

JANUARY, 1993

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Volume 43, No. 1



The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The CORD (ISSN 0010-8685) USPS 563-640) is published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

Subscription rates: \$15.00 a year; \$1.50 a copy. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778, and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The CORD, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure NY 14778 USA.

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 Commernium

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).

In Memory and Praise of Franciscan Women Unsung Saints Among Us

'Twas Thanksgiving Day when I was told that Sister Death had come to greet and had been gracefully welcomed by Sr. Clement Mary. "Clem" had been a Franciscan sister for over 50 years and, though very arthritic for years, had been ill but briefly. It fell to me to celebrate the funeral liturgy and, when the sisters declined to offer their reflections during the funeral mass, also to preach. Thus, I set out immediately to hear about "Clem" from her sisters; I asked for information and stories about Sr. Clement Mary. The very next morning, before mass, I listened to the sisters speak words - wonderful words, almost as if praying - describing their sister, Clement Mary. As I listened to their melody - "Clem was a *Lady*, a quiet, holy presence... unique in the whole house of 120 sisters; not one person would have a negative word to say about her..." - the image of Clare immediately came to my mind, and at that moment I decided to re-visit the *Acts of the Process of Canonization of Saint Clare* in preparing the homily. I hoped to capture their words of praise, their heartfelt gratitude for their sister by mirroring their memories of her life with memories of Lady Clare. The homily thus took the form of some paragraphs from those *Acts*, with gloss.

Several things have brought me to share now that homily: my own re-visiting of the *Acts of the Process of Canonization of Saint Clare*; my later remembering with my Franciscan sisters other Franciscan "saints" who have gone before us; my heartfelt gratitude for those women of faith whose courage, strength, commitment, and love encouraged me in my Franciscan vocation; my strong belief that in speaking their stories we continue their witness; my fervent hope that many might remember, and celebrate, and so believe... remember the many great Franciscan women who have gone before us, and celebrate the saints among us. My hope is, therefore, that the *gloss*, which humbly proclaims one specific "saint," may be but a spark to rekindle memories, may be but a beginning note to inspire melodies of those who "shone forth in life," and are "radiant after death," that we might remember those Franciscan women and celebrate the unsung saints among us.

[From the *ACTS OF THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION* (1253)]

Within two months of the death of Saint Clare, Pope Innocent IV issued the papal bull, *Gloriosus Deus*, October 18, 1253, in which he entrusted Bishop Bartholomew of Spoleto with the responsibility of promoting the Cause of her canonization. The Bishop of Spoleto, who had previous experience in these matters, took as his associates the archdeacon, Leonardo of Spoleto, Jacobo, the archpriest of Trevi, Brothers Leo and Angelo of the Friars Minor who were close friends of Saint Francis, Brother Mark, chaplain of the monastery, and a notary.

It happened that a "somewhat young" friar, a teacher at St. Bonaventure University, was assigned masses at the Motherhouse the week of Thanksgiving break, the last week of the Liturgical Year. Thus, when Sr. Clement Mary died on Wednesday, November 25th, it fell to that friar to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial and to preach at Sister's funeral. He set off in haste, therefore, to gather information from the sisters who had known "Clem." His associate, Sr. Barbara Sipple, interviewed many of the sisters of the convent and produced a written record of their responses. Sr. Natalina also wrote some recollections.

The First Witness

Sister Pacifica de Guelfuccio of Assisi, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath she knew Saint Clare while that holy woman was in the world in her father's house; and that she was considered by all those who knew her [to be a person] of great honesty and of very good life; and that she was intent upon and occupied with works of piety...

¹²She also said the blessed mother was humble, kind, and loving to her sisters, and had compassion for the sick. While she was healthy, she served them and washed their feet and gave them water with her own hands. Sometimes she washed the mattresses of the sick. Asked how she knew these things, she replied she had seen her many times.

One of the sisters who lived with Sister Clement Mary reported that she was "hospitable; had an attitude and manner of serving, not to be served..."

The Second Witness

Sister Benvenuta of Perugia, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath Lady Clare, former abbess of the monastery of San Damiano, had marvelous humility...

¹⁰She also said her speech was always about the things of God. She did not wish to talk about worldly things or for the sisters to remember these things...

Another of the sisters who lived with Sister Clement Mary reported that sister was "a wonderful listener. She did not speak much but the words she spoke were words of wisdom..."

She would be pained when she observed uncharitableness...

She never, never participated in the rather popular indoor sport of listing the faults and failings of another..."

The Fourth Witness

Sister Amata, daughter of Messer Martino of Coccorano, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath she had been about twenty-five years in that Order and had known Saint Clare...

⁴She was assiduous in prayer and contemplation. When she returned from prayer, her face appeared clearer and more beautiful than the sun. Her prayers sent forth an indescribable sweetness so her life seemed totally heavenly...

"Sister had an aura of holiness... patient endurance... truly a woman of hope..."

Sister had an air of peace about her. She was devoted to the Eucharist and for the past year has really put out great effort to *make it* to chapel for the Liturgy of the Eucharist daily..."

The Fifth Witness

Sister Cristiana de Messer Cristiano de Parisse, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she did not in any way know how to explain the holiness of the life of Lady Clare as well as her uprightness of habits. But it might be, as she firmly believed, she was full of grace, virtue, and their holy operations. She believed all that could be said about the holiness of another woman besides the Virgin Mary, she would say truly about her...

One sister said of Sr. Clement Mary: "Maybe she was the kind of woman Mary, the Mother of God, was ... gentle, unassuming..."

The Tenth Witness

Sister Agnes, the daughter of Messer Oportulo de Bernardo of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she could in no way express the humility, kindness, patience, and the greatness of the holy life and virtues of Lady Clare, as she saw them during the entire time that she stayed in monastery. She said it seemed that every good was in her and nothing reprehensible, so that she could be considered a saint.

One of the sisters reported that "Sister was very prayerful, did lots of spiritual reading..."

Sr. Veronica found words and images from a homily earlier that week to be most appropriate to describe Sr. Clement Mary: "She was a woman of prayer, led by the Spirit, rooted in God..."

The Eleventh Witness

Sister Benvenuta of Lady Diambre of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she had always been under the direction of most holy mother, Lady Clare. The Lady had taught her to love God above all else; secondly, taught her to confess her sins totally and frequently; thirdly, instructed her always to have the Lord's passion in her memory.

Sr. Clement's personality "led her to see the best in everyone. She encouraged people. In the presence of people who might be at odds, she seemed to be *mediator* simply by her presence, not by advice but by her silent concern and graciousness..."

The Thirteenth Witness

Sister Cristiana, daughter of Messer Bernardo da Suppo of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath the same as Sister Beatrice about her manner of living...

²She also said then, ... that she was under the discipline and guidance of Lady Saint Clare whose holiness of life enlightened the entire monastery and infused it with all the virtues and customs required of holy ladies.

Another one of the sisters spoke thus: "Sister was a beautiful person. She was a peaceful presence, quiet, holy... It was these qualities that made it so very pleasant to be in her company -she was truly an edification..."

The Fourteenth Witness

Sister Angeluccia, daughter of Messer Angelico of Spoleto, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

⁷...the death of lady Clare was wonderful and glorious, but one evening a few days before her death, she began to speak to the Trinity and to say very softly other words to God many educated people would hardly understand.

Sister Natalina said: "Sister told me one day when I was taking her to the doctor - a month or so ago (and things weren't looking so great) - that she was aware that she might not have too much time left, but it was OK. She told me that day that she tried to live always in the present of the Lord, that she renewed her vows every day at Mass and she was ready... if or when the Lord called her.

I feel that Sister had a special love relationship with the Lord, that she loved him with her whole heart, soul and mind - and that inner peace of the Lord was the Sr. Clement Mary we saw each day!"

[From the *BULL OF CANONIZATION* (1255)]

O the ineffable brilliance of blessed Clare!
The more eagerly she is sought after for something
the more brilliant she is found in everything!

