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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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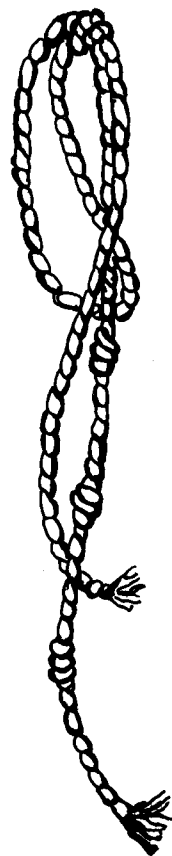
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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

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 the 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

Flor: 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).

AR: 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).

Modern Fioretti

Why The Brothers' Curia In Rome Is Built Upon A Hill Fragrant With The Scent Of Jasmine

BROTHER HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. On a Mediterranean spring evening in the mild month of May, after a tiring pilgrimage which took him to the "periphery", to the brothers in Lima and in Ayacucho in the Cordilleras of distant Peru, as well as to the "Virgin Morena de Guadalupe" in Mexico, the Minister Universalis returned to his hill named after jasmine, ("Gelsomino") in the centre of the city called Eternal and Holy. As he turned into the narrow cul-de-sac called after the "Mediatrice of All Graces" which leads up to the Curia in Rome of his world-wide brotherhood, he recalled a saying of the Indians in their far-away Andean land. They had said to him as he bade farewell, "The poor people love your brothers, whose brown robes remind us every day of the colour of our Mother Earth, our ancestral 'Pachamama' who has always been good to us." Why should it not be possible, he wondered, for the whole Fraternity to look with new, clear eyes at the Earth and upon everything growing upon it, in order to have a fresher and clearer understanding of their mission? As this thought crossed his mind, his nostrils were greeted by the friendly and seductive scent of the plants which had been growing here peacefully since time immemorial: off-spring of the "Jasminum odoratissimum" of the Canary Islands and the hill-chains of Provence, of the "Jasminum grandiflorum" from the region of the distant Himalayas and inaccessible Kashmir, of the "Jasminum officinale" from mysterious Iran, the Bismarck

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Archipelago and the Pacific Islands of the Sondas, of the "Jasminum nudiflorum" from the Middle Kingdom in the Far East. In the end he recognized also the unmistakable "Gelsomino della Madonna" or "philadelphus coronarius" which apparently originated in Umbria, Morocco and the Near East, but from the start did not want to be absent from the Fraternity's centre. And the Minister asked himself and others what indication the jasmine might give for the path to be followed by his Order and for its evangelizing mission. Not least, there was a mysterious statement made by the poet Gabriel Garcia Marquez which he had once heard from a young brother in Colombia which now also made him curious, "You are really grown up when you have discovered that jasmine is a flower that opens up only in the night."

2. When in those spring days there arrived in the Curia the members of a commission with the task of elaborating a new "Ratio Evangelizationis", there were represented from Occident and Orient, from the Northern and from the Southern Hemispheres, from the periphery and from the centre, as many lands, experiences, fragrances and colours as there were among the jasmine plants growing round the house outside. And the Minister opened the first session with the saying of the great Wise One of China, "If you carry in your heart a branch of blossom, very soon it will become the perch for a singing bird". The lesser brothers wherever they are, he explained, should in evangelizing by word and example make use of such fragrant words, such colourful metaphors, such new songs, that they succeed like Brother Anthony at the Chapter of Arles in making Francis himself visibly present (I Cel XVIII). He reminded them that the new evangelization presupposes a new culture of silence and of contemplation, "that we may not be found among those who possess the fine art of using many words to say nothing." He said that the scent of both the "exotic" and the "ordinary" jasmine reminds us of what Albert Einstein wrote, "The deepest and finest experience possible for a human being is that of mystery. This is the basis for all the others, including those of art and science." It also reminds us of the deep conviction of our Father and Brother Francis that we ourselves must be converted before we can preach to others. Finally, it reminds us of the maxims of innumerable mystics ancient and new, known by name or anonymous, which tell us that music and fragrance are the true distinctive signs of the new man and the new world. He reminded them that the visions of today will be the realities of tomorrow, and concluded his encouragement for a creative reflection with these words: —

"Show your love for the rain-bow and the butterfly,
the precious flower, the wild jasmine
the heavens filled with stars, and the dreams
which are not afraid of becoming realities.

Because a love which is not expressed
is like a candle not allowed to show its light,
or a melody not allowed to be sounded."

3. In those years the "Curia" on the Jasmine-Hill was making an effort to become more and more an international "fraternity." Therefore everyone thought it important to learn, besides the Latin language, also new languages like Swahili, Thai and Russian; besides Gregorian chants, also the new rhythms and melodies expressive of every culture and nation; and besides the art of using words, also the art of silence, of painting, of music and of dance, so that multiplicity may shine through our unity and unity through our multiplicity. That is why in the jasmine is esteemed by the brothers not only its common root, but also its innumerable blossoms and scents coming from a variety of climes and seasons. Moreover in the course of the years, apart from the jasmine as a symbol of friendly hospitality, they had managed to make other herbs and plants grow and flourish on what had before been a barren hill: the mulberry tree (Lk 17:6), whose top incidentally makes a perfect observation point (Lk 19:4); the evergreen myrtle, with its dark gloss and fine aroma, which in the messianic age, according to the prophet Isaiah (41:19; 55:13), will grow even in the desert and in places where before only nasty stinging nettles could flourish; the thorny but very useful furze, whose shadow is sought by men in the desert (I Kg 19:4-5) and whose roots are edible (Job 30:4); palms from every continent; cypress, oak and terebinth, thyme, hibiscus and fiery rhododendron, the almond-tree which in the spring is the first to flower and whose name in Hebrew means "watchful" (cf. Jer 1:11-12), as well as the rose and the common lily in the field (Mt 6:28); even various cacti from the deserts of Arizona and Nevada; but above all the olive-tree, sign of eschatological bliss (Hos 2:24), of happiness in sorrow, of fruitfulness in sterility, of perseverance in affliction. In the garden of "Curia" on the Gelsomino Hill there grew thus many a gnarled olive-tree as a symbol of respect (Ps 23:5), of friendship and the bond of brothers (Ps 133:2). It reminded the friars every day of their evangelical service of salvation, liberation, consolation and support for the poor.

