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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

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: 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

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

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

Guest Editorial

Francis of Assisi and the Use of Titles: A Reflection on the Canticle of the Creatures

FATHER GABRIEL B. COSTA

More than seven and a half centuries have passed since the *Canticle* appeared. Much has been written about this poem-prayer. Truly, it remains a classic; inspired by the Author of all Art written by the Poverello himself.

One point of interest is the consistent and constant use of titles: "Brother" Sun, "Sister" Moon, etc. And while courtesy has always been a part of Francis, indeed even before his "conversion", one gets the feeling that Francis was an informal individual who enjoyed intimacy and never stood on ceremony. A question that arises is: were these titles intentional or were they employed because of the way they looked or sounded?

My own feeling is that Francis was not "just being courteous" with these titles; they were neither randomly chosen nor accidentally used. There are just too many other stories, miracles, and legends which portray Francis addressing all Creation (human and otherwise) with titles. For example, when facing "eye surgery" in his later years, he asks Brother Fire to be gentle with him. No, Francis was too convinced, too aware, of a universal brotherhood and sisterhood and that all Creation, made by The Father, had been redeemed by Christ.

It was how he lived. Saint Francis gave *quality* time; Saint Francis exercised *saintly* compassion; Saint Francis preached *proper* respect. For

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him to address any part of creation by other than its proper title would have been, in a broad sense, a sin. Somehow, that would have gone against his grain, counter to his mission of radical love. And although, in the greater scheme of things, this would not upset most people, for one like Francis it was important. Possibly (probably?) an important factor in the making of a saint.

Perhaps Francis used titles as a reminder: both for himself and others. A reminder of the dignity of all peoples and things; of each and every fiber of creation. Words of respect to and for all people; signs of each person's dignity. For example, the titles of "Brother" and "Sister" recalling the vows of those consecrated to Religious Life; the title of "Father" for a priest as a reminder of his ordination; appropriate titles to all in their respective walks of life.

And "Little Brother Francis" was certainly not shy about identifying himself as a friar; that is, when he was not referring to his body as "Brother Ass".

Francis believed in equality but not sameness; he used differentiation without practicing discrimination. He was not afraid to call Brother Sun, . . . well, Brother Sun!, because Sister Moon might be offended. He used titles to acknowledge a person and his/her calling in life, just as he labeled the rest of the universe as he saw fit. For Francis, titles did not divinize anybody or anything; it was just his way to christianize all.

Maybe the use of titles can assist us in our time. It seems that lawyers, teachers, nuns, priests (you name it — any other vocation and/or career) seem to lack the respect they once had. Maybe the "specialness" of the idea of Call has not been emphasized enough. In the striving for a comfortable informality, could it be that familiarity has bred a certain unconscious contempt?

In light of the above one does wonder if indeed the use of titles has gone away? If so, then is it possible that with the titles, out went respect also, albeit unintentionally? For the past few years priests and members of Religious Orders have pointed out that there is a "shortage of vocations". Furthermore, we are all aware of the tremendous difficulties faced by those called to the married life; divorce rates, etc. (With regard to this, Francis would certainly agree that although used in different ways, the titles of "husband", "wife", "mother" and "father" are just as crucial as the other titles above for they, too, serve as excellent reminders.)

Titles are important, maybe even essential, for Francis. And while I don't believe Francis would say that the use of titles is in any way a sufficient remedy for "vocation crises", I believe he might say that the proper use of titles could assist all concerned in putting callings and lifestyles in perspective.

Sort of a gentle reminder that God has made us. And called us to special things.

A Way Towards Peace

GIANMARIA POLIDORO, O.F.M.

We all commonly think that we know what "peace" is, and consequently we think that we know what we're talking about when we talk about peace. Very few people realize that one can speak about peace with semantic horizons so different as to lead to a fundamental misunderstanding.

In fact peace is not a concept with fixed boundaries because it is a value which various peoples and cultures have always felt, proposed and sought after with a large variety of meanings and delimitations. The very words used in the various languages to indicate that which we call peace show very different cultural and conceptual backgrounds. For example, we have the Hebrew "shalom" which fundamentally expresses a general idea of integrity and completion; or the Greek "eirene" which probably has to do with the idea of a joyous space of time between one war and the next; or the Roman "pax" which underlines the dimension of a pact signed between two parties.

I believe that this brief initial punctualization is enough to make us see which path we need to follow to lead us to speak about that value which today we call "peace".

Eberhard Jungel, in his precious writing "The Essence of Peace", leads us to discover the weight of the value of peace, through enlightening research on the use of the term so as to be able to understand, as fully as possible, just what common people or the learned world mean by peace.

Thus we find ourselves dealing with a word and a concept in full evolution and in a dynamic context, and for this reason we are solicited on one side to pour some light on the meaning of the term itself, while

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on the other to help increase the potentiality of the concept with study, reflection, suggestions and practices which history continuously offers us.

It is for this reason that this talk is meant to provide a basis and an opening towards more ample horizons.

Without a doubt, in the short space of a conference I cannot illustrate and clarify in a complete way the progress which the concept of peace has made down the course of the centuries. But I can say one thing which practically sums up the entire progress of this concept of peace: in our common western culture to which I refer, war and peace are not antithetical terms as maybe all of us believe. Only apparently are they antithetical terms. In reality, they are consequential. In our culture (with the exception of a current which I indicate as a minority) peace has always been lived as a fruit of war, as the conclusion of a war, and not as an autonomous, primordial reality.

Studying cultural anthropology and history, we learn that for some people peace is the result of the annihilation of the enemy; for others (as in ancient Egypt) peace is the victory of cosmos over chaos by means of the Pharaon-god who with a war forces the enemy (chaos) to become part of Egyptian order (cosmos) which he imposes and defends. Then we have the example of the Roman pax (directed under the law of Rome), and so on until we arrive to the present day with an "American pax" which, with other forms and appearances, imitates the Roman pax. It's a Roman pax year 2,000 A.D.

Nevertheless, in the progress of our civilization, thanks to Christian revelation, we are learning, in concrete day to day life, to realize and live a peace which is not the consequence of a war, but is an inborn, primitive value. In this discovery, the study on violence and non-violence can help us.

So we can affirm that there are, on the whole, two conceptions of peace:

- 1) The peace which can be obtained only through violence;
- 2) Peace recognized as fruit of the civilization of peace. They are two points of view, two alternative roads which can be traversed.

The road to peace by means of violence, I think we already know well enough.

The road to peace as recognition of an ancient state of nature, reconquered after the Redemption and possible, though not perfectly, only after a tiring journey, we need to get to know better.

Unfortunately, the lack of serious study and application of this second road forces us to speak of it in only a general way, as with something of

which we've only taken a quick glimpse and which we don't yet know. For example, we do not yet know how to live concretely the non-violent attitude, and for this reason the choice of non-violence is normally considered a faded dream or as utopia.

Today it would seem that there exists no alternative to violence. The best we can do as far as non-violence goes in our world is a "peace" imposed by the United Nations by means of international military contingents. It would seem like a good start, until we realize just how much the UN depends on the economical-political powers. The fact that the UN has begun to have some success only after the fall of the Communist empire helps us understand the truth of what I say.

But this is not peace.

A true peace maker is a person who wants to overcome the concepts expressed before (that is, peace obtainable only through violence; a peace which derives from fear and not from love). These persons I call true peace-makers. They are persons who believe in peace as a positive, primary concept, not derived from the concept of war. The peace-maker totally disagrees with the fifty-third fragment of Heraclitus: "Polemos (war) is father and king of all things; some he reveals as gods, others as men; these as slaves, those as free men."