This woman, I say, was resplendent in the world,
shone brilliantly in her religious life;
enlightened as a radiant beam in her home,
dazzled as lightning in the enclosure.

She shone forth in life;
she is radiant after death.

Sr. Clement Mary was resplendent in the world;
She shone brilliantly in her religious life.
By her silent, graceful presence she has enlightened this home;
by her faith and devotion she has been light for the sisters,
by her love of God and service for others she has become His spouse.

**Sr. Clement Mary shone forth in life;
she is radiant after death.**

Fr. Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M.
St. Bonaventure University
The last day of the Liturgical Year 1992

THE HUMANITY OF DUNS SCOTUS

A Reflection on the Spirituality of Franciscan Christology

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND O.F.M.

John Who?

Recently I was asked to write an article in a British spirituality magazine on "Duns Scotus for the masses," a somewhat daunting task when one is writing for an audience who may never have heard of Duns Scotus. My brief was: "keep it simple..." Can anyone tell me *how* one simplifies the thought of John Duns Scotus? He is after all called "The Subtle Doctor." However, I began to write the article, all the time hearing the echo in my head "Keep it simple"! My own brief was to try to introduce ordinary British readers to the thought and spirituality of this great Franciscan thinker so that they should come to admire and love this great man. It proved an unenviable task. But it struck me as I read and used other material I had written on Scotus that, in the words of the Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, "...Duns Scotus is one of those many prophets not recognized in his own land..." Yet, he is a great European having lived and worked in four different European countries, one of the great minds of the Church, and one of the great thinkers in the Franciscan Order.

I was even more determined that when people asked "John who," they would know who Scotus was, what his principal preoccupation was, and what

Fr. Séamus Mulholland, a Franciscan who now ministers in a parish in London's East End, has pursued advanced studies at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury, England. Much of his study has focused upon the thought of John Duns Scotus.

his contribution to the history of Christian thought had been. The more I read, studied and revised my previous thinking on Scotus, the more I became increasingly aware of the profound humanity of this man. His vision of the universe is breathtaking, and his understanding of Christ within the cosmos can only be described in spirituality terms as a sustained reflection born out of the loving intimacy achieved in the union described in the "Unitive Way." Scotus, I have come to realize, is one of those figures in the great tradition of the Fathers of the Church who knew personally and indescribably intimately the God and Christ about whom they thought and wrote.

This reflection attempts to explore some aspects of Scotus' thought on the Predestination and Primacy of Christ, the Passion and the Immaculate Conception, with a view to highlighting elements of Scotus' spirituality of humanity and the humanity within his spirituality. All this, hopefully, without the academia that research and writing on Scotus at times necessitates - so that like the British readers for whom I have just written, others may come to admire and love this great Franciscan friar, scholar, thinker, writer and unrecognized mystic.

Like St. Francis, to whose vision Scotus always remained faithful (despite what some scholars think), Scotus died in his early 40s without getting the opportunity to revise his works. It is, perhaps, because he died so young and was unable to do this which makes Scotus' thought so complex and difficult to understand. We can only speculate on what might have been had he lived longer, but when we realize such speculation is useless, we can grieve for what might have been. Notwithstanding the fact of the complexity of his thought, careful study of Scotus repays fruitful dividends.

When we study Scotus there is no doubt that one knows one is in the presence of a singularly brilliant and keenly perceptive mind. But one also realizes that these thoughts on such a diversity of theological subjects can only come from a profoundly saintly man. Those who castigate Scotus through using the epithet "subtle" in a pejorative sense, do so because they fail to see beneath the subtlety. They see only the sharpness of his intellect, yet cannot see his heart. They fail to see the prayer and the experience of intimate union with the God about whom he is writing.

John Duns Scotus stands for us today as an example of how the mind and heart can work in harmonious union to bring about not just brilliant intellectual, theological, or philosophical insights, but also the lived experience of the meaning of love and in which to proclaim the Gospel which is the rule and life of every Friar Minor who attempts to seek union with God.

Duns Scotus and St. Francis

It is not for nothing that Scotus is called "The Subtle Doctor" but if we set aside the pejorative use of this epithet we can come to a deeper understanding of the dynamism and vitality of his vision of the cosmos. Scotus can drain the last ounce of meaning out of any word, yet he is attuned to the nuances of language, and at the same time understands the limitations of language. There are moments in Scotus' thought when we are faced with the reality of Wittenstein's dictum of "That whereof we cannot speak, thus we must pass over in silence." Even in his doctrine of the Primacy of Christ we can explain and explore it, see its beauty and its glory, yet perhaps feel that we are intruding in one man's deep, loving expression of his own spiritual life and quietly retire to a respectful distance lest we interrupt this dialogue between Scotus and his God.

When one studies Scotus it is like watching the sophisticated movements of an acrobat, the graceful movement of a ballerina, or the beauty of an ice-dancer. Scotus is an intellectual choreographer - for he unites clarity of thought and vision with the intricate movement of language. Each statement is precise, without being pedantic; and each statement carries with it its own unabashed Christian conviction, a tremendous intellectual and spiritual power.

However, lest anyone think whilst reading this that Scotus' thought is nothing more than a raid upon the theologically and philosophically inarticulate, let me hasten to say that such is not the case. Scotus is above all a Franciscan. We may think at first that the area of such intense intellectual speculation does not lie within the parameters of the vision of the universe as St. Francis saw and experienced it, and that, therefore, such intellectualism is out of place compared to the simplicity of St. Francis. But this is not so, especially in the case of Duns Scotus. Scotus did not join the Dominicans, nor the Benedictines; he joined the Order of Friars Minor and his formation was **Franciscan** formation. Scotus and his theological thought are deeply rooted in the Franciscan tradition. And this is most evident in his doctrine of the Primacy of Christ. It is Scotus' vision of the Cosmic Christ within the hierarchy of love which places him next to St. Francis both in vision and feelings.

What Francis gave expression to in the simplicity of his poetry, song, drama and mysticism, Scotus gives expression to in his unbridled speculation and profundity of thought which is so combined with a richly toned clarity of vision that it may be truly called mystical. Scotus' theology is not just the result of the application of the mind to the great problems and questions which beset us all, but also the application of the heart, soul and spirit. Scotus' theology is not just "theo-logos," words concerning God; it is also "pneuema-logos," words of the Spirit. The words of the Spirit that can only come from a life lived in prayer and

contemplation of the most inaccessible of the Mysteries: God Himself. Scotus and St. Francis stand side-by-side in the beauty and simplicity of their vision and their experience of the Most High God - for each comes to their conclusions as a result of intimate loving union.

The Beginning, Middle and End of Scotus' Theology

So, yes, Scotus is difficult to understand but he may be easily understood if we consider what the beginning and end point of Scotus' theology was. Like St. Francis, Scotus bases his theological endeavors and vision on Love. For Duns Scotus, the beginning, middle, and end of all his study, teaching, thought and explanation was Love. Even in his ethical thought it is Love which predominates. In his understanding of Christ it is Love which is the hermeneutic, and always remains so. It is the same hermeneutic principle which is applied to his understanding and explanation of the Redemption.

Love brings with it its own simplicity, and if this central preoccupation of Scotus is applied to the structures of his own thought, then we can say in all honesty that Scotus' brilliant intellectual capacity has its basis in this same simplicity, for what Scotus gives us is not typical dry Scholastic theology. Rather, we are offered a vision of humanity that is rich in its grasp of what is most essential to the human condition, Love. And this is also the key to understanding the humanity of Scotus' theology and spirituality. In the theology of Duns Scotus there is no contradiction or distinction between mind, heart, spirit. Intellect and Will, Logic and Love, Mind and Heart are so intimately bound together in close union that we may say that Scotus' logic and intellect are merely the paint and brushes with which he paints his picture of Love on the canvas of Medieval thought. Scotus understood and experienced God as Love first and foremost, and so in the Franciscan tradition he sees that theology has practical consequences - and is not just about abstract thought or intellectual indulgence. Perhaps, after St. Paul, he is the Theologian of Human Liberation.