When in this same month of May there was kept in the Curia its "maternal" feast, the Mediatrix of all Graces, the Minister Universalis was joined in a solemn celebration, in which all prayed for the maternal protection of the "rosa mystica", by many bishops from Southern Africa who had found for a few weeks humble quarters in the shade of the jasmine, because owing to great celebrations in St. Peter's there was no place for them in other Roman hostels. An archbishop from distant Lesotho later wrote about Jasmine-Hill, applying the words of Celano: "The earth resounded with mighty voices, the air was filled with rejoicings, and the ground was moistened with tears of joy. New songs were sung, and the servants of God gave expression to their joy in melody of spirit.

Sweet sounding organs were heard there and spiritual hymns were sung with well modulated voices. There a very sweet odour was breathed, and a more joyous melody that stirred the emotions resounded there. The day was bright and coloured with more splendid rays than usual. There were green olive branches and fresh branches of other trees there . . . and the blessing of peace filled the minds of those who had come there with joy . . ." (cf I Cel 126).

4. Shortly before the Feast of Saint Anthony, before the Minister finally traveled to Rio for the "Global Forum" about the protection of the environment and universal justice, he called together several brothers and sisters in order to listen to their counsel and so prepare himself better for an address he was to give in that place. They all concurred in saying that the message of Brother Francis to today's threatened world is not to be found only in books or on learned Roman parchments and decrees, but also in hearing the sighs of afflicted creation and the cry of the poor, but more particularly in the mysterious music of the universe, in the scent of bread and roses, of oleander and the common jasmine. Together they wondered what duty the Lord of History would want to lay today upon his Church and upon the Franciscan Family through the example of Saint Francis, who in his own time had healed a leper in body and soul with precious aromatic spices (Fioretti Ch. XXV). Did Francis not bring to mind the teaching method of Jesus, which consisted in allowing wheat and tares to grow together, impartially, without fuss, lovingly, benignly, and in sending his rain to fall on the righteous and the sinner alike? Was he not, as it were, a constant and friendly reminder for the brothers and sisters everywhere to acquire not only a love for computers and telecopiers but also the capacity for lending an attentive ear, for dialogue and for "correctio fraterna," and not to take pleasure so much in the sound of mighty horns, trumpets and big drums, but rather in the gentle, peace-inducing sound of harps and zithers; to admire not only the flight of the eagle, but also that of the butterfly and the gray sparrow; not to want to contemplate only exotic orchids, but also the hidden beauty of furze and common thistle? They saw more clearly than ever that what is really important in everything, and therefore also in the service of peace, is to understand and pass on "the fragrant words of our Lord" (Letter to all the Faithful, 2) and in everything to recognize and adore the Creator "for his own sake." Did Francis not give a strict command that in every vegetable garden a piece of earth should be reserved for sweet-smelling plants and flowers, so that all those who saw them should praise the Creator and be brought to "the memory of the Eternal Sweetness" (II Cel. Ch. CXXIV)? So, they thought, in Rio the Minister should say that we can heal the earth only if we first heal and purify ourselves. We should learn to acknowledge our guilt and not lose heart, knowing that the tears of pain and penitence often

water the tenderest and prettiest of flowers. Speaking as a little brother the Minister wanted to call to the mighty ones of the world, "I do not want to count as my friend anyone who needlessly tramples underfoot a single worm." He would tell his hearers everywhere about the Roman and the universal jasmine which prefers to flower by night, and as for himself, he wanted to be reminded often of a saying which he had heard from the Iroquois, "Perform your service quietly and in silence: words only rob it of all effect."

5. By way of conclusion, Brother Giles, the Vicar of the world-wide brotherhood, addressed to the Minister and all the others present the following words of exhortation:

"If I were to speak in the tongue of Curias and diplomats,
and were rich in knowledge but poor in wisdom;
if I were to prefer the logic of power to the logic of a
vulnerable blossom,
I would become but withered wood and shriveled flower.
But the fruits of the spirit are sensitivity, self-criticism,
humour, recognition of one's own limitations,
unconditional solidarity with the powerless,
but also the ability to distinguish
when a person's survival depends on a piece of bread,
and when for the poor it is rather
a rose or a gentle melody that is important."

Thereupon the Minister set out on his travels on the dewy morning of a day in spring, once more leaving behind for a time the Gelsomino Hill, but continuing to carry in his heart its unforgettable message.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit Frater Arminius Romanus, a secretis Ministri Generalis, in commemoratione Beatae Rosae a Lima, A. D. 1992.

* * *

After A Canticle

There is nothing that will be
Given me that is not already
Part of who I really am.

My life right up to this very moment,
My past that isn't passed at all but
Alive and well in a brand-new song.

Praising Him through the sun, moon
And stars, for I too am creature
Of the great string God

Francesco, yes, is brother, genial brother,
To the breezes, the winds, the air;
All weathers, whether cloudy or clear.

And don't you dare chide
Humble, nimble water, who keeps you clean.
Gently soothes the skin. She's a gem.

Or blame playful fire that will light up
The night, revealing what is hidden.
Healing your hurting eyes to see that this
Too is part of me, Mind-Reader, Ass-Brother.