In these days we must work, and we are working, so that a concept of peace different from the Heraclitan one may emerge. We believe that peace was the initial condition of Creation and we want to work on this basis. We affirm that "in principio erat pax." We refuse to assert that "in principio erat bellum."

We've already seen how the most commonly accepted tradition begins with the ideological conviction that war was the beginning of the composition of human reality. The mythologies at the foundations of a good part of our civilization speak of a cosmogony which is fruit of a war between the gods. Only the tendency of a small minority, as far as I know, has a contrary conviction. We can point out some tribal societies with convictions so non-violent as to consider mean and unworthy whoever tried to gain power by means of violence. We can think of Hesiod who in his "Works and Days" speaks of peace and justice as a gift of the gods to man. But, as I said, it's but a minority part of our tradition. However, a totally positive idea of the subject of peace we can find in the Biblical concept of "shalom", found in the prophets (especially the post-exile ones) which leads to the Christian message in which peace is the beginning and final aim of the way.

Allow me to quote what I tried to sum up in a writing of mine ("And peace I say to you", 1991) regarding the Christian message of peace, which is, I believe, the only message which contains a total vision of peace.

Christianity has no theory on war. It speaks of war only in an occasional and referential way. War doesn't enter into the evangelical horizon, because the Gospel has peace as its horizon. Peace, on the positive side, is not the contrary to an armed conflict. The horizon of peace to which the Christian message refers is the Kingdom, in contrast with sin and condemnation; it is the brother in comparison with the inimicus (enemy). It is, in practice, the cancellation at its very roots of the structure of enmity. The homo inimicus, in fact, is the devil (Mat. 13:25), father of lies (John 8:44), he who refuses the light of God.

Christ came to remove this devil of enmity: "He is our peace, who has made of the two one single people, breaking down the wall of separation which was in between, that is, the hostility. . .to reconcile both with God in one body, through the cross, destroying in himself the hostility" (Eph. 2:14-16). "For in him (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20).

For this reason the person who is truly mature, the person of the beatitudes who works for peace, is called son of God (Mat. 5:9).

And so the evangelical proposal offers a vision of life in comparison with a vision of death.

In this way, the antithesis of the Gospel is not war, as is commonly believed. The collocation of Christian peace is much higher than to be reduced to being compared to an armed conflict. And it's also for this reason that in the Christian message we don't find an antimilitarist strategy. Instead there is a strategy to make a person a child of God (John 1:12) through the presence of Emmanuel (God-with-us), the Prince of peace (cfr. Is. 7:14; 9:5).

Therefore we don't find ourselves confronted with a war to be fought, but with a plan to carry out (the plan of God), removing all that impedes its fulfillment. This plan to be carried out is called peace which is the fruit of Redemption, as appears from the greeting of the Risen Christ (cfr. John 20:19) which practically sums up his own messianic action with the words: "Peace be with you!"

We now are in the situation of the redeemed. To be in the situation of the redeemed means being persons with access to this peace; and this means that peace is possible, and not utopian.

The Second Vatican Council sees peace in the context of a road and of a construction, in so far as it is "in its substance regulated by the eternal law" but is subject "with the progress of time, for that which concerns its concrete requirements, to continuous variations." And so "peace has never been something stably reached, but it is a "house" in continuous construction" (Gaudium et Spes 78). This means that there's a road to be run.

I believe that one of the greatest proclamations offered to us by Christianity is the concrete possibility for a road to peace. We are not dealing with a consolatory or utopian thought (like that which could be formulated by someone who leaves faith out of consideration and thereby has only a partial vision of reality). We are dealing with a concreteness manifested to us with religious language and thereby within reach of as many as open themselves to understand such a language.

Peace, then, has a positive meaning which shapes the person of tomorrow, as one on the way to the civilization of peace; with an interpersonal and intercreational relationship able to found a civilization superior to that which we enjoy today.

With what I have said above, I mean to affirm in religious language a vision and reality which others can and must translate into political language, economic language, sociological language and so forth. This is a work to be done by the laity in general and by Christian laity in particular.

From these preliminary remarks, though very brief, there emerges the need for an actualization. I mean that it's clear that there exists the necessity to begin a road to peace and a work for peace, not in opposition, but as an alternative to the diplomatic channel or any other way. A road which instead of just being functional to economy or politics, is created to make us grow, to free us and to show our worth.

In this regard, I have had some experience. They may seem but marginal experiences, but I'm convinced of the strength of new ideas. Ideas are like the force which makes a seed germinate. Whether you are aware of it or not, the seed which has been sown moves, grows, breaks through the soil, and a field which until then was barren, suddenly becomes green. It's a sign that spring has arrived.

For this reason, we need a personal and social effort to transfer peace from being an ideological conception, from the field of utopia, to being a prophetic reality. A prophecy is announcement of truth, it's being able to look far ahead. It's not an ideology, which puts on a pair of glasses to see reality in the way most convenient to oneself. Prophecy is looking far ahead and it means choosing the road and preparing the means to be

able to reach the goal. So there's a conception of life to be lived and a methodology to be followed. Both the one and the other I tried to apply and it seems to me that the first be a good method for living and the second a good method for acting.

The first thing which a man of peace has to do is to change his mental categories. The judgements (conjunction of subject and predicate) of the man of peace are fundamentally different from those expressed by someone not working to bring about a civilization of peace because it has to do with civilization itself, and with culture also. Much is written about the demilitarization of man. Well then, having mental categories of peace is one of the fruits of demilitarization. The man who doesn't judge on the basis of mental categories such as the enemy, of that which is different... is the man who demobilizes that "military" which he carries inside himself.

The relationship with others, once we've been demilitarized inside, is a much changed relationship: the other, different, opposer, handicapped, unlearned, competitor... all acquire in our conscience the fundamental qualification of brother, associate, collaborator. As far as this goes, it's interesting to note the expression of St. Francis. "Brother Robber", where two truths are affirmed: the theological one of "brother" and the sociological one of "robber". St. Francis, with his demilitarized spirit, was able to make these two appellatives live side by side, even to cement them together by means of a concrete and real love.

As one can see, even this is an experience to be achieved. We need to learn to overturn certain ways of understanding and certain points of view which otherwise seem indestructible. To do this, the first element to be used is the valorization of the positive side.

In a new relationship, if the other is for me a "positive" towards whom I must move, only then will I be able to establish a relationship of peace.

The relationship which is created is a relationship of love (man made to the image of God has an interpersonal relationship modeled on the Trinitarian relationship in God!). It is a relationship which appreciates the good in the other, which he or she is, and therefore non-violent. Non-violence still needs to be studied and applied in our western society, which continues to think of non-violence as a behavior which eliminates the negative (non-violence) instead of a positive way of acting, for which we don't even have an adept term. (In Italian we can write nonviolence as a single word, but all the same it's not the right one.)

Then there's a methodology which needs to be applied in various situations of peace. It's a bit revolutionary, but I think it's worth knowing and using.

I've written something about this methodology of peace and I looked for ways to apply it in interpersonal and international relations. Maybe something came out of it!

Methodologically, to be able to pass from simple words to concrete facts, we have to learn to consider peace a prophecy and then we need to act consequentially. We don't need consolatory words. Moralistic exhortations don't touch reality. Above all, we need to avoid thinking of peace as a "good work", which we do, not so much because it's vital for us, but, as we're used to saying, because it will get us to Heaven. Too many think of peace as a pious feeling nourished by a good, holy person, knowing well enough that in reality there will never be peace. We know, on the other hand, that to be a prophet means to state a **truth**, to work for a reality which, with time, will be manifested.

The "homo oeconomicus" invests his money in an activity which he judges productive and which on a short, medium or long term will bring him profit.