*Scotus is difficult to understand but . . .
offered a vision of humanity that is rich in its grasp
of what is most essential to the human condition,
Love.*

Scotus and the Purpose of Theology

Scotus saw the basic purpose of theology as union with God in *this* life. It was not for some glorious future, it could be realized here and now. This is so because as far as Scotus was concerned God is Love. This and only this. Even when he is philosophically speculating in the realm of the Univocity of Being, he always says that God is Love. This is God's Being. This is His life. If God is Love, says Scotus, then the ultimate purpose of theology is the love of God and to love God above all else. For Scotus, there is only one subject-object in theology: the God Who is Love and the Love Who is God. Here Scotus makes a connection between philosophical theology and theology per se. He notes that God reveals himself in Exodus 3:14 as "I am Who am," which is abstract and ontological. Yet, he goes on to say, we know from St. John what this ontos of God is: Love (*1 John* 4:8). So even the abstraction of ontology is revealed as Love.

God is Love, says Scotus, and this being the case, since everything has its origins in God, everything has its origins in Love. It is not necessary for God to create; He does not have to do it, yet He does do it, why? - because God is Love and so He creates out of Love because He wishes to reveal and communicate Himself to others as the fullness of His own Love.

The Hierarchy of Love

God is Love. But Scotus does not leave it there. He begins the process of breaking down this love in understandable terms of a hierarchy. It sounds complicated but it is not because for all Scotus' intellectual complexity his insistence is always on the simplicity of God as Love. In this hierarchy, the highest and greatest manifestation of God's Love is the Man-God, Jesus Christ. In Scotus' understanding Christ is predestined from all eternity to be this highest manifestation of the Trinity, the God who is Love. Thus here is humanity at the heart of the Godhead *before* its historical or existential facticity and it is already loving God in his own mystery. Christ is the *greatest* manifestation in this hierarchy of love, all others are willed to be a predestined to grace and glory in relation to Christ. What Scotus means by this is simple enough and further evidence of his own spirituality and humanity: Christ is the *FIRST* lover of the Trinity, all others are "co-lovers" with Christ. But yet again, Scotus does not leave it there, more needs to be said and this he does. His understanding is that in view of this end i.e. Love of the Trinity by all creation, God also wills the means for this - Grace. Nature, therefore, is the lowest in this hierarchy but it too is directly ordained to the supernatural order of grace and glory. What is clear thus far is that Scotus begins and ends with the Love of God and the God Who is Love for all his theological reflections and his lived spirituality. In this light,

he is surely, not only a true son of St. Francis, but also THE theologian of the Love of God in the Franciscan tradition.

The Primacy of Christ: Scotus' Crowning Achievement

On the basis of what has already been said concerning Scotus' preoccupation with the Love of God and the God Who is love, I would like to offer a different approach to his crowning glory - the Doctrine of the Absolute Predestination and Primacy of Christ. While staying true to Scotus' doctrine I would like to reflect upon its human and spiritual consequences for it is here that we meet the mystic, the poet, the Franciscan, the man of simple faith, trust, humility, but above all we meet the lover of the Lover. This is Scotus' greatest and unequalled bequest to theology, the Church and to a glorious anthropological vision which has for its center God made Man. Once again it appears extremely complex, but if we keep in mind Scotus' starting point - the God Who is Love - then it is more readily understood.

Scotus encounters and reflects upon Christ within the context of His being the greatest manifestation of the Blessed Trinity. Using his own understanding of 2 Cor. "...all things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ..." Scotus goes on to experience and explore an understanding of Christ, which while speculative, is not only within the Franciscan tradition but owes much, spiritually, to the Fathers of the Church. For Scotus the Incarnation of the Son of God is itself a manifestation of God's infinite Love in the historicity of human terms, and this Incarnation is willed by God from all eternity quite apart from His knowing that humanity would fall.

Unlike others who were exploring the Reason for the Incarnation, Scotus does not begin with any hypothetical question as to what God would or would not have done in the event of sin. He begins with what God has already done. Indeed, even when Scotus does mention this question he does so from an entirely different perspective and considers the question in the light of what he has already said concerning Christ's predestination and primacy as Son of God. Scotus asks a radically different question, which has powerful implications for our contemporary understanding of the nature of man's goodness: Is the Predestination of Christ to grace and glory necessarily dependent on the Fall of Man in Adam? Scotus admits that many authorities suggest that such seems to be the case but, while not denying the necessity of Redemption Scotus argues against this view. Even at this early stage in his thought, sin in relation to the Incarnation does not occupy too high a place.

Scotus' vision is based on what he has already said concerning the hierarchy of love in the mind of God. God predestines all things to grace and glory *before*

His own prevision of their fall. And Scotus goes on to say, this is even more the case in respect to the soul of Christ which was predestined to receive the fullness of and highest glory possible before the fact of the Fall. This need not cause us any headaches trying to understand it because Scotus bases this part of his thought on the orderedness of God's creative activity. He says that since God wills in order and not in contradiction, God first intends what is closest to the end. So, just as God intends one to have glory *before* they have grace among those whom God has already predestined to glory, He would seem to intend *first* the glory of the one He wishes to be nearest the end, that is, Christ. Therefore, God wills glory to the soul of Christ before any other, and He wills to glory every other soul in relation to that.

The Predestination: The Highest Love in Scotus

In part III of the *Ordinatio* dist. no. 19 Scotus gives his own position on the Incarnation. It is a vision which is rich in love and mercy, which has a wonderful vision of the residual goodness in humanity, and which gives to the Incarnation the central place in the Universe so that all things come from God through it and so will eventually return to God through it. The depth of spirituality is evident and his own experience of not only being redeemed by Christ, but being loved by God in Christ is obvious, for his reflection on the Incarnation is yet another mystical experience - as if Scotus has glimpsed the deliberations in the court of Heaven before Creation and hears God say, "Let us make man in our own image" and sees the Incarnation already form in the mind of God.

Scotus' argument is that the Incarnation of the Son of God was not foreseen as being brought about by humanity's sin. On the contrary, it was seen by God from ALL eternity as a good nearer the end. So, Christ in his human nature is foreseen as closer to the end than any other (Scotus is here speaking of all the predestined - including ourselves) because each soul was ordered to grace and glory *before* the foreseeing of their fall. To understand this even better we might say Scotus sees the prevision of God in the following order:

In the **first** place God sees the highest good; in the **second** place God saw all creatures; in the **third** place God predestined some to grace and glory; in the **fourth** place God foresaw all those who would fall in Adam; in the **fifth** place God foresaw and preordained a remedy for that Fall, namely the Redemption through the Passion and Death of Christ, the Incarnate Son. Scotus adds to his argument by asserting that this being the case, Christ, as regards his Incarnation, as with the elect was *first* predestined to grace and glory *before* the Passion was seen as a remedy for sin (in much the same way, says Scotus, that a doctor wills the health of his patient before curing him).

So, Scotus' conclusion is that just as all the predestined were first predestined before the Redemption was foreseen as a remedy against their fall, so the Blessed Trinity first preordained the predestined to grace and glory, before seeing the Passion and Death of Christ as a medicine (Scotus' words) for those who would fall in Adam. So what is Scotus really saying? What is really going inside his heart in this explanation? Well, from Scotus' argument it may be safely asserted that the Incarnation was not brought about by, nor is it merely a response to, the fall of humanity from grace. On the contrary, Christ takes his place in creation before the foreseeing of sin. It is also clear that for Duns Scotus the Redemption is only PART of the total Christ-Event in the Incarnation of the Word.

So, Scotus does not consider the necessity of Redemption as the Primary motive for the Incarnation but rather that the Incarnation of the Son of God was always in the mind before, during and after the fact of the Fall. Surely something wonderful is being said here about how God loves humanity in Christ predestined to grace and glory as Center of the Universe? In his doctrine of the Predestination and Primacy Scotus was certainly going against the mainstream of Scholastic thought, even though one may argue that there is a good case for asserting that many of the Fathers of the Church held to such a position. However, Scotus remains unshakable in his theological conviction, precisely because it is born out of deep prayer and experience of intimate union. His doctrine is a simple, yet profound reflective explanation resulting from his own deeply rooted theological, prayerful, mystical and poetic exploration of the reality, as he sees and experiences it, of the God Who is Love and the Love of God as it is made manifest in the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.