IAIN DUGGAN O.F.M.

"Inflamed by the Fire of the Holy Spirit"¹

CHARLES FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

One of the truly great benefits that Vatican II brought to the Church, particularly in the west, is a much greater appreciation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the Church. Historically, the Eastern Churches have been much more aware of the role of the Spirit than we have been in the west. Thus, for many centuries the only Eucharistic Prayer used in the west, the Roman Canon, mentioned the Holy Spirit only at the end in the final doxology (and in the Preface of the Holy Spirit on the rare occasions when that was used). In the eastern liturgies great importance is attached to the oft-repeated *epiclesis* (imploping the coming of the Spirit) for they understand the Eucharist to be confectioned by the Spirit's power, while the west attributed the change of the Eucharistic species to the power of the Lord's words. When the first schema on the liturgy (written by western theologians and liturgists) was presented to the bishops at Vatican II, there was no mention of the Spirit. Eastern bishops considered this a serious defect; they found it impossible to speak of liturgy without speaking of the Spirit. Thanks to their suggestions the finally approved conciliar text, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, calls attention five times to the role of the Spirit in the Church's life of prayer. The 16 documents of Vatican II speak of the Spirit some 320 times; 85 times in *Lumen Gentium* alone. (In contrast, Vatican I mentions the Spirit 40 times). In addition to the many citations scattered throughout its documents, Vatican II devoted two lengthy paragraphs to the Holy Spirit that deserve to be reread and meditated on: *Lumen Gentium* 4 and *Ad Gentes* 4. Justifiably the claim can be made that one of the greatest

Readers will find great spiritual value in this article which gives us a profound sense of Franciscan mission. This concludes the excellent series on the "New Evangelization" which Father Charles so generously wrote for The CORD.

contributions of Vatican II was to bring to our consciousness a much greater awareness of the crucially important role of the Holy Spirit. During the months of preparation for the Council, Pope John XXIII prayed to God, and asked the whole church to pray: "Renew your wonders in this our day. Give us a new Pentecost." The evidence abounds that the council was indeed that and Pope Paul VI's insight that "we live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit" is surely on target.

The Scriptures ²

The Hebrew Scriptures are unaware of the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person. "The Spirit's distinct personhood can, and according to the New Testament should, be read into the OT, but cannot be read out of it." The spirit (ruah) of God is God's power in action. In some 100 OT texts, RUAH has "vivid and awesome associations when used of God's energy let loose." God's spirit is said to: "1) shape creation, animate animals and humankind, and direct nature and history; 2) reveal God's messages to His spokesmen; 3) teach by these revelations the way to be faithful and fruitful; 4) elicit faith, repentance, obedience, righteousness, docility, praise, and prayer; 5) equip for strong, wise and effective leadership; and 6) give skill and application for creative work. Revealing and enabling are the activities mainly stressed." One of Israel's most lovely psalms is 104, in which the psalmist pleads with God: "Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth." We often make those words our own knowing that it is precisely in the same way that God renews our church and world.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Church by the Risen and Glorified Christ at Pentecost. The Spirit is "another (that is, a second) Paraclete, who now takes over Jesus' role as counselor, helper, strengthener, supporter, adviser, advocate, ally for the Gk. *parakletos* means all of these." In the NT the Spirit: "1) reveals Jesus' reality and the truth about him, first by reminding and further instructing the apostles, and then by enlightening others so that they receive the apostolic witness with understanding and confess the divine Lordship of Jesus, and experience His life-changing power through faith; 2) unites believers to Christ in regenerative, life-giving co-resurrection so that they become sharers in his kingdom and members (living limbs) in the body of which he is head; 3) assures believers that they are children and heirs of God; 4) mediates fellowship with the Father and the Son of a kind that is already heaven's life begun; 5) transforms believers progressively through prayer and sanctification with sin into Christ's moral and spiritual likeness; 6) gives gifts (to build up the body of Christ and proclaim the gospel); 7) prays effectively in and for believers in Christ; 8) prompts missionary action to make Christ known, and pastoral decision for consolidating Christ's church."

So crucially important is the role of the Spirit in Jesus' mind that He insists the Church is better off without His visible presence so that we may have the Holy Spirit.³ It is "the Spirit who gives life,"⁴ says Jesus, so we profess in the Creed that the Holy Spirit is indeed "the Lord and giver of life."⁵

If the Holy Spirit is active in all dimensions of the Church's life, He is especially so in the missionary work of the Church.

Tradition

Reflecting on the biblical texts, early Christian teachers, especially in the East, developed a very rich theology of the Holy Spirit. St. Irenaeus taught that the Father has two hands by which He reaches out and saves humankind: the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶ Vatican II maintained that teaching: "(The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit) are both, always and everywhere, united in carrying out the work of redemption."⁷ Of special importance is the teaching of the Greek Fathers on the power of the Spirit to transform us at a very deep level:

It can easily be shown from examples both in the Old and the New Testaments that the Spirit changes those in whom he comes to dwell; he so transforms them that they begin to live a completely new kind of life. Saul was told by the prophet Samuel: "The Spirit of the Lord will take possession of you and you shall be changed into another person." St. Paul writes: "As we behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, that glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us all into his own likeness, from one degree of glory to another." Does this not show that the Spirit changes those in whom he comes to dwell and alters the whole pattern of their lives?⁸

