importance.

1. All cultures contain real values and much that is good. This "natural goodness" is a "preparation for the gospel" and "leads to the true God." This theme was developed by the 4th-century bishop — historian Eusebius of Caesarea, in no less than fifteen books. Said Vatican II: "Everything found among them [non-Christians] that is good and true, the Church perceives to be a preparation for the gospel, given by Him who enlightens all, that they may have life."⁷

2. St. Justin (d. 165), apologist and martyr, discovered in pagan Greek philosophy (especially in Socrates) the "seeds of the Word" that God planted in all humanity. Vatican II: "With happiness and respect let Christians discover the seeds of the Word hidden [in non-Christian religious traditions]."⁸

3. According to St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202), cultures need to be "assumed to be redeemed." Just as the Word assumed human nature without destroying it, so the gospel "takes flesh" in human cultures without destroying them. Vatican II: "In a way similar to the Incarnation, the young

churches, in a marvellous exchange, assume all the values of the nations, the inheritance of Christ."⁹

The same St. Irenaeus, in a text cited by Vatican II,¹⁰ wrote: "From the beginning the Son is present to creation, revealing the Father to all,"¹¹ and the Council, repeating the teachings of St. Leo the Great and St. John Chrysostom, makes the same claim for the Holy Spirit: "Without doubt, the Holy Spirit was already active in the world before Christ was glorified."¹² Missionaries always arrive late; God has always been there before them. As Leonardo Boff says: the first step in evangelization is for the missionary to be converted to the people, and the people are converted to Christ.

Pope Paul VI was drawing his inspiration from the ancient Catholic tradition when he wrote:

The Church respects and esteems these non-Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart. They possess an impressive patrimony of deeply religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable "seeds of the Word" and can constitute a true "preparation for the Gospel."¹³

Some Historical Notes¹⁴

Missionary inculturation presumes that the church approach cultures, and particularly the religious dimension of cultures, with great respect. The witness of church history in this regard is ambivalent.

From very early times there were sincere efforts to appreciate the real value of some pagan cultures and some examples of this have been mentioned. At the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria taught that "God is the source of all good; either directly, or indirectly as in the case of philosophy. But it may even be that philosophy was given to the Greeks directly, for it was a 'schoolmaster' to bring Hellenism to Christ, as the Law was for the Hebrews."

The approach of St. Gregory I, who sent Augustine of Canterbury and his fellow monks to evangelize pagan Anglo-Saxon England in 597 is of special interest. It illustrates an often used missionary method, "functional substitution." While Gregory expresses no awareness of the need of dialogue nor of the need to respect the consciences and religions of the pagans, he does advocate a certain tolerance. He writes to Abbot Mellitus, a fellow missionary of Augustine:

Tell Augustine not to destroy the temples of the gods, but only the idols housed therein. Tell him . . . to set up altars and place the relics

of the saints [in the pagan temples]. The people will see that their places of worship have not been destroyed, and will therefore be more inclined to renounce their error . . . and adore the true God for the places to which they come will be familiar to them.¹⁵

Since the Anglo-Saxon pagans were accustomed to offer animal sacrifices to idols (Gregory calls the idols "devils"), he instructs Augustine to institute another Solemnity, such as a day of Dedication, in which the people can kill animals for food "and give thanks to the Giver of all gifts for his bounty." In other words Gregory advises against the total suppression of pagan rituals; he wants to keep some elements, giving them a new meaning. He advocates tolerance in combatting error: "It is certainly impossible to eradicate all errors . . . at one stroke, and whoever wishes to climb to a mountain top climbs gradually step by step and not in one leap." Are there not many occasions in our evangelizing ministry today when such pastoral tolerance would be very helpful?

Centuries later, Francisco Ingoli (d. 1649), one of history's most remarkable missiologists, based himself on Pope Gregory's tolerant teaching but went far beyond it. Ingoli served as the first secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (known for short as **Propaganda**), established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. Largely due to Ingoli's influence (felt even after his death), in its early years **Propaganda** showed great broadness of vision, a genuine **catholicity** in its approach to other religions and cultures. A 1659 Instruction to Chinese missionaries reads:

Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure on the peoples, to change their manners, customs and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy or some European country to China? DO YOUR UTMOST TO ADAPT TO THEM.¹⁶

The Instruction goes on to say that even when native customs are perverse, it is better to correct them gradually, helping the people themselves to see the need for change, rather than by direct attack and verbal condemnations.