Scotus defines predestination as "...the preordaining of a rational creature to grace and glory and the means to attain that glory..." He has already argued against the commonly held theory of the Incarnation as being necessitated by the Fall of humanity. His argument for this is quite stunning for it is a leap into the very heart of the Love of God and the God Who is Love. Once again we may explain his argument in terms of a 1,2,3,4,5, that is, in an ordered way. However, while we are dealing strictly with a speculative theological position here, what it most certainly clear is that intellect and logic are at the service of spirituality and speculative intellect is submissive to the Will which is the seat of Love in Scotus' thought. The outcome of Scotus' doctrine of the Predestination of Christ is an unforgettable experience of the Love of God and the God Who is Love permeating every facet of the universe and as John Donne has written on the love of God it batters our heart, and ravishes us.

Scotus' argument for the Predestination and Primacy of Christ is as follows: **Firstly:** God loves Himself. **Secondly:** God loves Himself in others and this is

a most holy and ordered love. **Thirdly:** God wills that He be loved by another who can love Him perfectly (and here Scotus is referring to someone's love outside God). So, he argues, **Fourthly:** God foresees the union between Himself, the Word and the creature Christ, who owes Him a supreme love *even if there had been no sin*. **Fifthly:** God sees Christ as Mediator between Himself and God coming to suffer and redeem His people from sin. Now, because God is Love, He necessarily loves Himself first. God knows Himself and He knows that He is infinite blessedness. This Divine Life is sealed in the procession of the Holy Spirit who is Personal Love.

So at this point Scotus has moved beautifully from a consideration of the Love of God, the place of Christ in the Universe, to a profound spiritual reflection on the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity. The reason for ALL the Divine activity is found in the very nature of the Love of God Himself: a love that is ordered, free and holy and in which He loves Himself forever. God also loves Himself in others and this love is unselfish since God is the cause of all the creatures. This Divine Love tends to "spill over" or diffuse itself, here is Scotus at his most Platonic (though closer to neoplatonism), and God wills that He be loved by another who can love Him as perfectly as He loves Himself, that is, Christ. God also wills that other creatures love the same object that He loves since it is the very nature of love to want the object which is loved to be loved by others since such love knows no jealousy or envy.

*Scotus was a man who knew Christ. . .
He is the embodiment of his own principle that the
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God in this life...*

So, for God to will others to love the Divine Essence that is Himself is to will others to have this love in them and it is at this point in the Divine intention that Scotus places his understanding of Predestination. He quotes Richard of St. Victor, when he says "Love loving perfectly, wishes the Loved to be loved." And now Scotus has arrived at the most sublime, cosmic exploration and reflection on the generation of Eternal Love: God, loving Himself, wills to have co-lovers because He is Love. Scotus goes on to assert that since the motive of all God's activity outside Himself is the glory of the Divine Essence by Love, in Love, for Love and through Love, God first decrees the existence of Christ in whom God is glorified in all creatures in the highest possible way.

Scotus and the Perfection of Christ's Love

This homage of the Incarnation contains, for Scotus, the most perfect love and so bears within itself the love of ALL creatures. But Scotus continues to insist that the final reason for God's activity outside Himself is the Incarnate Word in whom Creator and creatures are united for ever. It is Christ who is the first intended of these co-lovers. Because of His perfect love, and as a consequence of Predestination, God wills the whole of the order of grace and nature. In other words, there is creation only because there is Love. The Love of God and the God Who is Love is also the supreme purpose of Revelation. The truths which have been made known to us are not there simply to offer perspectives to our intellects, rather, they are there so that we should and foremost love God.

It is in this sense that Scotus understands there can be no separation between Theology and Spirituality and certainly there is no such separation in Scotus' own life. Revelation was made to direct the activity of the Will to its final end and its highest and most noble endeavor: the love of God Who is Love. So, we have come full circle and have returned to our starting point: God and God's Love. It is within this understanding of Love that a brief exploration of the spirituality of Scotus' understanding of the necessity of Redemption and the Passion and Death of Christ can be explored. When Scotus does consider this issue he does so beautifully and in a profoundly moving way because once again it is Love which is the central preoccupation.

The Necessity of Redemption and the Passion in Scotus

When Scotus considers those authorities who say that sin is the reason for the Incarnation, he argues that this position can be explained in the sense that Christ would not have come as Redeemer if there had been no sin to redeem. Scotus accepts this saying that since there had been no sin to redeem there would have been no need of redemption. But Scotus' position vis-a-vis the Primacy and Predestination of Christ is not based solely on the necessity of Redemption and he argues that it was not because of the Redemption that the soul of Christ was predestined to glory. Why not? Well, Scotus argues with a stunning simplicity, because the redemption or even the glory of ALL souls that are to be redeemed cannot be compared to the glory of the soul of Christ! Scotus pushes this even further when he says that it is unlikely that the highest good in the universe, that is the Incarnation, is a chance occurrence dependent on the fall of humanity. In other words, it does not make sense that the highest good took place only because of a lesser good. He concludes by arguing that it would be most unlikely, as well as contrary to God's ordered act, if the soul of Adam was predestined to such a good before the soul of Christ. So, on the basis of this what is Scotus'

The Incarnation is the greatest expression of God's love for Humanity. That Christ has come as a Redeemer is secondary in the mind of God because Scotus cannot allow that the highest good is dependent on an inferior good, that is, the need for Redemption. God, he says, freely chose to create angels and humanity with free will, He foresaw their fall, and having foreseen their fall, he also willed Christ as Redeemer through his suffering and death. So, as always, the context is that of Love. Scotus views the Primacy of Christ and the Redemption as a loving expression of the highest justice, mercy and love of God. This mercy is shown in the Blessed Trinity who sent Christ, the Word Incarnate, who offered himself up on the cross for humanity which was alienated from God through sin. Justice is to be found in the repairing of the damage done by humanity and in the reconciliation of that humanity with God.

When Scotus speaks of the Passion of Christ and considers the blood that was shed, it is simple, prayerful, reverent and moving. He saw the Passion and Death of Christ as the culmination of his love for the Trinity and humanity - the ultimate service he was predestined for. By this service Christ became humanity's unique means of salvation and the only Mediator between God and Creation. This vision of the Redemption, where Love is made central and not sin, could not have come from anyone who had not already lived out the effect of Christ's redemptive act in their own life. It must come from Scotus' life of prayer: a life steeped in Christ, a life steeped in God Who is love and the love of God. In the theology of Scotus everything is subordinated to the spiritual life with Christ as the Center. There can be no doubt that John Duns Scotus is at one with the vision of St. Francis of Assisi and there is much we ourselves can reflect upon.

Some Final Thoughts

Scotus was a man who knew Christ, not just intellectually but in his own heart. His work shines with a radiant vision of humanity perfectly expressed in the Incarnation from all eternity and the predestination of Christ to glory. He is the embodiment of his own principle that the purpose of theology is union with God in this life - and that is the essence of his mysticism. Scotus' spirituality is undoubtedly Franciscan. The recent beatification of Scotus is a source of great joy to the whole order, my own Province and the people of Scotland which gave him birth. There is a singular warmth and attractiveness about this man who put an awesome mind at the service of the great love of God and the God Who is Love. So once again we have ended where we started: with the Love of God and the God Who is Love. There is where John Duns Scotus, Franciscan, priest, scholar and lover of the love of God began and ended. And it is this which gives the theology of Scotus its great accessible humanity - for Love is humanity loved in the Incarnate Christ in Duns Scotus.