In this context the Greek Fathers spoke of the "deification" of human beings by the Spirit. Early Christian teachers were fond of pointing out the trinitarian nature of the Christian life: it begins with the Father who takes the initiative to save us by sending His Son, and the Son, after completing His work sends us the Spirit. In our journey to the Father we begin with the Spirit, who joins us to the Risen Lord Jesus, who leads us to His Father. The Spirit is the bond of love between Father and Son, a love so perfect that it is another Person equal to them. In the Decree on Ecumenism (n.2), Vatican II taught that the unity of the Church has "its supreme model and principle in the unity of one God in a Trinity of Persons: Father and Son in the Holy Spirit." Some bishops objected to the phrase "in the Holy Spirit" claiming that the principle of unity in the Trinity is the divine

nature and not one of the Persons. The commission decided to maintain the phrase pointing out that according to many Church Fathers the Spirit is called "the bond of love between Father and Son." Following St. Robert Bellarmine, recent theology had seen the unity of the Church expressed in three factors: professing the same faith, receiving the same sacraments, and living under the governance of the same pastors. Following St. Cyprian, Vatican II sees the unity of the Church coming fundamentally from the church's participation in the unity of the Trinity: the Church is "the people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

In the Liturgy we often pray to the Father through Christ "in the unity of the Holy Spirit." Just as in the Trinity the Spirit is the principle of unity, in the Church the Spirit's role is the same: He joins the members of the body with its head, the glorified and risen Lord. Thus in his "Proof of the Apostolic Preaching," St. Irenaeus writes:

For those who are bearers of the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is to the Son; but the Son takes them and presents them to the Father. So without the Spirit there is no seeing the Word of God, and without the Son there is no approaching the Father, for the Son is knowledge of the Father, and knowledge of the Son is through the Holy Spirit.

The Example of St. Francis

If anything at all is clear in the life of St. Francis it is that he was, in a spectacular way, led by the Spirit, and with utmost fidelity followed the Spirit's lead. How else would one explain his life of so much creativity and spontaneity? Of such deep and continual conversion, of such total self-giving, of such radical gospel living? If Francis was such an "alive" person, and if even today his words and example are found by so many to be life-giving, it is because he was so receptive and open to the "Spirit who gives life."

The words "Holy Spirit" occur 38 times in St. Francis' writings, almost always in a Trinitarian context. The word "Paraclete" occurs 7 times. Francis loved to pray the *Gloria Patri* and encouraged his followers to do the same. He sent a letter to the friars in France⁹ so that "having seen these letters they might rejoice and speak the praises of the Triune God saying: 'Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit.'"

St. Francis is so convinced of the absolutely indispensable role of the Holy Spirit, that his followers must want "**above everything else** to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy manner of working,"¹⁰ and St. Clare gives the same advice to his Sisters in her Rule. St. Francis consistently sees the Spirit's presence as a very **dynamic** presence — thus, "his holy manner of working," an expression

which occurs four times in his writings. According to the Rule, only those were to be received into the brotherhood who came "by divine inspiration" (that is, "led by the Spirit"), a requirement that St. Clare repeats in her Rule also. According to the First Admonition, it is the Spirit who enables us to believe in the Eucharist, and "it is the Spirit of the Lord, Who lives in His faithful, Who receives the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord." Thus for St. Francis the Spirit is very close to us: He "lives in (the Lord's) faithful." Perhaps he was thinking of Jesus' promise to send the Spirit who "will be with you and within you." In the Pauline teaching we are the living temples of the Spirit who lives in us, a text to which Francis explicitly refers in RNB 12:6. Similarly, a life of deep prayer and worship is of the very essence of Francis' way of life, yet "we do not know how to pray as we ought."¹¹ Prayer is above all the Spirit's gift to us: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit," another Pauline text to which Francis refers in the eighth Admonition.

Precisely because Francis is so convinced of the importance of sincere worship of God that he so frequently reminds us of the need to worship the Father "in Spirit and in truth, for it is just such worshippers that the Father seeks." For Francis this means worshipping God with a "clean heart and a pure mind."¹² Only when we worship God "in the Spirit" do we worship God "in truth." This too is gift, for such worship is far beyond our weak human powers.

To describe his concept of radical gospel living, Francis never uses the customary term of "imitating Christ." He prefers to speak of **following** Christ. He speaks specifically of following: the Lord's precepts, His poverty, His will, His humility, His teaching, His life. Francis especially likes the phrase "following the Lord's footprints," an expression which denotes very close personal relationship and intimate discipleship. Francis pictures us as following right behind Christ, walking in His very footsteps. (Perhaps that is why he prefers "following" to "imitating." we might imitate someone from a distance, but we cannot follow someone's very footprints from a distance). Francis knows that this kind of radical discipleship is possible only when we have been "inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and INFLAMED BY THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," and prays for those gifts in the prayer found in his **Letter to the Entire Order**.

Of crucial importance in Franciscan life is the process of continual conversion. This too is gift. Francis speaks of men and women who "produce worthy fruits of penance and persevere in doing them." He calls them "blessed" precisely because "the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them, and He will make His home and dwelling among them."¹³ "Everything the Holy Spirit touches He changes and consecrates," said early Christians, explaining how bread and wine

become the body and blood of Christ. In a similar way, the Spirit changes and consecrates us, and is thus the principal agent of our conversion. The radical demands of the gospel become doable only when one has been transformed by radical grace. As Vatican II said: "The Holy Spirit moves the heart and converts it to God."¹⁴ Conversion is closely connected with the grace of reconciliation, and like early Christian teachers, Francis too understands that it is the Spirit who reconciles, that is joins us to the Risen Lord. Meditating on the words of Jesus in Mt 12:50, Francis writes: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit."¹⁵ The bond of love between husband and wife is a human, visible expression of a much greater bond: that between "the faithful soul joined to our Lord Jesus Christ." That sublime bonding is the work of the Spirit.