Such a view of mission has much in common with St. Francis' vision, as found especially in chapter 16 of the RegNB and also in chapter 3 of RegB.

Cultural pluralism in the Church is an obvious prerequisite for inculturation, and the development of the Eastern Catholic rites is perhaps the clearest example of diversity that does not destroy but rather affirms true unity. During the first three centuries the evangelization of the Middle East was completed: Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Armenia, Romania,

Southern Russia and in the fourth century that of Egypt and Ethiopia. In his 1964 visit to the Holy Land, Pope Paul VI spoke warmly of the traditions of the Eastern Churches. He described how the apostles left Palestine to found churches, and added:

Each nation received the good seed of their preaching according to their own mentality and their own culture. Each local church grew with its own personality, its own customs and its own personal way of celebrating the same mysteries, without this harming the unity of faith.¹⁷

In other words, the gospel was inculturated! If such pluralism was possible and even fostered in the apostolic church, it is equally possible and necessary now. In his 1969 visit to Africa, Paul VI assured the Africans:

You will be able to remain sincerely African even in your interpretation of the Christian life; you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture; you will be able to bring to the Catholic church the precious and original contribution of negritude, which she needs particularly in this historic hour.

All peoples and cultures need to be given that guarantee, and the fulfillment of that promise is surely one of the most effective ways to promote the ecumenical dialogue, as well as the dialogue with non-Christians and even non-believers.

It is gratifying to note that in the years immediately following Vatican II, some Roman dicasteries were actively promoting more pluralism in the church. Thus, a Vatican Instruction on translating liturgical texts in 1969 said: "In a really renewed liturgy we shall not be content with texts translated from another language. **New creations will be needed.**" (Emphasis added)¹⁸ Thanks largely to the perseverance of Cardinal Malula of Kinshasa, the church in Zaire has its own rite and the Holy See is considering other 'rites' for approval, from India, the Philippines and Latin America.

Less Positive Examples

We need to recognize honestly that in addition to many examples of ecclesiastical openness to cultural pluralism, history also provides examples of real shortsightedness. The tendency to confuse unity with uniformity began early, almost as soon as Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Yves Congar O.P. has written:

There existed an imperialism which tended to impose everywhere the Roman customs and rites, in a word, considering the universal church as a simple extension of the Church of Rome. We find in Pope Siricius in 385, in Innocent I in 416, the astounding affirmation that no one

can truly have the faith of Peter unless he desires the customs and rites of Peter, that is, of Rome.¹⁹

Over the centuries, for all the obvious reasons, missionaries especially have felt the need to plead against too much Roman centralization. Thus, the Capuchin martyr Blessed Agathangelus wrote from Cairo to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda:

To pass judgment on [the question of Catholics participating in the worship of the Copts] one must have full and accurate knowledge of all the circumstances. Since teachers [in Europe] have no knowledge of the practice of these regions, they cannot have that full and accurate knowledge. It seems to me then that the judgment in these matters must be left to the missionaries.²⁰

In what may come as a surprise, Pope John Paul II has claimed that too much centralization may have impeded the desirable pluralism, so necessary for inculturation:

There was perhaps a time when some put too much stress on the authority of the **magisterium** in the organic life of the faith. Vatican II has clearly shown that the understanding of Revelation develops . . . also by "the contemplation and study of believers" and "the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience" (*Dei Verbum*, 8). For their part, theologians have had their important place in the Church recognized.²²

Freedom of theological inquiry by the local church is absolutely essential for promoting inculturation, and the same would have to be said for the human sciences, whose contribution is also essential.

Tragic Arrogance

"Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the distinguished historian of religion, has noted that 'the fundamental flaw of Western civilization in its role in world history is arrogance, and . . . this has infected also the Christian church.'" ²¹ Regrettably, one of the most deplorable expressions of this arrogance is found in the bull *Dum diversas* of Pope Nicholas V, sent to the King of Portugal in 1452:

In the name of our apostolic authority, we grant you the full and entire faculty of invading, conquering, expelling and reigning over all the kingdoms . . . of the Saracens, of pagans, and of all infidels, wherever they may be found; of reducing their inhabitants to perpetual slavery, of appropriating to yourself those kingdoms and all their possessions, for your own use and that of your successors.²³

The African slave trade to Europe had been begun by the Portuguese ten years earlier. This wretched merchandizing of human beings, so

. . . only an attitude of profound respect for "the other," for those who are "different," is an absolute prerequisite for inculturation

deplorably advocated by Pope Nicholas, would last for over four hundred shameful years!