The peacemaker invests time and activity not for a generic aim, but in a specific expectation for the productivity of peace.

And so, for peace, plans have to be made on a short, medium and long term. Precise conduct needs to be put into action. It has to be clear in one's mind just what can be reached. Peace, therefore, not as simple chattering but as a serious pledge towards a concrete goal.

We need to follow Christian teaching which is the only one that has a project of peace. I don't think that there exists any true project of peace outside of the Christian vision, because there are no reference points, principles or aims.

Christianity speaks of human reality previous to sin, of a reality stained by sin, and of another reality of humanity redeemed by Christ. We can say it in this way: in the beginning was peace; then man's sin broke this peace; the Redemption effected by Christ gave us back the possibility and capacity to return to the "Earthly Paradise" and also it put into his reach a future to be achieved.

It may appear strange or fideistic talking about the concrete possibility of bringing about peace (even though not total) and make it all depend on a religious standpoint. That's true, it could seem fideistic, but only to a certain Western mentality, spoiled by the idea that rationality is everything and therefore has gotten rid of things like faith, intuition, love, etc. as cognitive instruments upon which man can and must base his activity and his programs if he really wants to be concrete. To forget the knowledge which can be had by means of faith doesn't mean to be antireligious. It

just means to have the prejudice of considering the religious standpoint as merely optional.

With this introduction, maybe a bit long and maybe still in need of further explanations, I'll go on to a more precise discussion on the methodology of peace.

1) First of all we have to know what our aim is: to reach a state of interhuman relations based on non-violence, on coming towards one another, on the complementarity of individuals and peoples. This level of relations doesn't mean laziness or the impossible evolution of such relations. On the contrary it means progress in continuous dialogue. In place of arguing and violence, we put dialogue and complementarity. In this same point of view, we can and must include ecology, which means knowing how to put every reality in the place given to it by God. As we can see, it's a dynamic goal and not a static one, which goes along with Gaudium et Spes which indicates peace as a road to be run. The gradual achievement of running this road, we call peace or a way towards peace.

2) We need to change our mental categories. For example, non-violence shouldn't be considered and lived as if it were a "good work", but as a natural attitude of redeemed man. The positive aspect of the other should be retained as the fundamental point of every man, which always overcomes the negative aspect. It means getting by every barrier to be able to meet the other. It means respect for every difference, for every culture, etc. Doing this, in practice we renew our mind and therefore our heart and our actions as well.

3) Attention must be given toward creating a non-violent language. Too often we use cultural models which derive from the violence of wars to indicate states of mind or actions. For example, practically all sporting language is based on bellocose expressions. Often we're unable to tell athletic competition from warlike challenge. Any football game, or other sport, is none other than the simulation of a war instead of competitive sport. Another example: many discussions, even cultural ones, are looked upon as a sort of battle, with winners and losers.

4) So-called diplomacy is a thing of the past. It's no longer possible to use an international language based on concepts of power and reciprocal mistrust. Reasonableness and complementarity need to be the main points of international relations. We can't sit around the same table with each person holding a gun in his hand. Every important meeting should be preceded by a personal meeting between the protagonists on a human level so that human misunderstandings and human defects don't get in the way of the negotiations. Personally, I remember when Gorbachev, through the

Italian premier Craxi, asked us of the International Center for Peace of Assisi a methodological explanation about the message which we had sent him. I myself prepared the answer and the first indication I gave was that the meetings between him and Reagan be preceded by a good amount of time dedicated to knowing each other personally. Maybe it was just a coincidence, but their meetings, beginning with the summit in Geneva, have been carried out in just this way. I had the joy of being present in the various cities of these different meetings.

5) The economy can't continue to be a field where power has its way. Competition is a good thing. It helps growth. Crushing another helps make money, but it doesn't help make peace. Take food away from people and they'll start a war. Humiliate a people and you'll give them fuel to start the next fire.

6) Cultural domination, as well as economical and political, is a subtle, invisible cause of war. That's because it humiliates. One has to be aware of this and learn to abstain from forms of domination which, sooner or later, provoke rivalry. Trade is one thing, imposition is another. We have to remember that economical, political and cultural domination are a triad which reciprocally support each other and make nations explode.

7) The appreciation of the other, of that which is different, is the key both to one's own growth and to every peaceful collaboration. To appreciate the other means to consider his worth and to esteem him. Without this, peace cannot come about. Therefore, together with the capacity of non-belligerence, we need the capacity of accepting that which is different and respecting that which is contrary. This is the great lesson which comes from tolerance. It's a question of social maturity which makes us not be afraid of the other. Tolerance is a civil way of living; and to be tolerant means to allow the other to exist even when this means having to reduce ourselves or to withdraw from positions of excessive expansion.

8) Therefore, there's a new world to construct in peace and in justice. To combine peace and justice, to be able to open oneself to this new world, every person needs to live a spirituality. I believe that a pure materialist, if he really is so, will have a hard time going towards the good of peace. In fact, if we don't grow on a spiritual level, we can't be leaders of civilization. Our technological progress will just be an obstacle on our road if it's not accompanied by spiritual maturity. History offers us shocking examples of barbarity which occur every time man finds himself being a technological giant and a spiritual dwarf. For this same reason, a child is not capable of playing with weapons or using dangerous electrical instruments. It's tragic how we, despite our insufficient maturity, administer

things like nuclear power, chemistry and genetics with a rudeness of motivations and lack of attention which are absolutely foreign to such great responsibilities.

So attention to spirituality, in the more ample sense of the word must be restored, in those fields where people assert that their intention is to work for peace. This is true even for those who consider the spiritual problem of secondary importance, thinking of themselves as champions of the concrete. As far as peace goes, true concreteness lies in the capacity of transcending purely material interest to project our actions beyond it, towards a complete project of civilization.

9) To be true peacemakers, we also need to realize the insufficiency of running back and forth like firemen trying to put out the fires of war. We have to rediscover the important work of prevention which is a hidden activity and whose result can't be measured, for the very fact that it is prevention. The peacemaker who comes onto the scene which is already afire, does a very important job; but we have to learn to put at his side a creator of conditions of peace.

To create conditions of peace is not easy. We live in a civilization which still hasn't faced the question of peace as a prominent and fundamental problem. And we can say this despite the fact that everyone talks about peace, as if it were our greatest aspiration. Unfortunately the concrete structure at the base of our whole national and international society is not a structure which promotes peace. Situations of peace will always need to be "invented" thereby creating alternatives to the current ways of conceiving both life and interpersonal and international relationships. □



Good Theology and Good Geometry: Creation and the Cross in the Works of Bonaventure

PATRICK QUINN, T.O.R.

In the past decade much attention has been given to the role of creation in the spiritual life. Many books and articles have explored the various facets of creation, including the inner dimensions of the human person, as a means of encountering and finding union with God. These spiritualities summon the reader to a greater awareness of the presence of God's reign here and now, falling heavily on the side of realized eschatology. Such "creation spiritualities" are often critiqued however, for the lack of recognition given to the reality of sin and its effects on the created world.