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BROTHERS GATHERED AT THE PORTIUNCULA JOINTLY WROTE THE SO-CALLED "RATIO FORMATIONIS FRANCISCANAE"

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. In the year of grace and freedom 1990, the year in which the brothers of the young Provinces of Brazil began to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of missionaries from Saxony in Germany and in which they themselves took the action of sending their first missionaries to Angola; the year in which several frontiers disappeared, never again to be instruments of separation between people of good will but rather to unite them and enable them to share in a common destiny; while the Fraternity prepared for the Chapter of Pentecost under the protection of Blessed Diego of Alcalá; following the commemoration of the transitus of Francis, our Father and Brother, behold, about one hundred and twenty friars, all of them masters and formators, gathered under divine inspiration, each with his letter of obedience from the General Curia in Rome. This meeting in the Portiuncula was for the purpose of studying the "priorities" of Franciscan "Formation" and of drawing up a document that would be important for the whole Fraternity and for the world. This document they decided to call a "Formation Plan" or "Ratio Formationis."

During the four weeks of their stay at the "Domus Pacis" their sharing of ideas in an atmosphere of peace enabled them to gain a profound understanding of what the Holy Spirit is saying today to the Provinces and to the brothers. They

Fr. Hermann Schalück, O.F.M., General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, whose creative and insightful reminiscences have been applauded by many readers of The CORD, here offers an inspiring reflection on how the Brothers came together to write a Franciscan Plan for Formation.

followed an inductive rather than a deductive method, while they were full of joy at the sight of the many signs of life and growth which became obvious throughout the Fraternity. All of this they gave expression to in the "Ratio" we have mentioned, as a means of helping all the friars, as time went on, to enliven and cultivate all the gifts of the Spirit which may lie dormant in them; to wit, the gifts of contemplation and of action, the gifts of the word and of silence, of animation and of organization, of teaching and of study, of preaching and of working with their hands, of caring and of consoling.

Some of the results of that meeting are set down here in simple words for the edification of all those who may come to this Curia after us and as a help for all those sent by God who may desire to improve their formation and to instruct their brothers.

2. First of all, they dedicated themselves to contemplation in all its aspects, under the guidance of a certain Brother Premanand of Bengal. The name of this dear brother means: "The Beloved of God." So as to introduce us into the mystery of education in the Spirit of God and make us become conscious of the grandeur, and the beauty, as well as the difficulties of the task of educating young friars, he availed himself particularly of the profundity and the mysterious complexity of art, especially the art of MUSIC. He began by quoting John Crysostom, doctor of the Church, and spoke to us, using his words: "There is no greater art than that of education. The person to whom this art has been given must be a more complete artist than a composer, a painter, a sculptor or a musician." Granted what he called the "dynamic character" of Franciscan formation and education, he then quoted a mystic of his own country, distant India. "Does not the sorrow of unsung songs break the strings of my lute?" (R. Tagore). Finally he quoted an anonymous German poet who, upon seeing the walls of Europe collapsing, had exclaimed: "When the Lord intones the ode of history, I want to be flute, guitar, harp and cymbal. I would wish him to inspire me with sweet music and melody."

Brother Premamand earnestly exhorted all to come to know and learn new songs, new rhythms (cf. *Ps* 32:2): the music of wind and sea, the unfinished symphony of the universe, the hymn of flowers and the murmur of rocks, the melody of a pure heart and the "steady chant" of the other cultures of religions, particularly those of the poor; to remember also - if it should be necessary - that after the example of certain figures who have preceded us in the faith, it is possible to sing in a furnace (cf. *Dan* 3) as also in the belly of a whale (*Jonah*).

So, thanks to these suggestions, all reflected on the best way to proceed in the future in the "Formation of oneself and of others."

3. Next came the discourse on holy THEOLOGY. A certain Brother Anthony, a most learned man coming from a university situated in the holy city called Eternal Rome, gave an exposition on "theology as a science according to St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and Blessed John Duns Scotus." After this all shared their own experiences and reflected on what they should say in the "Ratio" apropos to this sacred science. They recognized more clearly than ever how important it is for the Friars Minor to interpret at once courageously and humbly, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the signs of the times both past and present (cf. *GS* 4), and to conceive liberating utopias for the future; for they should remember that it is a matter of general experience that those without utopias or dreams become transformed into slaves and are filled with hatred. They came to understand that for all people there is a propitious time: a time for meetings, articles and scientific symposia, but also a time for attending the school of the poor and working in a soup kitchen (G. Gutierrez). Was it not true that the Lord had explained his word to our Father Francis when through the "inductive method" he led him among the poor, in order to show mercy to them? (*Test*) So from now on, the younger friars, wherever they may be, should understand more clearly and with eyes and hearts illumined, announce as "minors" the good news of the "God who is forever minor." This means that with a watchful eye and in solidarity with the suffering Christ in the heart of the today's world, we should look more carefully into the face of the poor. It was not necessary to look for anything else - Br. Anthony confirmed - in the living heritage that our illustrious predecessors, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and others have left us. And they all reflected on how to proceed better in the future, "in the formation of themselves and others," thanks to these suggestions.

4. Then the important treatise of history was taken up. A certain Brother Francis of the empire of the Aztecs and the Mayas gave another notable exposition on the subject: "Whoever has no memory, has no history." He declared that in the Fraternity, as in the universal Church, it was important to write and to understand history, not as a history of victors and conquerors, but as a history seen from the perspective of the humble, of the oppressed, and of all those who had been outcasts from their countries, but who, according to the promises of Our Lord, will one day possess the land (cf. *Mt* 6). He knew how to stress in a gentle but convincing manner that for those of us who have promised to become genuine "minors," the history of evangelization should neither be written nor taught with the eyes and hearts of those who manned the ships of the "conquistadors," but with the eyes and the anguished hearts of those who in those past centuries were standing on the seashore and looking out at the approach of the ships of the conquerors. In this respect he advised us to "structure" the study of history, of our faith, of our Church and of our Fraternity in such a manner that

it could be of interest to all marginalized brothers and sisters of all the continents, who are nameless, with no one to console them, and have even been forgotten by "official" history.

All began to reflect on how to proceed better in the future in the process of "renewing themselves and others," thanks to these suggestions.

5. The brothers gathered together in the Portiuncula did not neglect to reflect upon a new PEDAGOGY and a new PSYCHOLOGY which could be very useful at least for the internal growth of the Fraternity. A certain Brother Hyacinth of South Africa gave a learned discourse on the theme: "The road is open ahead of you but the obstacles on the way are within you." With great sensitivity he showed how he who is called "master" and formator, must himself be constantly learning; how we as "minors" can learn from the poor; how active

*"If you wish to provide for one year, sow
some grain.
If you wish to provide for two, plant a tree.
If you wish to provide for a hundred years,
consecrate yourself to your brothers.
Because if you sow grain, you can only
harvest once.
If you plant a tree, you will be able to
harvest ten times.
But if you form human beings,
you will harvest a hundred times."*

non-violence is not a virtue of the weak but rather of the strong and courageous, of those who are pure of heart (cf. Mt 6). How important it is to accept the dark shadows in one's life, "to transform one's anger into strength," to have the patience and the bravery to advance by slow steps, never looking down upon the small and insignificant. He exhorted all in the words of the famous Thomas More, not to abandon ship because the wind is so much stronger than we are "Utopia", but rather to learn thoroughly and patiently the strength of helplessness. He ended his words by saying: "If many little people in many little places of the world do very many little things with a little bit of courage, something great

happen." When they heard this they realized that in the new "Ratio" reference should be made to love for the "smoldering wick" (Mt 12:20) and the glance full of love for the "broken reed" (Is 42:3). For even in this age of computers and satellites the most effective techniques of communication continue to be attentive listening, fraternal conversation and "fraternal correction." So all the brothers, wherever they may be, should be convinced that the only constant in their life is the need for continual change.

Again all reflected on the best method of making further progress in "their own formation and that of others," thanks to these suggestions.