This kind of arrogance makes totally impossible anything even resembling inculturation; on the contrary the Christian west has often felt it had the right to destroy "pagan" cultures as the works of the devil, and even force people to accept conversion. The great Augustine of Hippo even used the Lord's words in the gospel ("compelle intrare") to justify forced conversions. After some hesitation, St. Bernard of Clairvaux adopted the same position some seven hundred years later. Thus, the conversion of many barbarian nations was carried out by force. Among other repressive laws, Charlemagne, for example, laid down the rule: "Any unbaptized Saxon who attempts to hide himself among his own people and refuses to accept baptism will be put to death."²⁴ It is recorded that Charlemagne put to death 4,500 Saxons in a single day. A great deal of violence accompanied the conquest of the Americas also, and many natives were forced to accept baptism. To cite only one example: the conquistador Gonzalo de Alvarado sent this word to the Mayas before attacking them:

Let it be known that our coming is beneficial . . . because we bring tidings of the true God and Christian Religion sent by the Pope — the Vicar of Jesus Christ, God and Man — and the Emperor King of Spain, so that you may become Christians peacefully of your own free will; but should you refuse the peace we offer, then the death and destruction that follow will be entirely of your own account"²⁵

A good example of "oppression theology" — a contradiction in terms! This technique of "conversion or extinction" is a shameful chapter in mission history. We cannot judge consciences, nor can we fairly evaluate the past by modern sensibilities, but it is important to recognize the horrific injustices attributable to the illusion of a western superiority complex. The poisonous fruits of this legacy, such as racism, are still in our church and society. In his address to Native Americans in Phoenix, Arizona (14 September 1987), Pope John Paul II honestly confessed: "The cultural oppression, the injustices and the destruction of your life and traditional societies need to be recognized . . . We are called to learn a lesson from

the mistakes of the past." The best way to make amends for the past mistake of cultural oppression is by promoting now its opposite — inculturation!

The Example of St. Francis

If it is true that only an attitude of profound respect for "the other," for those who are "different," is an absolute prerequisite for inculturation, the example of St. Francis will be an enormous help to us in dealing with this delicate question. Not without reason is Francis known as "the universal brother." If there was anything he did NOT want to do it was to dominate and control others. In his writings Francis uses the word "power" as an attribute that belongs to God alone; in treating of the life of the brothers he uses the word "power" only once, and that is to say that they should never have it.²⁶ He spoke with great respect even of hardened sinners.²⁷ As he dictated his Testament, he recalls how he (after his conversion) and his brothers treated others: "We were simple and subject to all."

As the church in Francis' day considered the killing of Moslems to be not homicide but "evildicide"²⁸ and granted indulgences to those who went on crusade to kill infidels, Francis adopts just the opposite approach.²⁹ The story of his visit to the Sultan in 1219 has been embellished by many legends but one thing is certain: he who showed so much respect to these "enemies of Christ and the Church" was himself greatly respected by them. It seems that Francis wrote his "Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples" after returning from Egypt, and in that letter asks the Rulers to have a signal given each evening so that all the people may give thanks and praise to "the all-powerful Lord God" — a Muslim custom he had witnessed and had come to appreciate. Similarly, Francis tells his brothers that they are sent to the whole world "to bring everyone to know that 'no one is all-powerful but God'" — a Muslim creed that Francis would have heard often while in Egypt. Openness to everything that is good and the desire not to dominate others but serve them — these are among St. Francis' chief characteristics. They are also the qualities that most effectively make inculturation a real possibility in the church and in the Franciscan family.

Reflection Questions

1. In E.N. 20 Paul VI wrote: "The rift between Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time." What evidence can you find to support that statement? How does the example of St. Francis help us to meet that challenge?

2. The apostles determined "not to lay any burden on you beyond what is strictly necessary" (Acts 15:28). What are the implications in this for the Church today?

3. In their statement "1992: Time For Remembering, Reconciling and Recommitting Ourselves as a People" (*Origins*, Jan. 9, 1992) the U.S. bishops emphasize the importance of "inculturation of Catholic faith within the Native American community . . . [to] demonstrate deep respect for native culture and spiritualities." What are the broader implications in that statement?