St. Bonaventure also recognized the import of creation as a way of encountering the presence of the divine, but he escapes the critique of contemporary "creation spiritualities." There is no doubt that he was greatly influenced by St. Francis' love for nature and respect for all creatures. Like St. Francis, he understood that all creatures of this world reflect the glory of their Creator. However, the Seraphic Doctor was also greatly influenced by Francis' deep love for the Crucified Christ. The Cross has a special prominence in the life and spirituality of St. Francis. His life of conversion begins in prayer before the crucified Christ at San Damiano and culminates in his reception of the stigmata, an exterior manifestation of his total conformity to the Crucified Lord. The writings of St. Bonaventure are thus greatly affected by this spirit of St. Francis, not only regarding the revelatory character of creation, but also in the recognition that this same created

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world is in need of redemption through the Crucified Lord. Accordingly, Bonaventure gives primacy of place to the cross as "the way" and "the door" to entering into God. As Duns Scotus has been called the "Theologian of the Incarnation," Bonaventure is rightly called the "Theologian of the Passion."¹

In spite of St. Bonaventure's emphasis on the centrality of the cross, he does not exclude nor neglect the importance of creation as a means by which our God draws humanity into intimate union. In describing the way in which God calls us and restores us through the cross, the Seraphic Doctor ever respects the harmonious order of creation, as well as the created nature of the human person as a subject endowed with freedom. He is, however, fully cognizant of the reality of sin and its effect of distancing the human person from God. He acknowledges that creation does have a value in drawing us toward knowledge and union with our Creator, but at the same time, he recognizes the Cross of Christ as the indispensable instrument by which we are brought to full knowledge of God and restored to union with God. His theology is one of balance and symmetry, with the cross planted firmly in the center.

The Role of Creation

At the onset of the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Bonaventure holds that the Crucified Christ is the one and only way to enter into God (Prologue 3). However, six of the work's seven chapters are dedicated to the role of creation and the consideration of the human person as pointing the way toward God and revealing the presence of the Creator. In so structuring the work, he expresses the fundamental truth of our faith that we have been created in the image and likeness of God, both male and female. In spite of the reality of sin, through reflection on the human person, specifically on the human faculties of memory, intellect and will, Bonaventure admits that one can arrive at a certain knowledge of God. Furthermore, he notes that our capacity to experience Creation through the bodily senses and to contemplate invisible realities such as "Being" and the "Good" also leads us to knowledge of God. For Bonaventure,

...the universe itself is a ladder by which we can ascend into God. Some created things are vestiges, others images; some are material, others spiritual; some are temporal, others everlasting; some are outside us, others within us" (*Itinerarium* I,2).

The Seraphic Doctor thus recognizes the value of creation and of the human faculties as a way of coming to know God. However, he also acknowledges that human reflection on the created world is limited and can not bring us to full knowledge of God. Such reflection can only dispose

the soul as one ascends toward God through contemplation on the various levels of created being. The consideration of the created world leaves the soul wanting as it affords but an "awareness of something divine, an obscured knowledge, in which the divine reality was seen, but only through the fog of created things and the human expression of Revelation."² Therefore, according to Bonaventure, creation does serve in pointing us toward God, but we are ultimately led to an abyss which can only be bridged through the mediation of the crucified Christ. It is only the Cross of Christ which can carry us over into full knowledge and union with God.

The Fall From Original Grace

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure explains the origin of the abyss which had been created between God and the human family. He states that in the "original disposition of nature," humanity was fit for resting in God through quiet contemplation. However, because Adam turned away from the light, he and all his descendants were by his fault "bent over by original sin, which infected human nature in a two-fold manner: the mind with ignorance, and the flesh with concupiscence" (I,7). The effect of original sin has caused a curvature in the human person, directing the individual in toward him or herself, resulting in inordinate self-love and concupiscence.³ Being bent over, the person is absorbed in self-interest, perceiving the self as the center of existence and is consequently blinded to the Eternal Light.

Bonaventure's understanding of the human condition after the Fall accounts for the limitation of the created world as being a means for attaining full knowledge and union with God. The reality of sin distorts human perspective and impedes the person from seeing the fullness of God in creation because human vision is impaired by a chronic curvature. We are unable to see God clearly because we are using our own self-interest as the prism for looking upon creation. Creation then becomes regarded as something to possess, appropriate and consume. According to Bonaventure, it is only through the cross that we are restored to our upright condition and thus enabled to look beyond the self and upon the Eternal Light.

The Cross and Our Restoration

For Bonaventure, the cross is the antidote to our fallen condition. It alone can reverse the effects of sin and lead us into God. He points to several ways in which the passion and death of Jesus on the cross restores us, bridging the abyss between God and humanity.

As the restoring Principle created us in orderly fashion, so must He also restore us in orderly fashion. He must restore us in such a

way as to respect not only the freedom of the will, but also the honor of God and the harmonious function of the universe. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, ii)

In this rather stilted theological language, Bonaventure is trying to demonstrate the harmonious manner in which God restores us in Christ. He is illustrating how our redemption wrought upon the cross respects the honor of God, the dignity of the human person as a freely willing subject, and the original created order of the universe.

a) The Harmonious Order of the Universe

Bonaventure again recognizes the goodness and the import of creation by detailing how the redemptive sacrifice on the cross respects the original created order of the universe. He acknowledges that in spite of the Fall, God continues to work in and through the created world, and that it still reflects the Creator, albeit imperfectly. As in the original dispensation, all life had been brought into existence through the **Uncreated** Word, now it is recreated through the **Incarnate** Word. Just as the world had been created through the divine Logos, so too would it be restored through the same Logos. Hence, the import of the Incarnation, the Uncreated Word becoming the Incarnate Word, comes to the fore as a means in which God respects the harmonious order of the created universe in the restoration of humanity.

This harmony is respected further in Bonaventure's notion of the "coincidence of opposites" which is effected through the passion and death of Jesus upon the cross. Bonaventure perceives in the Fall and in Redemption a coincidence of opposites in which the cross is at the center.

It is most fitting that evils should be healed through their opposites. . . . To heal humanity by the appropriate remedy, God-made-man, willed to be humiliated and to suffer on a tree. As an antidote to universal infection, he willed to suffer a passion most comprehensive; as an antidote to lust, a passion most bitter; as an antidote to pride, a passion most ignominious; as an antidote to death not willed but incurred, he chose to suffer a death not deserved but freely willed. (**Breviloquium** IV 9,iv)

Thus the death of Christ repairs the damage done by original sin which consisted in pride, disobedience and greed. The Crucified Christ provides the antidotes for these sins: pride is taken away by accepting a humiliating death among thieves; disobedience is repaired by being obedient to the Father even unto death on the cross; and greed (lust) is countered by the bitterness of his suffering in the Passion. Death, not willed, but merited through sin, is transformed into life eternal by means of a death not merited, but freely willed. The cross, through the uniting of opposites, thereby restores humanity to wholeness in a dynamic way, honoring the mathematical harmony of the created order.

b) Respecting the Honor of God and the Dignity of the Human person
The Seraphic Doctor illustrates the way in which the Cross respects the honor of God by employing Anselm's well known "Theory of Satisfaction" (cf. **Breviloquium** IV, 9, iii). In this respect, Bonaventure is typical of the theologians of his day, maintaining that only Jesus, both fully divine and fully human, was able to repay the infinite offense committed against God by the sin of Adam. However, he departs from Anselm by also relying on the notion of the "example" given by Christ in going to the Cross. Although the Council of Sens in 1140 had condemned the doctrine which held the life and the work of Christ to be but a mere teaching and example, Bonaventure did not view the theories of satisfaction and moral example as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary.⁴

According to Bonaventure, the example given on the cross plays an active and effective role in our restoration, and at the same time respects the freedom of the human person.

Christ therefore restored humanity through his all efficacious example. An example is all efficacious when it both invites to the summit of virtue and shows the way thither. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, ii).

Bonaventure says further, that nothing better exemplifies the way to virtue as Christ's being obedient unto death. Nothing could move us more strongly to virtue than the goodness which Jesus displayed in willingly enduring a cruel and humiliating death, so that we, the undeserving, would have life. He concludes by saying,

For how could God who has not spared his own Son but has delivered him for us all . . . fail to grant us also all things with him? We are invited, then to love him and follow his example. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, iii).