6. A short but important chapter was devoted to ASCETICISM. Br. Nicholas of North America spoke about the hurt that can come both from the struggle against the unjust suffering of the humble and the poor, and of the commitment, not to capitalism or socialism but to a more just order for all. He complained vehemently that among the Fraternity there are still ministers and brothers for whom one of the most dangerous sounds in the world was that of brave, committed people who thought in a loud voice. He said it was a question of sharing with "compassion" in the passion of Jesus in the poor of today. He wished all brothers, wherever they may be, to recognize more clearly that "he who suffers enriches and heals the world." He demanded that the friars, both clerical and lay, exercise without distinctions and with equal dignity and competence the "ministry of reconciliation, peace and of solidarity with the weak"; and that which they found repugnant should be considered a grace, with the disposition of the spirit of Poor Man of Assisi.

Again all realized that something should be inserted in the "Ratio" concerning this renewed asceticism.

7. Finally he developed the theme of EVANGELIZATION and the third "priority" of these six years: formation in a missionary spirit. In the "Preliminary and Marginal Notes" of this important theme of a certain Germanicus of Freiburg, it was stated that a fraternity which is not a serving fraternity is of no practical use. The Church of Jesus, he said, should at all times, including our times, be the valiant bearer of the "memoria" of Jesus by being in the front line of the struggle in favor of the utopia of the Reign of God, of peace and justice and the reconciliation of human beings with the entire cosmos. There is question, he said, of sowing in many places, in the spirit of creative fidelity and of faithful creativity, the gospel seed of hope in the future and being able to wait patiently for growth and the harvest. Something which should not be one of the lesser preoccupations of the fraternity is that of being a sign of salvation among men and women even under new forms (cf. CCGG 84; 87,3).

The brother called attention to the necessity of studying other languages and of establishing numerous international fraternities as witnesses of the new world and new forms of evangelization. For it matters little - and this was his final word - that a brother came from Bavaria or Bengal, France or Guinea, Thailand or Germany, Saxony or Siam, since all are equal in Jesus Christ (cf. *Gal 3:28*). He exhorted each member of the Fraternity to undertake a "new exodus," using the words of a Buddhist proverb: "The frog that lives in a fountain has no idea of the immensity of the ocean." Therefore all must learn to see further than their noses in order to recognize with new and pure eyes the traces of the Reign of God in the entire world and in all of creation.

All took to reflecting on what they should do in order "to be formed themselves, and to form others," thanks to these suggestions.

8. By way of ending this memorable reunion, the Masters held a silent prayer meeting around the little chapel of the Portiuncula, in that very place where Brother Francis had been "formed" by the Lord. Having spent one hour in silent contemplation, all heard, each in his own language, the words which Brother Francis spoke from high up on the ancient walls:

"If you wish to provide for one year, sow some grain.
If you wish to provide for two, plant a tree.
If you wish to provide for a hundred years,
consecrate yourself to your brothers.
Because if you sow grain, you can only harvest once.
If you plant a tree, you will be able to
harvest ten times.
But if you form human beings,
you will harvest a hundred times."

He then added in a low voice:

"You are only followers. Pray to the Lord, the only Master (cf. *Mt 23:8*), that you may also be precursors."

Then they all went home consoled and strengthened, filled with salutary restlessness - Masters to their Provinces, and the rest to Rome, to the place called the Curia.

In praise of Christ. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit, vixit
et fideliter conscripsit
Frater Hermannus Transalpinus
in civitate Lipsiae Saxoniae,
die 1.1 A.D. 1991

The Canonization of the Czechs' Agnes

PETR PIT'HA

(TRANSLATED BY SERGIUS WROBLEWSKI, O.F.M.)

On the 12th of November 1989, Pope John Paul II canonized in Rome the Czech, Blessed Agnes. From the day of her death (March 2, 1282) more than 700 years have elapsed. It is well to remember her life and works in order to understand the meaning of the canonization.

Agnes (Aneska in Czech) whose nation calls her "a royal daughter" was a princess from the Premysl family, the only native dynasty which ruled the Czechs. Known in the world as the Czech Agnes, or Agnes of Prague, she had among her own the name Anezka of Premysl and that indicated the fact that she belonged to a family which symbolized Czech independence and sovereignty. The Czechs emphasize that she was a daughter of the same family as the patron saint of their land, St. Wenceslaus, and the first Czech saint - St. Ludmila.

The exact date of the birth of Agnes is not known but it occurred at a time when two outstanding events took place in the history of the Czech people: in the year 1204 Pope Innocent III canonized St. Prokop, and in 1212 Emperor Frederick II conceded to Czech authorities the hereditary royal title. In this way,

This article by Petr Pit'Ha, originally entitled KANONIZACE ANEZKY CESKE, was translated into Polish by Juliusz Zychowicz and first published as KANONIZACJA AGNIESZKI CZESKIEJ in TYGODNIK POWSZECHNY 43 (1989). The editors of The CORD wish to express their thanks to the editors of Tygodnik Powszechny for permission to publish this article and to Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M. for his translation of the article from Polish into English.

according to medieval standards, the Czechs were fully recognized as a nation from the cultural and political point of view.

Agnes' father was the powerful king Ottokar I of Premysl. Her mother was Constantia, daughter of the Hungarian King Bela III. The fate of royal daughters at that time was only seemingly a happy one. For, in fact, the daughters of magnates were, above all, pawns in the political game of their fathers. Armed tensions and conflicts in those times were as a rule resolved by marriage proposals that bound countries according to the will of politicians. In this way the personal lives of little children were often predetermined. The Church tried, though totally ineffectively, to defend their rights to a free decision in the question of marriage, at least their free consent. Anna of Premysl and her younger sister Agnes (probably a three year old at the time) were engaged to the sons of Prince Henry the Bearded from Silesia and his wife, St. Hedwig. Both princesses were brought to Silesia to be educated in the environment and customs of that country, where they were to live at the side of their husbands. St. Hedwig herself brought up the older Ann. The little Agnes was cared for at the monastery at Trzebnicy; Hedwig's daughter looked after her.

The sudden death of her fiancée freed Agnes who was able to return to the land of the Czechs. The nuns in the Norbertine monastery at Doksan looked after her education. The talented Agnes acquired here a solid foundation. But even that stay did not last long. The young girl, more or less 18, was again engaged and taken to Austria where she was to be brought up as the wife of Henry, son of Emperor Frederick II. The quiet Agnes was somewhat out of place at the plush and lively court of the Babenbergs. For she always sought obscurity and avoided parties. Instead she searched out the needy and the poor in order to serve them with alms and by works of mercy.

The young Henry, influenced by the magnates of the Emperor and against the will of his father, suddenly rejected Agnes and took as his wife Margaret Babenberg, the daughter of her protector Leopold. This move actually unsettled the political equilibrium in Europe and resounded in all the European royal courts. Such a betrayal and offense was a cause for war. As the rejected Agnes was returning to Prague, both countries mustered their armies. But it never came to a serious armed clash, because Agnes herself argued against a punitive expedition of Czechs into Austria. Contemporary witnesses saw in this a miracle that she pacified her father's anger before whom knights and magnates trembled like an aspen leaf.

Once more protracted negotiations were carried out to marry Agnes off. There came to Prague delegations from the English king Henry III and from the Emperor Frederick II who had become a widower. In those times it would not have been surprising for Agnes to have become the wife of a would-be father-

in-law. But she herself was already giving her heart and strong will to a different Lover. For a long time she was fascinated by the work and spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, so that she had decided to leave the world of magnates and the rich and to go among the poor and the needy; to leave the realm of intrigue and war for the realm of service and love. Hence she rejected the emperor's crown and entered the Poor Clares. Her decision and solemn taking of the veil caused a sensation which many contemporary chronicles mention.

Her entry into a convent was not the gesture of a disillusioned and bitter woman nor the flight of a weak creature incapable of carrying life's burdens. Agnes did not despise the world and its positive values, but rather chose higher ones: service and love.

With a vigor worthy of a sovereign, she founded three churches, a Franciscan friary, a Poor Clare monastery and a big hospital just opposite the royal residence at Hradczanach on the shore of the Vltava river. This complex of buildings built on the gothic style then current was situated in the midst of the rich Czechs, as a center where life was differently understood and guided by different laws. Agnes established in her homes an oasis for God's Kingdom.