Two Options: Life According to the Spirit or According to the Flesh

Another Pauline concept (found especially in Romans and Galatians) that Francis uses often is the tension between spirit and flesh. Sins of the flesh are not exclusively or even principally sins against the sixth and ninth commandments of the decalogue. In chapter 5 of Galatians, for example, the sins of the flesh, in addition to impurity, are idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like." The vast majority of these vices directly offend love; they are all expressions of a self-centered life. In marked contrast to these are the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness and chastity." These are expressions of a God-centered life. For Francis, it is by submitting the flesh "to the obedience of the Spirit" that the works of the flesh are put to death in us;¹⁶ so that by the Spirit we might put off the old person and put on the new.

That this was of great importance to Francis can be seen in chapter V of the RNB where he describes how the friars are to act with regard to ministers and other friars who are "living according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit."¹⁷ While Francis gave no importance to the distinctions among people often made in the world of his time (e.g. "learned or unlearned, rich or poor, noble or serf, cleric or lay") he does attach great importance to other differences between: those who live in penance and those who do not; those who live *sine proprio* (without anything of their own) and those who appropriate something; those who walk according to the Spirit and those who walk according to the flesh. These are all synonyms for the basic distinction between those sincerely committed to living the gospel, and those not so committed.

True Franciscans: "Led Only by the Spirit"

St. Francis knew well that the way of life he had received from the Lord and

passed on to his companion became doable only when people were changed at a very deep level and empowered by God to live this life. Francis knew that people cannot purify and change their own hearts, nor can they empower themselves to live the gospel, becoming in Christ a "new creation." All this is gift, freely given and freely received. People may refuse the gift, but no one can "deserve" it or obtain it by one's own mighty efforts. "The Lord God created us and redeemed us, and will save us by His mercy alone," writes Francis in the RegNB. Similarly, in his **Letter To The Whole Order**, Francis prays: "by your grace alone may we make our way to you, Most High." Francis learned this from his own experience. He knows he did not and could not convert himself; rather, "the Lord gave me (the grace) to begin to do penance," he insists in his Testament.

The early Franciscan brotherhood grew very rapidly: from 12 in the year 1209 to some 5,000 about ten years later. Perhaps not all those who came did so "by divine inspiration" (that is, "led by the Spirit") as Francis wanted, and one can sense Francis' keen disappointment with perhaps many of his followers in his **Letter to the Entire Order**. Nonetheless, in that time of discouragement, when Francis withdrew for a period from the friars, he continued to trust that his family would always be gifted with true and faithful followers, the "blessed ones of God." Who would these be? People who were "led by the action of the Holy Spirit alone."¹⁸ In a word, those are the people that Francis longed to see join his family: those "who walked according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh." Perhaps it was also at a time of discouragement, when some of the Ministers were setting a direction quite different from that intended by Francis, that he consoled himself with the conviction that the true Minister General of his brotherhood was the Holy Spirit. So convinced was he of this that he wanted to have this insight inserted in the Rule, but was unable to do so because the Rule had already received papal approval.¹⁹ Since the Rule was approved on 29 November and Francis died less than three years later, he arrived at this conviction towards the end of his life.

The Holy Spirit and Mission

If the Holy Spirit is active in all dimensions of the Church's life, He is especially so in the missionary work of the Church. In **Evangelii Nuntiandi** Pope Paul VI reminded us that it was no accident that the great work of evangelization began on Pentecost, and added: "Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit." Jesus began His own ministry when he returned to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit," and His first sermon begins with the ringing words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me."²⁰ In His last recorded words in the Gospel of Luke, the risen Lord says to his apostles: "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon

you: but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." In the beginning of Acts Jesus continues this discourse, identifying both the promised gift of the Father and the source of the power He spoke of. The promised gift: "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The source of the only power Jesus wanted His disciples to have: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." The apostles do not empower themselves to evangelize; it is only on receiving the Spirit that they are able to bear witness to the crucified and risen Lord "in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth." The Holy Spirit is the first witness to the Risen Christ: "When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will bear witness to me." Only then, when the disciples have received the witness of the Spirit in their hearts are they also empowered to become witnesses: "You too are my witnesses."²¹

This theme is developed throughout Acts on almost every page. The growth of the Church and the stupendous success of the early community's missionary efforts are constantly attributed to the Holy Spirit. The starting point is of course Pentecost. Lavished with the gift of the Spirit the apostles preach the message "as the Spirit gave them power to proclaim it."²² When the crowds are astonished that the apostles' words about "the marvelous works of God" are understood by all nationalities of the diaspora present (the reversal of Babel), Peter explains that "what they see and hear is the promise of the Holy Spirit." Whereas Babel represents misunderstanding and division among people, the Spirit brings about understanding and harmony. Where did the Spirit come from? Peter explains: the risen Lord was gifted with the Spirit when he returned in glory to His Father. This is Jesus' consecration as eternal High Priest for all humanity. The risen Lord did not keep that gift only for Himself but "exalted at God's right hand he first received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, then poured this Spirit out on us."²³ Gifted with the Spirit, the apostles are characterized by courage and eloquence far beyond what they were capable of before the Pentecost event and "filled with the Holy Spirit," the Jerusalem community is empowered to speak the word of God "boldly." Today the Spirit invites us to become His coworkers by promoting unity and harmony and when we are filled with the Spirit we too are empowered to proclaim "the marvelous works of God," each in his own language.

Of special interest in considering the Spirit's role in the mission of the church is the constant teaching of Acts that it was the Holy Spirit who led the apostolic church to embrace the whole world. It is the Spirit who leads the apostles to understand the universality of their mission — a difficult concept for them to grasp as shown repeatedly in Acts. Peter explained that Pentecost was the fulfillment of what God had promised through the prophet Joel: "I will pour out a portion of my spirit on all mankind," and Peter receives Cornelius into the

community when he perceives that the Spirit was poured out "even" on this gentile and his family.