The means chosen by God to redeem humanity was meant to attract persons by the love displayed in and through God's giving his own Son to death on a cross. This is a most fitting means since it preserves the person's liberty. One is invited, illumined and stimulated to follow the example of Christ in the way of love.⁵ The human person remains free to personally decide whether to accept or reject the love of the Crucified and follow his example. Bonaventure poses this question to the Lord in his "De perfectione vitae ad sorores": "Why did you let your blood pour forth in a river when a single drop would have sufficed for the redemption of the world?" The reply given by Bonaventure is that it was for "no other reason than to show your love for me" (IV, 6). For the Seraphic Doctor, the cross is the revelation of God's infinite love. It is in our turning to the Cross and seeing this great love that we are attracted to imitate that love, and are thereby freed from our egotistic curvature and restored to

our upright condition, able to cast our gaze outward beyond the self. Through the Crucified's example of love, the human person is called and invited to that same love and to participate in the fruits of his work.

Bonaventure speaks further of the effective power of the example given by Christ on the cross in reversing our fallen condition.

Consider who is suffering . . . that Christ is truly the Son of God, the Principle of all beings and the saviour of all . . . unite yourself to him with the movement of compassion, sharing the pains of the utterly blameless . . . loving Christ, consider why he is suffering and forget yourself in a rapture of devotion . . . consider how he is suffering and put on Christ by endeavoring to resemble him . . . Follow his example, strive therefore to be kind to your neighbor, severe to yourself, humble before God and shrewd against the devil's guile. Consider how much he is suffering and embrace the Cross. (*De triplici via* III, B. 3).

The Seraphic Doctor is bidding the Christian to meditate on the passion and the death of Jesus as a means of appropriating the example given by Jesus. He recognizes that it is in this example that we are not only invited but, also shown the way to wholeness, to union with God. The example given by the Crucified invites us to embrace our restored human condition and live in the reality of that condition in the here and now. By our responding to the example of Christ in his free acceptance of the cross, the deformity caused by original sin is healed and the human condition is restored. No longer is the human bent over and absorbed in the self, but rather, one is able to look out beyond the self in love toward one's neighbor and upward in humility toward God.

Relocating the True Center

Bonaventure maintains throughout his writings that while creation can lead us toward God, the cross remains the only way to union with God, to find the true center of our being. In *Collationes in hexaemeron*, he writes that Christians who reject the centrality of the cross oppose their own salvation, they are unable to measure themselves, to know their true worth. Such persons lose their true center, and once again turn in on themselves as that center, reverting to their fallen condition. Bonaventure employs a helpful image borrowed from geometry in demonstrating the cross to be the way to find our true center.

How marvelous is divine wisdom, for it brought salvation through the cinders of humility. For the center is lost in the circle, and it cannot be found except by two lines crossing each other at right angles. (*Hexaemeron* I, 24).

The Seraphic Doctor always holds the goodness of the created world in tension with the reality of the sinful condition of the human person. . . .

According to Bonaventure, created reality is in need of a center and that center is not to be found in the self, but in God. Just as the center of a circle is found by drawing two lines at right angles, the way to our true center is found in the Cross of Christ, two linear pieces of wood joined at right angles. Looking to the cross draws the eye away from the self and outward toward God and neighbor. The cross corrects our vision and reveals the true, admirable God. It opens the eyes of the believer to an authentic understanding of him or herself in relation to God.

Conclusion

St. Bonaventure recognizes that God calls us into loving union in many and varied ways. He is acutely aware that creation itself is one such way. However, he also realizes that the created world is limited and taken by itself, can not unite us to God. He further recognizes and gives proper place to the reality of sin that affects all of humanity, and the consequent need of the Divine Hand to lift humanity from its fallen condition. Bonaventure points to the Cross of Christ as the way chosen by God to do this. Through the Incarnate Word nailed to the Cross, we are brought to union with God and restored to our upright condition. The Seraphic Doctor always holds the goodness of the created world in tension with the reality of the sinful condition of the human person and the need for redemption. In so doing, he maintains the perspective of the "already" and the "not yet" of God's reign. He thereby avoids a realized eschatology which the experience of greed, hatred, violence and war radically contradicts. His is a theology of balance and symmetry, good theology and good geometry.

End notes

¹ Leone Rosato, "Il mistero della passione di Cristo nella teologia francescana," in *Quaderni di spiritualita francescana* 4, (1962), 63.

² Philotheus Boehner, *St. Bonaventure's Itinerarium Mentis In Deum: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1956), 131.

³ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴ Justo Gonzales, "The Work of Christ in St. Bonaventure's Systematic Works," in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974 v. IV* (Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 1974): 379.

⁵ Rosato, 68.

STAR QUILT

Obedience these days
is to trade marriage's
lush burgundy comforter
for the ethereal
star quilt mantle
of Guadalupe.
Perhaps in some
mind's eye
this is merely
tip-toeing parallel
the Via Crucis,
never really setting
firm foot or bending
the back to the road.
But I distinctly heard
the turquoise Lady
amidst the mandorla
of fires
say that she and
the beloved disciple
died also
that day
her Child united them
as mother and son,
and she added:
first came the blood,
then the water,
then light, and then
the tongues of fire.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

FIRE ABOVE / WATER BELOW

The least little brothers
had this tale to tell,
how once he had
accepted the offer
of a prostitute,
is she would obey
the nature of brother fire
and lay down
with him
in the womb of the hearth
where all our desires
are purified.
And they recalled
this wonder too,
how one night
out of the heart
of the hearth he flew,
all engaged
in dazzling flames,
driven like Elijah
enroute Home.
He spun round and
round their waking dreams,
touching their
hopes and prayers
with tongues of fire.
And this
most amazing miracle,
which made them weep
and run like rain
to remember:
how mercy had
always poured out
through him
because he used
all authority given
to him
to serve.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

If Anyone Wishes To Go Among The Saracens Witness In Fraternal Peace As The Context For Inter-Faith Dialogue (A Friar's Experience In East London)

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND O.F.M.

When St. Francis strode through the massed ranks of the Crusaders during the battle for Damietta in 1218 into the camp of the Sultan Al-Melek with that typical single-minded purposefulness, he laid the foundation for any future work which the Friars might engage in with other religious faiths, and his experience in the Sultan's camp gave the context for such work. It is true that in that bold march Francis, motivated by his life-long desire for martyrdom, had great trust and confidence in God — and no doubt the Muslim troops were stunned into disbelief at the sight of this little beggar man moving towards them. But unlike the Crusaders, Francis does not carry any sword in his hand, nor does he wear a scabbard round his waist, nor does he come to them on an armored charger: all Francis carries is the gospel of Christ. While it is true that Francis went to the Sultan with the intention of converting him and to experience martyrdom, it is also true that Francis learns something himself in the way in which he is received by the Sultan.

The incident is described in various texts: LM IX, 1 Cel.57, LMin 3,9.LP37, Fior 24 and while the form and nature of the stories vary what does not vary is the fact that Francis proclaimed the gospel by his very presence as well as verbally, and that the Sultan received Francis with respect

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and courtesy and in the end admired him. The Fioretti text tells how the Sultan was actually converted to Christianity, the Major Life text relates how Francis could see *no genuine spirit of religion in the Sultan* [and also relates the humorous incident of the Islamic priests slipping away when Francis mentions walking over fire]; 2 Celano text tells how Francis foretold the defeat of the Christians and forbade the war. But all agree on the attitude of both Francis and the Sultan and it is this which sets the tone and approach for us today as we try to dialogue in fraternal peace and understanding in a genuine spirit of openness with other religions.