Her long cloistered life was not a quiet one; she had many battles to wage. The first of these was the battle for the preservation of the original Franciscan ideal.

Her long cloistered life was not a quiet one; she had many battles to wage. The first of these was the battle for the preservation of the original Franciscan ideal. Agnes got to know the Franciscans at the royal courts in Austria and Prague to which came outstanding representatives of the esteemed Order, often as diplomats of the Church. In Eastern and Western Europe the Franciscan movement at first affected the upper classes of society, although it was otherwise in Italy at the beginning. Nevertheless, Agnes was to come to know the original ideal of St. Francis based on pure poverty. A few nuns from St. Clare's circle at St. Damian's in Assisi came to the newly erected monastery at Prague. These nuns showed Agnes the new, and until then unknown to her, deep sense of the Franciscan ideal and informed her about St. Clare's futile efforts to allow the Order to keep the original severe rule. For practical reasons the Church authorities did not want to allow the Poor Clares absolute poverty, such as

practiced when Francis and Clare had around them a handful of brothers and sisters. That became in practice difficult and almost impossible when both male and female branches of the Order started to develop and grow numerically. For that reason the Roman curia gave the Sisters a changed version of the rule.

The sensitive Agnes was taken up with the original ideal of total poverty. The sister of the powerful and influential Czech king stood with St. Clare and initiated a struggle lasting many years to recover for the female branch of the Order the primitive Franciscan rule. She carried on a lively correspondence with St. Clare, but unfortunately only four letters of Clare written to Prague survived. She also carried on a lengthy correspondence with the pope. She succeeded in obtaining a series of minor concessions for her monastery in Prague as far as the primitive rule was concerned but in the end she was told not to speak or think about the matter any more. It seemed that this severe verdict prejudged the fate of the female Franciscan movement. Shortly afterwards, however, the Pope visited the dying St. Clare and, overcome by the spiritual power that radiated from her in her agony, gave permission for the restoration of the primitive rule for the convent of St. Damian in Assisi. Very likely, because this privilege was given to the maternal convent, it was likewise extended to Agnes' convent at Prague. On that score Agnes could be at peace.

One more fact was linked with the battle for the ideal of poverty in the spiritual history of the Czechs. In order to live in true poverty Agnes had to separate the hospital she founded from her convent. Indeed, the maintenance of the hospital required a certain economic base which at first was assured by the great wealth of the convent which received rich donations from members of the royal family and from numerous magnates. Agnes brought about the independence of the hospital and gave it all those possessions. This separation of the hospital from the convent was not for her a simple matter, because it meant that from then on she would not be able to serve the sick personally at their bedside. However, she kept her involvement with the needy and succeeded in getting her fraternity of nurses recognized as a separate religious congregation, as "the Crusaders of the Red Star" which became the only native Czech religious community. Even during Agnes' lifetime, and undoubtedly by her initiative, that hospital and religious congregation spread throughout the Czech lands and created a network of social services noteworthy for those times, the first on Czech lands. Not long after, it widened its activity into Silesia and its charitable activities took in also Poland (Cracow, Breslau and other cities), then Hungary and Austria.

Agnes' social interests were not only an expression of her religious life but also a farseeing vision into one of the most important problems of the Middle Ages. Agnes pointed to the problem of urban poverty which was not understood and neglected in the following period of great growth: in the times of the Premysl dynasty and during the reign of Charles IV. Eventually, it brought on a social

crisis, and a blood bath in the Hussite era. Her Christianity was not divorced and separated from life by a religious abstraction. Her Christianity reached out to life by way of works of mercy.

The peace of the convent that Agnes sought was everlastingly disturbed by stormy events, when the Czech nation was divided by two rulers and civil war followed. Agnes pursued peace in the country. It was in her convent and by her effort that peace was made by her brother, King Wenceslaus, and his son Ottokar of Premysl. And when the conflict with Austria ended tragically for the Czechs and Ottokar II of Premysl (Ottokar received that number only after becoming king) fell in battle, her convent became a refuge for the women of royal descent. Later, during the regency of Otto, the Brandenburg Margrave, at a time of misery and hunger and at a time when the Czech successor to the throne, Wenceslaus II, was imprisoned in the castle at Bezdez, that convent became the last hope for the impoverished multitudes but also a symbol of Czech independence. The steadfast daughter of Premysl endured by the strength of her spiritual and moral authority as a sign of Czech rights in the face of all the representatives of foreign powers in the country. The fate of Agnes is significant: that Agnes who abandoned the comfort of royal apartments in order to share the life of the poor, died in the midst of her nation's misery from exhaustion and hunger. An unknown foreign monk presided at the funeral because none of the more important prelates dared to take part for political reasons. But an enormous multitude of the poor and the oppressed Czechs bade her farewell as a saint and an uncrowned monarch of the Czechs.

St. Agnes comes to bless and protect those who took up her work according to her spirit. Her canonization is the threshold through which the Czech people enter a new era in their spiritual life.

Czech kings and Archbishops of Prague have in the course of 700 years agitated for her canonization a number of times. It is astonishing that it took so long to elevate on the altar a woman whose sanctity no one doubted. But everything has its sense and time. The symbolic significance is in the fact that the canonization of Agnes of Premysl took place shortly after Francis Cardinal Tomasek, archbishop of Prague and primate of Czechoslovakia, together with all the bishops of Czechoslovakian and Moravian dioceses announced an extensive program of spiritual renewal of the nation - the decade of St. Adalbert. It is significant that the first year of this decade was committed to the protection of Saint Agnes and is called the year of respect for life. Within this space of time the faithful prayed not only for the sick, the elderly and the abandoned but also

for physicians, for workers engaged in health services and generally for all who serve those needs. They raised questions of medical ethics and they pondered the problems that nowadays arise in modern health care which frequently fails to look to the spiritual dimension of human beings and becomes one-sided (and therefore is ineffective) care of the sick body. They took up the cause of the human dignity of the dying and of the unborn. In the course of the year individuals and groups of the faithful began to complete Agnes' testament by a simple and quiet service to the needy. In the episcopal curia of Prague there sprang up a lay Christian committee of help which organizes charitable activities that reach those that even the best social institutions do not care for.

The Church has made progress also in the area of reconciliation which meant so much to Agnes. In his Easter message for the first year of the decade Cardinal Tomasek appealed to all Christian Churches and to the whole nation and called for cooperation in the work of spiritual renewal in that which all have in common, because cooperation in a good work is the best way to remove disunity.

When we take all this into account, it is clear that the canonization of Agnes comes at a time when her nation began to honor her, not only in thought and word but in deed; and what was always neglected was finally done. It is also evident that the new appearance of Agnes on the Czech scene is not the culmination of efforts at her canonization nor, even more, a solemn conclusion to her history. St. Agnes comes to bless and protect those who took up her work according to her spirit. Her canonization is the threshold through which the Czech people enter a new era in their spiritual life.

It is indisputable that this canonization has an entire special meaning for Czech lands, and surely for all of Czechoslovakia; for the cult of Agnes was always alive in Slovakia and its influence was known in Bratislava when "the Crusaders of the Red Star" were active there. Agnes, of course, has been declared saint for the whole Church. One ought to ask what has the 13th century saint to say to the contemporary world. Poles likewise — neighbors of the land where this event will be celebrated solemnly — cannot be satisfied only with a "historical" reply and leave it at that: that Agnes came from the family of the princess Dabrowka; that her sister was the wife of Henry the Pious; that through her Prague convent the Poor Clares came to Poland; and that the congregation she founded was active in Poland. The delay of her canonization for 700 years is not the payment of old debts, but has a full and clear meaning now. At a time when in the whole world there appear dangerous restrictions and one-sidedness in the institutional resolution of social and medicinal care, the stature of Agnes of Premysl calls us to personal responsibility towards people in need in our circle. She calls for a christian stance expressed in good works. In an era of tensions arising from decrees of authority, she calls us to reconciliation and strongly reminds us that to govern means to serve.