More than any other apostle it is Paul who will bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. His calling is attributed directly to the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit said: 'Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me, to do the work to which I called them.'"²⁴

The Spirit however is sovereignly free and "blows where He wills." The Spirit is not restricted to working within the confines of the church, but is also active in other religions and in the world. Thus, in his address to the Cardinals and the Roman Curia on 22 Dec. 1986, Pope John Paul II justified his invitation to representatives of nonchristian religions (as well as representatives from other Christian churches) to the Day of Prayer For Peace in Assisi, by referring to his "conviction that every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart."

The Spirit Active in the World

Wherever people strive to build up a social order that is more just and loving, the Spirit is surely at work even though often it has not been the church that began or encouraged these initiatives. At times the institutional church has even opposed them. In his keynote address given a few years ago at the "Future of the American Church Conference," Dr. Anthony Padovano pointed out, for example, that our American Catholic bishops unanimously opposed the introduction of child labor laws and the women's suffrage movement when these issues were first raised. Similarly, during the shameful decades of slavery in this country not a single Catholic bishop spoke out against it; the abolitionist movement, begun largely by Puritans, Quakers and secular humanists was often seen as another example of "Protestant fanaticism." Archbishop Hughes of New York wrote President Lincoln to say that Catholics would turn away "in disgust" if Lincoln were to free the slaves, and Pope Pius IX stated candidly that all his sympathies were with the slave-holding Confederacy. Yet surely all recognize today the working of the Spirit in all the above movements that brought about a more just society. The Spirit is sovereignly free indeed.

The Spirit in St. Francis' View of Mission

The Anonymous of Perugia (n.40) informs us that after a general chapter Francis gave all the friars, cleric or lay, permission to preach, provided that the friar had "the Spirit of God and the ability to speak." Preaching for Francis required more than theological knowledge and training in public speaking. The very first requirement is that the preacher "have the Spirit of God." Just as the apostles did not empower themselves to preach, but undertook their ministry

only as the Spirit empowered them to do so, so too all Christian preachers can perform their ministry only in the measure the Spirit gives them this grace.

Similarly, regarding those who want to go among "the Saracens and other nonbelievers" Francis makes one requirement: only those are to be sent who "led by divine inspiration" ask for this. Again, the initiative to go on mission comes not from us but from the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Yves Congar O.P. wrote a masterful three volume work entitled "I Believe in the Holy Spirit." I conclude this essay with his reflection²⁵ on the meaning of the words "in the unity of the Holy Spirit," found in the Eucharistic doxology:

The Holy Spirit, who fills the universe and holds all things in unity, knows everything that is said and gathers together everything that, in this world, is for God and tends towards God. He ties the shief together in a hymn of cosmic praise through, with, and in Christ, in whom everything is firmly established (Col 1:15-20).

Or, as St. Athanasius said: Through his incarnation the Son "ennobles the whole creation in the Spirit by making it divine, by making it son, and he takes it to the Father."²⁶

Endnotes

¹ Prayer of St. Francis in his Letter to the Whole Order.

² All quotes in the following two paragraphs are taken from "New Dictionary of Theology" by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pp. 316f. The biblical citations in both Old and New Testaments for the roles attributed to the Holy Spirit, omitted in this essay, are cited in the Dictionary.

³ Cf. Jn 16:7 ⁴ Jn 6:63

⁵ This is also the title of Pope John Paul II's fifth encyclical, devoted entirely to the Holy Spirit.

⁶ Cf. for example Adv. Haer. V. For a study on this cf. J. Mambrino's "Les deux mains du Pere dans l'oeuvre de S. Irenée" in NRT, 79, 355-370.

⁷ Ad Gentes, 4

⁸ Commentary on the gospel of John by St. Cyril of Alexandria, found in Office of Readings, Thursday, 7th Wk. of Easter. In his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Pope John Paul II has many citations from the Patristic era, especially in notes 96 and 254. In no. 42 he cites St. Bonaventure's "De Septem donis Spiritus Sancti." So convinced was Bonaventure of the importance of the Spirit's role that he held that the work of the Father and Son would remain ineffective without the Spirit. For the most complete treatment of the Tradition, cf. Yves Congar's "I Believe in the Holy Spirit" (3 volumes).

⁹ Cf. Esser "Opuscula" p. 323

¹⁰ Rule X,8

¹¹ Rom 8:26

¹² Cf. EpFid II, 20; Fragm 1:18 and RegNB 22:26, 29-31

¹³ EpFid I, 1, 6

¹⁴ Dei Verbum, 5

¹⁵ EpFid I, 1, 8. The same thought is repeated in EpFid II, 45-47.

¹⁶ Cf. SalVirt 14.

¹⁷ Other writings of Francis in which he cites opposition between spirit and flesh: Adm 4, 10, 12, 14; EpFid I, 1, 2. II, 1-12; EpFid II 37, 45, 63-69; SalVirt 10:14-15; RegNB 17:11-17; 10:7.

¹⁸ 2 Cel 157

¹⁹ 2 Cel 193

²⁰ Lk 4:14, 18

²¹ Jn 15:26f

²² Acts 2:4

²³ Acts 2:33

²⁴ Acts 13:2

²⁵ Cf. vol. II, p. 224

²⁶ Cited by Congar, *op. cit.* p. 225.

* * *

TO YEATS

I, too, climb a winding stair
Committed to mortality
Assenting to time and place,
One's temporal history.

Ready, like Francis, in extremity
To go on without them all.

But meantime, while mounting
Counting the dark abyss below,
Aspiring, ascending, transcending-never
Yet loving ever
Irrefutable Unity, ineffable Beauty.

Sr. Clare McDonnell O.S.F.

Being Grateful, Being Franciscan

JOSEPH DOINO, O.F.M.