I am not sure that I would agree with Bonaventure's description of the Sultan as having no genuine religious spirit. The Sultan had already told Francis that he could not embrace Christianity for fear of a revolt among his people; he was after all their religious leader and had responsibilities which outweigh personal considerations. The offering of gifts by the Sultan is not an attempt to "buy" Francis, it is simply hospitality and generosity, although I accept that the biographers do have a certain hagiographical intent. But if the texts are all taken together and the sections on the attitude of the Francis and the Sultan analyzed, then a few things can be deduced.

In the description that Bonaventure gives, it seems as if the Sultan is some kind of tyrannical despot. However, a truer picture would be to see the Sultan as a humble man of his own faith, who in reality has the good of his people at heart [and thus does not feel that he can convert to Christianity] and he certainly does not engage in the forceful proselytizing that Francis uses. It may also be assumed that the Sultan is committed, cautious, courteous and is certainly truly "Islamic" i.e. submissive to the will of Allah, as much as Francis is to the Will of the God and Father of Jesus Christ [who in this instance indicates that Francis's desire for martyrdom is not to be realized and from the other viewpoint it is the will of Allah that this little beggarly Christian infidel lives]. We do not know what Francis and the Sultan eventually spoke of in the few days Francis spent in the camp — but it may be supposed it was not of mutual death: the Sultan is a warrior, not a barbarian. We know that Francis preached the gospel to him and perhaps went on to speak of the Scriptures, the teachings, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the "True God." The Sultan perhaps spoke of the teachings of Mohamet [Blessed be the Prophet of Allah! *this is said each time the Prophet's name is spoken*] and the teachings of the Holy Qu'uran [which itself speaks in reverent tones of Jesus as a great prophet and holds to the Virgin Birth]. And more importantly, perhaps Francis even saw the Sultan take out his mat, fall to his knees, face Mecca — and pray five times in the day.

In other words, despite the seeming arrogance and irreligion of the Sultan as it is given in the Bonaventurian account of this encounter, the Sultan would not have been fighting a "**hajjah**" [a holy war] for something he did not believe in with sincerity and integrity — otherwise his strong Islamic beliefs would have no real basis and this can be dismissed. The main point that I wish to try to make in considering the story as an inspiration for any Friars working with other religions, is that Francis and the Sultan shared their faith-experience, their spirituality and their scriptures — and did so in understanding and respect [quite apart from what was going on around them]. It is this genuine spirit of fraternal dialogue which has contextualized the inter-change between the Order and Islam, and why there is a continuing movement towards understanding between Franciscans and those who follow the teachings of the Prophet. However, for me in the multi-faith/ethnic/cultural situation I find myself working in as a Friar in London's East End, there is an even wider context for this faith sharing.

I work in the parish of St. Antony's, Forest Gate, which is the Mother-house of our Province, which is in the East London Borough of Newham. Newham is the second poorest borough in the country: it has a serious unemployment problem, a high substance/chemical misuse rate, one of the highest HIV/A.I.D.S. rates in the country, and recently headed the table for teenage pregnancies nationwide and has the highest influx of refugees — and Forest Gate is a poor part of the borough with all the attendant problems that go with inner-city areas. The Friars who work in this Borough [our other house is in Stratford which is the next parish] do their best to meet the many needs of the people inside and outside the parish both spiritual and social — we too find ourselves "among" the poor and other faiths.

Forest Gate is also made up of a wonderful diversity of cultures, races, languages and creeds. The main shopping area, Green Street, is rather affectionately known as "Little Delhi" because of the preponderance of Asian sari shops, delicatessans, confectionary shops, music shops. We have Irish, English, African, Asian, Caribbean, South American, Phillipino, Sri Lankan Tamil, Sri Lankan Sengelese, Ethiopian; there are Christians [of all denominations], Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Ba'hais, Quakers, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Sai Babas and even some Zoroastrians. We have Churches, temples, mosques, Meeting Houses, Kingdom Halls and a new Sikh temple in the final stages of completion just 200 yards from the Church — and all this within the parish of St. Antony's

It is within this rich diversity of culture and faith that I work with the Newham Association of Faiths. Sometimes our work is hard [our last

meeting lasted nearly three hours — by which time everyone was ready to give up inter-faith work!!] and there are moments when we have to deal with intemperate, ill-judged remarks and prejudiced misunderstandings of what we are trying to do. There are moments when tension is high in the area [as at the moment over an educational issue] and bigotry, racism and cultural clashes surface and we as an Association have to try to deal with these issues realistically as brothers and sisters working for understanding, tolerance, justice and peace. The friary has been used for meetings, the walls of the meeting room covered in multi-language greetings and prayers and the Prayer for Peace attributed to St. Francis is frequently used as an end of meeting reflection and meditation. At the moment we are working hard to organize a festival of faiths for the area as a preparation for the World Year of Faiths in 1993 and are drawing on the tremendous good will among the people. So there will be Indian, African, Irish, Asian, South American food and music, and dancing; a poster competition, opportunities for other faiths to visit each other's places of worship where they will be welcomed with the same respect and courtesy which the Sultan gave to Francis. There will be talks on different spiritualities, teachings and scriptures with the opportunity to ask questions and explore other faiths with sensitivity and openness.

While the work is hard and at times unrewarding [we were recently turned down for a grant because we had a member of a particular religious faith on our Committee and the organization felt that inter-faith dialogue, work and worship was incompatible with Christian teaching on Jesus as the True God and One Saviour of all] we nevertheless struggle together for peace and harmony and understanding.

As a Friar I have certainly been enriched through coming into contact with these different faiths and am constantly discovering the meaning of fraternity in peace and seek to understand the religious doctrines, hopes, expectations and fears of other faith communities. I do not feel under threat [no one does], nor do I feel my Christian faith in any way compromised or diluted [rather the opposite], nor do I, or could I, deny or devalue the universal redemption of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. There is a real sense in which I feel this to be "among" the *Saracens and unbelievers* [though these are people of very DEEP belief!] sharing my own faith and Franciscan fraternity in poverty at a wider level, working for greater co-operation and acceptance and seeing the great unity-in-diversity within which I live and minister. None of us underestimates the many difficulties of the task facing us in an area such as this, but this does not prevent us from meeting together and trying to quietly and peacefully break down the barriers of mistrust, suspicion and prejudice.

The context for me is always the experience of, and sharing in, fraternal poverty. Like Francis I go to the meetings and undertake projects armed with nothing but my own Christian faith and Franciscan commitment and it is within the context of sharing my own faith experience that I learn about sharing the faith of others. I believe that Christ is the Saviour of all men and women regardless of their credal confession, and I believe that Christ is the completion of any world religion or faith. But I am also aware that Christ does not reject those who do not consciously reject him and that the brethren of other world religions and faiths may well, in the words of Eucharistic Prayer IV be seeking Christ "with a sincere heart." I am convinced that as Friars we can help them do this, not by evangelical proselytizing, but by evangelical proclamation through fraternal, peaceful, witness-in-presence which finds its root and source in our commitment to Christ in the way of Francis of Assisi and our powerlessness. We, as friars have nothing to share with the other faiths of this world but such commitment in poor fraternity, as the Ratio Formationis 18 points out:

The Friar Minor welcomes the others as a gift of the Father, lives in full communion by prayer, rejoices in the good which God works in the life of each one, and considers the fraternity constitutive and an essential element of his being a Minor and of his gospel calling.

While it is true that the text refers to the Brothers in the Fraternity, it can be extended [as "among the Saracens and other unbelievers"] to a wider understanding of the fraternity which for us as Friars Minor must be universal and indiscriminate. If I may once again just take a text from the Ratio, which, though again directed specifically to the fraternity that must be present among the Friars, can be applied as the context for dialogue and work with other faiths.