End notes

¹ Quoted, *The Tablet*, 20 Oct. 1990, p

² Pedro Arrupe S.J. in his "Letter to the Whole Society [of Jesus] on Inculturation" (15 April 1978)

³ Marcelo de Azevedo, "Inculturation and the Challenge of Modernity," p. 11

⁴ For example, Bishop Joseph Blomjous: "The period 1960-1980 can be considered as the main transition period from the traditional Mission to the new Mission of the future. It has been characterized as the period of 'inculturation,' though the better term would be 'interculturalization' in order to express that the process of inculturation must be lived in partnership and mutuality." Cf. Aylward Shorter in his "Towards a Theology of Inculturation" (*Orbis*) p. 13

⁵ *ibid.* p. 10

⁶ Cf. Nicholas Standaert, "L'histoire d'un neologisme. Le Terme 'inculturation' dans les documents romains" en *NRT*, 110 (1988), 555-570

⁷ *Lumen Gentium* (L.G.) 22

⁸ *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (A.G.) 11

⁹ AG 22 and LG 22

¹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* 57, n.5

¹¹ *Adv. Haer.* (Cf. Office of Readings, Wednesday of first week in Ordinary Time)

¹² AG 4

¹³ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 53

¹⁴ "Inculturation" in the Scriptures is obviously of the greatest importance but is beyond the limits of this brief study. For information on this cf. "The Biblical Foundations For Mission" by Donald Senior C.P. and Carroll Stuhlmüller C.P. (*Orbis*), especially the references in the index to "acculturation" (sic) and indigenization. Also Shorter, *op. cit.* 104-134. In "Earthing the Gospel" (*Orbis*) Gerald Arbuckle S.M. points to Jesus' Last Supper as "a perfect example of inculturation" (p. 10). Of special importance for inculturation is the apostolic decision "not to lay any burden on you [gentiles] beyond what is strictly necessary" (Acts 15:28).

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 142

¹⁶ "Adaptation" falls far short of inculturation but is a move in that direction. Stephen Neill in his "History of Christian Missions" (p. 109f) provides an interesting

example of early Franciscan adaptation: "The Mongols were nomads; if they were to be evangelized, the missionaries must also adopt the nomad way of life. About the year 1335 we have word of small groups of Franciscans who wore Mongol dress, followed the Mongol 'hordes', and carried their portable altars and vessels on wagons very much like those of the pastoral people to whom they ministered. It was said that those who worked through these 'mobile convents' were far more successful than others in winning converts."

¹⁷Address in St. Anne's Church, Jerusalem, 4 January 1964.

¹⁸*Notitiae*, 1969, p. 12

¹⁹*East Asian Review*, 1981, p. 310

²⁰Office of Readings, 7 August.

²¹*African Ecclesiastical Review*, October 1983, p. 317.

²²*Commonweal*, 11 January 1991, p. 21

²³Cf. "A Handbook on Inculturation" (Paulist Press) by Peter Schineller S.J. p. 34

²⁴"Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae". Cf. Neill, *op. cit.* p. 69

²⁵Cf. "The New Internationalist" Dec. 1991, p. 6

²⁶Cf. *RegNg* V,9

²⁷Cf. L3S 58 and *Anonymous of Perugia* 38.

²⁸St. Bernard of Clairvaux in his *Sermo ad Milites Templi*

²⁹Cf. *RegNB* XVI and *RegB* III, 10f



FIRST FLIGHT

Birdwing flashes, fluttering overhead.
He lands softly and settles on the branch.
Flute notes he makes within the maple grove,
Hazy with greenness and mist.
Light as a dewdrop he shakes his head,
Fluffs up downy breast and sits awhile to rest.
Then tightening like a spring,
Uncertain courage pushed within,
He explodes into the air to try again.

Kathleen Collins

JOB'S LAMENT

Roots of broom I eat in darkened caves,
prepared on smoking brush
salvaged from the desert floor
before the rains came,
and the wolves.
My cloak,
spun with threads that have no strength,
offers little warmth from bitter winds
that howl in my soul.
I am cold to the bone.
I have been thrown out
into the night to wander
with dogs as my companions.
Tears wash my aging face;
sorrow spills upon my grief.
My bent steps are tortured by injustice.
I have been forced to take up lodging
with the poor;
eating old bread, dark and stale,
choking on the words I used to chew,
no longer asking questions,
waiting only for God's mercy.

Sister Rosemary Stets, OSF

The Third Order Regular of St. Francis and the "Irish Connection".

SERAPHIN CONLEY, T.O.R.

This past year, I had the opportunity to visit the historic Friary of "San Isidoro" here in Rome, the site of the Irish College established by the famous Luke Wadding, OFM for the education of young friars from his country during the long period of religious persecution there. In the Refectory is an impressive set of drawings of the ruins of some of the ancient houses of the Friars Minor in Ireland. I thought it would be nice to have a similar drawing of the ruins of a house of the Irish Friars or Sisters of the Third Order Regular for an honored place in our Generalate at the Convent of Sts. Cosmas & Damian. In the process of searching for my ancient and picturesque ruin, I discovered a number of interesting things.