PART ONE: St. Francis and Gratitude

1. The Experience of Gratitude.

The experience of gratitude possesses its own unique power and beauty. Should someone in a private moment of encounter express thanks and appreciation to us in some genuine word or gesture, there occurs an inner experience of a profound nature. We all know how we can be easily hurt if we feel that we have been deliberately slighted or taken for granted. Conversely, should someone with whom we live unexpectedly and with great sincerity reveal to us that he or she values our life together, in such moments life can really open up to a new dimension. If we are receptive and unafraid to express our real feelings of appreciation, such encounters can lead to a marvelous transformation of our lives together. In reality, such an expression of gratitude is a profound moment of grace that has the power to reveal an untouched dimension of our lives. In a sense, it can lead us to an experience of the freedom for which Christ has set us free (Gal. 5, 1).

But what happens if I am the thanksgiver? What if in some graced moment I myself break through and move beyond the everyday ritualistic "thank yous," when I am able to gather up repressed fragments of words and thoughts and utter sincere words of appreciation to someone for being who they are. If I let the thanks I truly feel within break out into the clearing, what happens then? Doesn't this letting go of the self possess its own far-reaching power for recreating life anew, not only with this particular person but with all? In such instances a creative surge is released; something happens to our entire experience of time, especially with this person. Our memory of one another sweeping over past, present and future becomes reconstructed. In this breakthrough to authenticity

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there is a sense of the Transcendent. All of it is, to apply a favorite phrase of St. Bonaventure, "a most secret action, which no one knows unless he experiences it."¹

Whether we are the receiver or the actor, therefore, such unusual moments of gratitude insert themselves into our memory in a lasting way. Because they are so precious they have the power to dwell within us and provide a constant source of hope and love. Such moments of rich human exchange are necessarily restricted; we cannot expect them to occur often. Of their nature, however, they do reveal to some degree the beauty and the power and the place of thanksgiving in human experience.

2. Francis and Gratitude

Francis almost shocks us with how thanksgiving pervades his everyday consciousness. Gratitude is not a virtue he cultivates alongside others; it is more like a climate which enfolds and penetrates all of his waking moments. It is really impossible to understand or to genuinely enter into the radically Christian experience of Francis or of Clare except that our daily conscious hours be rooted in gratitude.

Gratitude is at the very heart of the Franciscan charism. One does not really know Francis without participating in the remarkable canticle of thanksgiving that possessed his inner heart and desire. In the very unusual twenty-third chapter of the Rule of 1221 Francis with unbridled enthusiasm reveals before the Church and the world the profound gratitude which rooted him and his brothers in their Gospel commitment.² Francis, together with the brothers, issues a burning invitation to all to join them in a life wherein thanksgiving and praise prevail. "We thank you" is a recurring phrase in the first part of the chapter; it sweeps across creation, redemption, final judgment.

The opening words should not be overlooked: "We thank you for yourself." These words immediately reveal to us the richly personal nature of the lived relationship of faith to which Francis had led the brothers. For them God is inconceivable except one's faith be set afire with the recognition of His immeasurable and totally undeserved generosity. "He has given and gives to each one of us (our) whole body, (our) whole life. . . . He did and does every good thing for us. . . ." Gratitude, is not only for the past; it springs from a consciousness of God's activity in the entirety of every person's history. Francis is passionately ablaze with thanksgiving to the God who has revealed His nature in the cruciform love of His Son.

Saint Bonaventure in a poignant scene shows how remarkably thanksgiving pervaded the consciousness of Francis (LM XIV, 2). Rather than give in to the suggestion of a brother that he pray for relief during intense suffering which the

brother thought God had unduly laid upon him, Francis gently yet passionately chided the brother, kissed the ground, and thanked God for even his sufferings. Gratitude to God would never cease to burn in Francis' heart, either in suffering or in death.

The freedom that Francis experienced was a contagious flame that was fired by a gratitude that knew no limits. He was grateful for lepers, for his brothers, for creation, for his charism, for sickness, for his brother and Lord, for knowing the God that he knew and loved. This was his basic stance toward all of reality and experience. He lived it, he preached it, he demanded it of his followers. He even insisted that those in positions of authority in the brotherhood should be able to discover reasons for being grateful in the pain and suffering brought to them by a sinning brother (EpMin).

Chapter XXIII of the *Regula non Bullata* indicates so strongly that gratitude was to be the stance of all the brothers toward reality and experience. In his interpretation of this Rule of 1221, David Flood characterizes the chapter thusly:

The literary genre of this prayer is that of a *laude*, a style of preaching widespread in the religious movements of the age. A *laude* gives the brothers' message a rhythm which turns doctrine into chant. Thus, they sing rather than argue. Less intent on convincing than in gathering men into their movement, they display a religious enthusiasm which makes listeners either dance or flee. . . . The brothers were singing; they had wonders to sing about; and they sang a song that was catching. . .³

Francis and the brothers dramatically reveal to us the liberating power of gratitude. How he must have looked back to his early years when he took so much for granted! How enslaved he had been to satisfying his ego with unrealistic dreams of glory!

He could truly speak of a flight from the song of gratitude. We ourselves know it from our own experience and at times we cannot help but feel the self-betrayal involved in repressing sincere thanks or expressing ourselves in a few ritualistic words when so much more is burning within. Sometimes the flight from gratitude resolves itself into a terrible everyday 'taking for granted' that sadly has reduced life to satisfaction without appreciation. Failure to give thanks when it develops into a life-stance can enslave one to self in a crippling way. Francis knew this so well, and the appeal to all people in Chapter XXIII is truly an invitation to enter the dance of freedom which gratitude offers so uniquely.