The Friar Minor progresses in knowledge and acceptance of himself and others intensively cultivating a family spirit, so that the entire fraternity becomes a privileged place of the encounter with God.

It is not unfair to meditate on these texts within a wider context since as Friars the context of our fraternity is the universal gospel, and not only do they speak in profundity about our fraternal relationship with each other as Friar, but also as Friar with, to and for others in the world in peace, harmony and mutual understanding. In doing this the nature of the

fraternity changes while the gospel context always remains the same; it changes and remains because I believe that it becomes even more deeply rooted in Christ the Word, who, through what is revealed to us in the brothers and sisters of other faiths, shows us how his Spirit of Inspiration, justice and peace, is at work in a world ravaged by fear, mistrust, religious bigotry, racism and intolerance. In this vision evangelization becomes a much more profound and meaningful concept and experience [as well as a reality realized] and I have the beginnings of the faintest glimmer of what is meant by "the kingdom" — that all-embracing reality in which God is present in his fullness in Jesus, the Lord. It is this same Jesus, as the Council pointed out, and as the present Pope reiterated in his marvelous encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* who is the Light of the Nations and is present to, and enlightens every person coming into the world. He is present with his love, his saving death and resurrection, his freedom and forgiveness and who calls every person to knowledge and love of the Father through him in the Spirit.

What may appear to be grandiose theological, soteriological, ecclesiological and even Christological concepts, I am convinced, are slowly through much work, prayer, discernment, struggling to be lived out here in the multi-ethnic/cultural/religious area of Forest Gate in London's East end, in a poor borough, by poorer people and poor friars. I feel privileged and graced to be involved in this work in some small way, and I would like to conclude this personal reflection by yet another extension of a Franciscan text — the Testament. Francis writes:

When the Lord gave me some brothers and I did not know what to do, the Lord himself showed me that I must live the holy gospel.

In my own Franciscan life I feel that Lord has not only given me the brothers of the Franciscan fraternity, but the brothers and sisters of the inter-faith community and through them all is calling me to live an even deeper gospel centred life in fraternal witness-in-peaceful-presence. My joy is to live with the poor of this area as their lesser brother and to be evangelized by them so that my own weak witness in fraternal peace may bring to the brethren of other faiths something of the great love that is Jesus, the Christ and Lord of the whole Universe to whom all things tend in love and through whom all things will return to the Father. Perhaps we may even be glad that Francis did not convert the Sultan to Christianity — the riches of Islam and other faiths are not lost to us, and perhaps they can also, like the creatures of Francis' Canticle, in some mysterious way speak to us about the majesty and glory and all-embracing love and salvation of the Triune God, who calls us to union with Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Book Reviews

"De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam" — The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation. By Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M. Rome: Instituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1991. Pp. 461. Paper, \$45.00.

Reviewed by Sr. Ramona Miller, O.S.F. Staff Member of Franciscan Pilgrimage Program

The book's cover symbolically conveys the focus of its historical content and the intended readers. A glossy-print, colored photo presents the manuscript of St. Francis's earlier version of the "Letter to the Faithful" — a manuscript discovered by Paul Sabatier in the Guarnacci Library of Volterra and sometimes referred to as the Volterra Letter. State-of-the-art publishing provides a clear observation of the distinctive red script used by the scribe for the introduction to Francis's letter in contrast to the black script for the body of the work. There, in red, we read: "De illis qui faciunt penitentiam" ["concerning those who do penance"]. All Franciscans, therefore, are the intended readers of Stewart's lengthy and detailed study of the development of the Secular Franciscan Rule. The valuable collection of the thirteenth century sources on Francis and the penitents designates this book as a necessary reference text for any study of the early Franciscan penitential movement. In addition, the entire second chapter is an overview of "penance" in the church from Old Testament understanding up to and including Francis's understanding of penance.

The detailed study of the early Rule for the penitents and how it developed through the centuries, along with extensive footnotes, might intimidate a prospective reader, but the persevering mind will find refreshment and hope in the culminating chapter. Here Stewart synthesizes Paul Ricoeur's method for interpreting a text [no small feat!], and then applies it to the earlier version of the "Letter to the Faithful." He presents his belief that the primitive Rule is about radical conversion and proceeds to explore what the Rule is about for contemporary Franciscans, that is, what "radical conversion" means today. Surprisingly, in this scholarly account of the development of the SFO Rule, a gem appears for spiritual director(s): an analysis of conversion and the meaning of conversion from psychological and theological perspectives. Franciscans looking for an invitation to growth, a book to indicate the direction for becoming "palpable expressions of God's love and presence in our world," would do well studying and appropriating this landmark publication in Franciscan research. Since the scholarly nature of the text places this book in the category of texts for serious historical study, it is unlikely that the ordinary SFO membership will read the book in its entirety. Hence, I would invite Stewart to write another book to popularize his important findings "concerning those who do penance." But, meanwhile, all Franciscans who risk the reading will find a treasure.

The Making of Saints. By Michael Freze, S.F.O. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1991. Pp. 239, inc. Indices and Bibliography.

Reviewed by Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Associate Editor of this Review.

This is a book which combines inspiration and information. The Introduction, three chapters on the Call to Sanctity, Jesus and the Eucharist, and Life in the Spirit fall into the former classification. The chapters on heroic virtues, and special charisms, Parts II and III on the Background for Canonization and the Way to Beatification, together with the Appendices comprise the second category. A chapter on the ceremony of canonization is both informative and edifying.

Specially valuable in this book are the spelling out of the 1983 Norms and Procedures to be followed in regard to Causes of the Saints. Those norms follow a lead of 1969 decrees placing the origination of the Cause not with Rome and the Holy Father where it had been, but with the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Servant of God died. Any Catholic or Catholic group can petition the Bishop to start the Cause for a particular person who has died with a reputation for sanctity, the Norms indicate.

Also helpful are facts and figures about the Saints, e.g. their ages, emblems, and meaning of saints, short biographies of Saints by station in life; a Glossary of their names; Terms and a collection of sayings about holiness from various Saints.

I think the book would have been helped by some thematic diagrams, or — a time-line, and by some more historical examples (e.g. of cases where the process was stopped because of a cultus). Nevertheless THE MAKING OF SAINTS IS A READABLE NARRATIVE and a useful addition to any personal or community library.

A Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals By Ann Ball. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1991. Pp. 222, inc. Index & Bibliography. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Associate Editor of The CORD.

This is a very handy reference manual, written in clear and easy to understand language. An introductory essay by Michael Miller, C.S.B. explains the theology—the faith—involved in the use of Sacramentals and roots it in the Catholic understanding of the goodness of Creation and the Incarnation. Miller indicates clearly, when superstition is operative rather than genuine religious awareness. Another essay on Sacramentals in the Oriental Rites is informative.

The body of the book considers Blessings, things designated for Sacred Purposes, Crosses and Crucifixes, Water, Christmas and Easter Sacramentals, Images, Cords, Medals, Scapulars, Chaplets and Rosaries, and "Miscellaneous" Sacramentals. In each of the accounts there is a physical description of the Sacramental, a narration of its history and spiritual significance, and, when appropriate, an indication of how the Sacramental may be obtained. One of the fascinating discoveries made was that the Christmas Song "Twelve Days of Christmas" was a catechetical code used by Catholics during persecution in England — two turtle doves being the Old and New Testaments, three French hens being Faith, Hope and Charity, etc. (See p. 70-71).