First of all, that in the fifteenth century there was a rapid expansion of the TOR Friars in Ireland similar to the remarkable response to the Order in Italy and in Spain. In that century, during which it seems there were no fraternities of the TOR in England and only two in Scotland, some forty friaries would be founded in Ireland. The Order took root in Connaught and spread most successfully in the western part of Ireland beyond the Pale where the native Irish were still dominant. Obviously, there was something about the Rule of the Franciscan Order of Penance which was attractive to the Irish spirit and a flexibility which enabled the friars to respond to a need in the local Church and culture.

Fr. Seraphin Conley, TOR, writes from Sts. Cosmas and Damian friary in Rome where besides being local superior he serves as General Definitor of the Third Order Regular of Penance. Previously he was engaged in the ministry of formation. He is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province (Washington, D.C.).

Another interesting and curious detail, given the numerous congregations of Tertiary Sisters, is that there seems to have been either no communities or only two communities of women following the TOR Rule during the same period. In light of this, one of the historians wondered why certain papal letters to Ireland were addressed to the Brothers . . . and Sisters . . . of the Third Order Regular of Penance! Most probably the solution to this not very great mystery is that since the Rule has always been "The Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance", any papal document granting a privilege or referring to the entire Third Order Regular would use this formula.

The Irish Congregation of the Franciscan Third Order Regular was made up of both clerics and non-clerical members. It is known that a number of secular vicars and canons had resigned their offices and benefices to become friars. Under their influence, the religious strove to live a life of penance and self-sacrifice in community while cooperating in the pastoral work of the neighboring parishes. However, the special work of the TORs in Ireland was teaching. Each monastery was to a greater or lesser extent a center of learning and had its own "free school" for boys. As teachers in 15th century Ireland, their cultural and teaching interests would not have centered so much around the classics of Greece and Rome as around the native learning — the grammar, the poetry and songs of Gaelic Ireland and the sagas of its important heroes. In an important time in Irish history, the Third Order Regular Franciscans as teachers preserved the native culture, as priests they provided pastoral assistance to the faithful in their districts and as sons of St. Francis their loyalty and obedience to Rome was unshakable.

The Reformation was eventually to wipe out the TOR in Ireland. However, it took a long time before English law could effectively reach into the rural areas to definitively suppress their Convents. The Friars would come back to places several times after their expulsion but probably by 1635 the last of the TOR Friars had died. Over the following centuries even the memory of their connection with certain ruins of churches or friaries was lost to the local people! Of the 47 Third Order Regular foundations, there are remains of 21 of them. The only Convent to be fully preserved is that of Rosserk Friary founded sometime before 1441. It is built of cut stone work of the highest quality and beautifully situated on Killala Bay at Rosserk, County Mayo.

There is a famous monastery with the confident motto: "If cut down, it will sprout anew". That could very fittingly be a description of the Third Order Regular in so many countries. In Ireland, it did "sprout anew" especially in the Congregation of Franciscan Brothers of the Third Order

Regular with their Motherhouse at "Mountbellew" in the Diocese of Tuam. In the very best TOR tradition it was rooted in the Local Church and in service to the people. The fraternity began with two brothers dedicated to teaching children their catechism and their language. More young men joined them and they developed three types of schools: Sunday Schools for those young men working in the mills during the week; Evening Schools where the brothers handed on their skills as tradesmen; and the Day Schools or the regular grammar school for boys. The Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. McHale was an enthusiastic supporter of the Brothers and saw in them a revival of the monastic system of education on which he would base his Catholic school system. In modern times, the TOR Brothers still remain faithful to their service to the local Church and people, especially by means of their Agricultural College at Mountbellew. The emphasis is on the best methods of scientific farming to get the most out of the type of land in their area and allied subjects such as Marketing, Development of new products. With this type of training more and more young people are able to stay on the land and avoid the need to emigrate.

The Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn have their roots in this Franciscan Congregation as do the two American Provinces of my own Third Order Regular. Mountbellew might be called the "Irish Connection". So, perhaps, it might be more fitting if there were two drawings to have a place of honor here at Ss. Cosma e Damiano: Rosserk Friary for the ancient Congregation of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Mountbellew Monastery for the modern brothers who carry on its great tradition.

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