GRECCIO

Earth no longer stands brash and bold
In the decaying embers of winter's cold.
The often flexed muscle of the world
Is slack and fatigued. Winter has come.
And the long promised time is unfurled
In the silent damp of a woman's womb.

Time stands still in silence. Expectant
moments, fragmented, are still pregnant
With hope long born from the icy fear
That becomes strong and tall as it waits:
For what cannot strain cannot hear
All is deaf in hearts speaking in hate.

The concrete ground is bruised and torn;
Buildings are tombstones to ingenuity;
Blood and destruction content to be sworn
Enemies of the weak framed humanity -
Yet they too collapse into irrelevance
And not as mere consequence.

Somewhere (in a brief pain-filled bought
Second) meaning finds its own meaning
In the almost unbearable screaming
Of a gasping creation: a roaring torrent
Of despair is held, caressed and brought
Into being after too long dormant.

The desert wastes; the post-flood dry,
Cry in a hoarse underlying voice, a drip
Of pure water, life-giving, sustaining
Water of chaste clarity. It is time.
All is blind for the unseeing eye,
Nakedness nothing left to strip

And eternity's heights still unclimbed.
All is hushed in Greccio, all star gazing
The massive mountains are laid low;
The valleys filled with their debris,
The plains raised as highways -
At Greccio imagination in reality-

The world bursts from a single stem
The Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Book Reviews

A Speechless Child is the Word of God, by James A. Mohler, S.J. New Rochelle, N.Y. New City Press, 1992. 174pp. Paper, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Kevin M. Tortorelli, O.F.M. Fr. Kevin, former Director of Classics at Siena College, is now Campus Minister at the University of Georgia. He has published articles on Augustine in *Vetera Christianorum* and other journals.

The reader may wonder where to locate yet another book devoted to St. Augustine within that great body of literature that bears his name. The present book is clearly a source book or a compendium of Augustinian text arranged under the following headings: Trinity, Christ, Mary, Church, Authority, Sacraments, Prayer, Hope and the Two Cities.

I found that the book has the kind of strengths and weaknesses often associated with the genre of a "Reader", in this case, an "Augustinian Reader." The author has a great competence in Augustinian texts and he has put together a judicious assembling and collating of them to illustrate his several headings. The effort clearly brings the riches of Augustine's thought to an increasingly large theological readership. It is a rich feast with several courses, pleasures and delights.

But there is a weakness to this approach. The collection of texts asks for a context, for the significance and meaning of texts critically chosen, for a thematizing of the issues Augustine has raised. I note the lack of an introductory essay, biographical or theological, to the volume. Perhaps the temptation should be resisted but one sees the shadow of Peter Brown or

W.H.C. Frend who have set high standards for interpreting Augustine. Or indeed there is little classic of Romano Guardini which sifts the meaning of Augustine's life and conversion in the form of a deeply moving and learned meditation. One tends to invoke them to turn their hand to the extensive corpus of Augustinian texts assembled in this book. This tradition of Augustinian scholarship adds critical and explanatory grasp to the assembled and collated texts.

There are some points of detail. Regrettably, on page 10, we read, "But some such as Melitus of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem and Basil of Ancyra preferred *homoousion*, namely, that the Son is of like substance to the Father." But the relevant Greek term should read *homoiousion*. There is of course more than an iota of difference here and on that distinction, in its time, many a future hung in the balance. Two variant spellings of the name "Volusian" appear on the same page (page 36). Similarly, on page 164, we read "Augustianism" and "Augustinianism" in the same sentence. Also, on page 164, the reference cited as footnote 4 lacks a publication date.

I believe the discussion of Neoplatonism (pages 120-123) would be more pointed if it were contrasted with Augustine's experience of moral impotence which accounts for his passage from Plotinus to Christ and which is majestically set forth in Confession IX: 9-10. Lastly, a final heading on grace and freedom should be added to the others.

This book is a labor of love and generous in tone. Clearly, it lets Augustine speak for himself.

Discovering God: Life's Adventure, by John M. Scott, S.J., Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992, 160 pages, Paper \$6.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English, and Campus Minister at the University.

Jesuit Father John M. Scott has been a high school science teacher for more than thirty years. His little book, *Discovering God: Life's Adventure*, reveals his background. His scientific knowledge allows him to see God's grandeur and God's power in the whole of creation. Convinced that wonder is a natural characteristic of young people and of older people as well, the author finds evidence of God's presence in all things of a person's living experiences.

In twelve chapters, Father Scott presents in his own words, and in the words of many different writers, thoughts about God as suggested by all things made, from electricity to solar energy, from clouds to wind

and rain, from flowers to stars. In his first chapter, quoting Hugh Lavery, the author writes, "Every child wonders, and feeds on surprise. The dawn of wonder is the dawn of divinity" (page 9). In his twelfth chapter, Father Scott writes, "The person who looks upon creation as a love letter from God, finds God everywhere" (page 145).

From our everyday experiences, from all the wonders of nature that we observe, we can see a reflection of or an image of God. The author encourages the reader to reflect upon what he or she experiences through the five senses. Such reflection will result in an awareness of God's presence to us and in us and all around us. What a wonderful world we live in! What a wonderful world God created for us to enjoy!

This reviewer recommends this book to readers of all ages. For some readers, the scientific explanation of the phenomena will be a learning experience. For other readers, it will be a confirming experience. For all readers, it will be an inspirational experience.

Books Received

Albertus, Karen. *Recover and Heal: Meditations on the Twelve Steps*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. vii-308. Paper, \$12.95.

Apicella, Raymond. *Journey into Luke. 16 Lessons of Exploration and Discovery*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. 64 with Bibliography. Paper, \$5.95.

Barnecut, O.S.B., Edith. ed. *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels Year A*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 168. Paper, \$9.95.

Barr, Robert R. *Scriptural Comfort for Trying Times*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992. Pp. 204, inc. Index. Paper, \$8.95.

Bodo, Murray. *Clare: A Light in the Garden*. Revised and Expanded. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger, 1992. Pp. xi-126. Paper, \$6.95.

Carey, O.C.D., Terence, ed. *Therese of Lisieux - A Discovery of Love: Selected Spiritual Writings*. New York: New City Press, 1992 Pp. 142. Paper \$9.95.

Cerini, Marisa. *God Who Is Love in the Experience and Thought of Chiara Lubich*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 90. Paper, \$5.95.

Convey, Stephen R. *Principle-Centered Leadership*. New York: Simon Schuster, 1992. Pp. 334, inc. Index. Paper, \$12.00.

Cotter, Theresa. *Christ is Coming - Celebrating Advent, Christmas & Epiphany*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. 133. Paper, \$6.95.

Davies, Oliver. ed. *Gateway to Paradise - Basil the Great*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 125. Paper, \$7.95.

Davies, Oliver. ed. *Born to New life - Cyprian of Carthage*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 126. Paper, \$7.95.

DeCoursey, Drew. *Lifting the Veil of Choice - Defending Life*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992. Pp. 126. Paper, \$4.95.

Dryer, Elizabeth, Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., and Mary Francis Hone, O.S.C. *Clare: A Woman for All Times*. 3 cassettes. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. \$29.95.

Fox, Matthew. *Sheer Joy: Conversations with Thomas Aquinas on Creation Spirituality*. San Francisco: Harper, 1992. Pp. 532 inc. Appendix & Bibliography. Paper, \$18.00.

Goodhue, Thomas W. *Sharing the Good News With Children: Stories for the Common Lectionary*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. 322, inc. Indices. Paper, \$19.95.

Humphreys, Carolyn. *From Ash to Fire - An Odyssey in Prayer. A Contemporary Journey through the Interior Castle of Teresa of Avila*. New York: New City Press 1992. Pp. 160 inc. Bibliography. Paper, \$9.95.

Mohler, S.J., James A. *A Speechless Child is the Word of God*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. inc. Index. Paper, \$9.95.

Povilus, Judith M. *United in His Name: Jesus in Our Midst in the Experience and Thought of Chiara Lubich*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 152. Paper, \$8.95.

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