Photographs (not always placed near what they are describing), a list of Sources, and Index and a complete Table of Contents make this work a very useful tool. Sacramentals are a way of awakening faith, hope and love in ourselves. Ann Ball's work helps us appreciate such opportunities.

Kenosis By Fr. Kevin M. Cronin, O.F.M., Rockport, MA: Element: 1992. 116 pages, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Br. Thomas Conway, O.F.M., a Campus Ministry Intern at Siena College in Loudonville, NY.

Fr. Cronin's recent work is a theological reflection based primarily on his experiences of the summer of 1973. Two years prior to Fr. Cronin's ordination to the priesthood, he spent a summer working as a lay brother at St. Francis of Assisi Church, a service church in Manhattan. He kept a detailed journal of his activities and reflections of that summer.

The Franciscans staff a number of service churches on the East Coast. Service churches provide an opportunity for shoppers, workers, and tourists to participate in the sacraments, consult with religious, meet for popular devotions, and gather for either presentations or self-help groups at convenient urban locations. The wide range of his ministerial experiences in New York City provided Fr. Cronin with fertile ground for reflection on the many dimensions of *Kenosis* in his life.

Kenosis is a Greek word for the act of emptying oneself for the sake of God and others. Fr. Cronin understands this experience of *Kenosis* as a spiritual exercise, one that leads himself and the other into a greater closeness and experience of God. With sincerity and enthusiasm, he draws us into the very specific and concrete ways in which the *Kenosis* of Jesus challenged this Franciscan to become both a more loving minister and a more fraternal friar.

Fr. Cronin integrates the passages of Scripture in a style which imitates that of the writings St. Francis of Assisi. To read this book, to read the stories of

ministry to ordinary people in ordinary situations, to read about the presence of God in a seemingly cold and heartless city, is to pray a prayer, a uniquely Franciscan prayer at that.

The humanity of the person of the minister shines forth brilliantly in this work. Fr. Cronin describes the acts of being, believing, living and serving as a minister. In many ways, he goes forth to do the unthinkable in a manner that is both natural and fearless. He empowers the homeless to laugh, talks aloud to nature, goes to the movies with the mentally ill, and wears his distinctive Franciscan habit to talk to teenagers who are waiting in line for a rock concert. In a typically Franciscan style, he brings the Church to marketplace. The people respond, although sometimes unpredictably, to the presence of this lovable Franciscan suddenly in their midst. Through the example of his life, he teaches the strong and the weak to acknowledge that we are indeed humans, with failings, fears, and an intense need for one another and for God.

Fr. Cronin brings us through many intimate dimensions of his life and his experience of this particular summer. Each chapter begins with a wonderfully heart-warming story from his life prior to his arrival at St. Francis Church. We journey with the author in an amazingly personal way, feeling that which he feels, as he comes to shed light on his identity as a human being, a Franciscan, a man of God, and a person who is present for others. As he interacts with nature, a child, other friars, and migrant workers, he comes to an understanding of the meaning and the value of *Kenosis* and perhaps of life itself. He reaches from the depths of these stories, extracts the meaning, and applies it to these new ministerial and fraternal situations at St. Francis Church.

In many ways, Fr. Cronin unlocks for the general public many of the mysteries surrounding the question "Why would a well-educated young person want to join religious life today?" He concisely and passionately exposes the joys, the hardships, and the challenges of post-Vatican II formation to religious life. While his work is primarily a spiritual reflection, it would also seem to have several very practical uses. Because he risks to bare his soul in describing very typical ministerial situations, his story would be valuable to adults who are considering religious vocations. A reflective reading of this work by a lay minister would be valuable because Fr. Cronin, through entertaining narrative, points out many of the pitfalls inherent to ministry. Finally, it would be valuable to many in religious life, especially Franciscans. This book both rekindles our instinctive idealism and refines our appreciation of the ordinary.

Drinking From a Dry Well. By Thomas H. Green, S.J., Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1990, 125 pages, \$5.95

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association and Campus Minister at the University.

The author of **Drinking From a Dry Well** presents a book of encouragement for pray-ers who are striving for contemplative prayer. He writes this book as a sequel to a book he published in 1979, **When the Well Runs Dry**.

Father Green bases the first part of his book on the writings of St. John of the Cross, especially on **Ascent of Mount Carmel**. The author explains the three stages of the spiritual life as presented

by John of the Cross as "getting to know the Lord, knowing and loving God, and truly loving God" (page 17). The author spends a lot of time on the third stage of prayer, the stage where, as St. John puts it, there is often a "dark night." It is to the pray-ers in this "dark night" that Father Green directs this book.

The second part of the book deals with the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. The contrast between the contemplative life as described by St. John of the Cross and the apostolic life as described by St. Ignatius is interesting to reflect upon. Father Green shows that both saints are directing their followers to the same end, namely union with God. Union with God is the aim of all prayer and all life.

Drinking From a Dry Well may be a difficult book to read for readers who have not read other books written by Father Green. The author repeatedly refers to earlier works he has written, assuming that his readers are acquainted with them. The author seems to be implying to the reader, "If you haven't read my earlier writings, you should have." Still, this reviewer found **Drinking From A Dry Well** instructive and encouraging and recommends the book to anyone who becomes discouraged with his or her prayer life. The message of the book appears to this reviewer to be that a person serious about contemplative prayer must remember this truth: at a point when one's efforts at prayer bring little or no consolation, the pray-er has to entrust herself or himself to the Lord and allow His Spirit to take over.



Praying By Hand. Rediscovering the Rosary as a Way of Prayer. By Basil M. Pennington. San Francisco: Harper/Collins, 1991. Pp. 128, and Bibliography. Cloth, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Julian A. Davies, O.F.M. as associate editor of this Review.

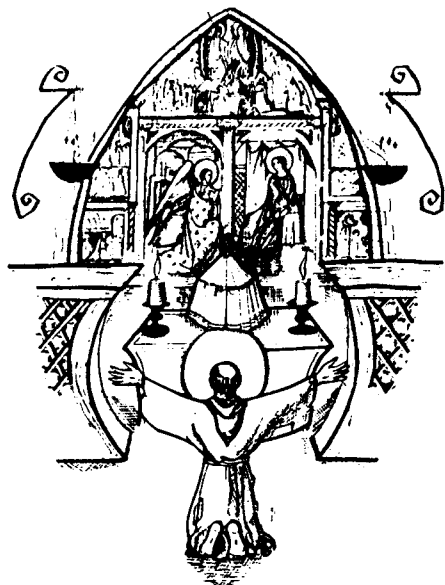
This compact and thought-provoking book is both informational and inspirational. Fr. Pennington, the well known Trappist spiritual writer, begins by situating the Rosary as a form of prayer using beads. Then he moves on to describe the historical development of the Christian Rosary. Reflections on the constituent prayers of the Rosary follow, and then a listing of the Scriptural texts which correspond to the fifteen mysteries associated with the Rosary as we know it today.

Fr. Pennington then briefly considers, one by one, the Joyful, Sorrowful and

Glorious mysteries. His thoughts are all personal, and quite pertinent to the spiritual life of religious. I found the thoughts on the Annunciation particularly striking.

Something new in the book is the presentation of several lists of alternative sets of mysteries to reflect on, for instance the Sacraments, or the hidden life, Jesus' encounters with Mary, Jesus relationships with women, etc. He reminds the reader that the key to praying the Rosary, as Paul VI had noted, was freedom, it is not something we have to be concerned about doing just right. Rather it is a means of bringing us into contact with Jesus, for Mary never fails to lead us to Him.

A couple of references to the Holy Spirit as "she" seem uncalled for, and theologically questionable. However, *Praying by Hand* is by all means a worthwhile book. □



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