The Christian consciousness of Francis and the brothers expands our own as we move with them in gratitude from the heights to the depths, from the length to the breadth, from the present to the future of God's unspeakable goodness. They are grateful for the mystery of God himself; the gifts of creation,

incarnation, redemption and the rewards of the Son when he "will come again in the glory of His majesty. . ." The generosity of God itself spans past, present and future: "He has given and gives to each one of us. . . will save us. He did and does every good thing for us. . ." Because of this immeasurable goodness of God, to be ungrateful is to be "miserable and wretched, rotten and foul-smelling. . . and evil." Neither time, nor place, nor circumstance, nor any created reality is to divert the rich energies of our hearts from that Franciscan gratitude that is so preoccupied with the "Fullness of Good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good." Franciscan sensitivity to the unconditional and always active goodness of God evokes an uninterrupted desire "to love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and give thanks. . ." to this unspeakable mystery of Love.

Francis is a remarkable realist because he is so grateful.

3. Franciscan Gratitude and Reality

Thomas of Celano in his *First Life of Francis* (37) writes that the effect of Francis on his age was that "thanksgiving and voice of praise resounded everywhere so that many put aside worldly cares and gained knowledge of themselves from the life and teaching of the most blessed Father." The thanksgiving that Francis and the brothers put at the center of their gospel lives has an unusual power: it leads to profound discovery of ourselves, of the world about us, of God; we are led to eradicate from our hearts and minds all that obstructs a Christian appreciation of reality. Their sung message raises penetrating questions regarding our penchant for self-satisfaction and taking for granted; it holds out a promise for a new kind of freedom; it demands an honest look at our relationship with God, with creation and with others. It questions our perceptions of reality.

The more we read and read of Francis the more we recognize the power of his intuitions. Isn't it so that one does not really recognize reality as it is unless one lives in gratitude? If, for example, we do not appreciate those with whom we live, or the people in our lives, or the life we are given, or the people with whom we work, or the incredible gifts of our Christian and Franciscan lives — if we are not living our lives out of a conscious awareness of these and so many more gifts, we are not really in touch with reality. Most of our difficulties and struggles

begin when we fail to be grateful, when we take for granted, when we see people and reality primarily in terms of meeting or not meeting our self-centered expectations. To live in this way is to live with a partial view of reality, if not with illusion.

Francis is a remarkable realist because he is so grateful. Gratitude enables him to look upon and experience all reality as proceeding from the absolute reality of God's loving generosity. Only when one enters this vision is one truly in touch with the real. Not to see the world, self, others and God himself in this light is not to see or walk in the truth. It can and does lead to a life of disappointment and illusion, if not complete breakdown.

4. Gratitude and Human Healing.

One Tuesday morning in the summer of 1986 a headline in the special science section of the New York Times caught my attention: "In Japan, Gratitude to Others is stressed in Psychotherapy."⁴ Written by Daniel Goleman, the article spoke of a new therapy sweeping over Japan. It is called Naikan which means "inner observation," "looking within," and basically it provides the patient with an intensive experience of gratitude and appreciation as an effective way of healing "the psychic wounds of modern life." Naikan is a form of self reflection or meditation that emphasizes the goodness of others towards us. Together with this recognition we acknowledge how little we have returned to them. Our memory is made to recall as far back as possible how much our loved ones have given us. Its basic tenet is that "we take without thought, without gratitude, and we offer little of ourselves to our world."

Naikan is rich in imagery, symbols and history. But it is not a "negative, guilt producing, self-punishing oriental moralism, a sort of mental flagellation." No, it is built from a healthy, realistic, penetrating guilt which leads to a desire toward self-sacrifice. There also comes the soothing awareness that despite one's own limitation, others have continued to provide love and support. There is a kind of demolishing of the ego, and a recollection of how little of what we were or are deserves to be called a "self in the first place." Typically, a Naikan patient is made to empty a drawer of its contents and "thank each object in it for what it has done: a spoon, for example, for having ladeled out soup." Though related to Japanese culture, it has been found by Doctor David Reynolds, an American therapist, to transcend culture in many of its aspects.

I was fascinated by this therapy and also by one that is often used in tandem with it, a therapy called Morita. Where Naikan attempts to cultivate a sense of appreciation and gratitude to others, Morita's emphasis includes the "Zen focus on here and now awareness." This is designed to help people see their world

more clearly. It tries to get people to do what they need to, regardless of their feelings at the moment. A typical Morita exercise is to ask the patient to close his eyes and describe the room. In the Zen tradition of the focusing on the here and now the patient is made aware of a choice: to focus on that bleak inner dialogue of complaints, or on the richness of what is actually going on around them.

Naikan and Morita therapy enables the client the crucial lesson of how to live in reality or to live properly and gently. In both cases one comes to a deep experience of surrendering the self. Though there is occasional guidance from an experienced traveler, in both cases the patient is called upon to journey alone. When successful, the wonderful outcome is a desire to serve others.

There are ten common experiences associated with those who have undergone the Naikan therapy and they certainly bear Franciscan resonances:

1. A light is seen;
2. The client's body feels buoyant, tears pour out;
3. People and nature appear to be beautiful
4. The client becomes more levelheaded, sensible;
5. There is a feeling of joy, happiness, celebration of life;
6. The client feels more settled, develops the ability to take another's point of view;
7. There is a feeling of gratitude, closeness, and a desire to serve others;
8. The Naikanshe has a sense of being changed in a fundamental way;
9. There is an increased desire to take proper care on oneself;
10. There is a decreased anxiety and an increased sense of peacefulness.⁵

Francis, of course, did not need such therapy. Rather, religious genius that he was, he simply lived continuously out of a sense of gratitude to the "one true God, who is the Fullness of Good, all good, every good, the true and supreme who alone is Good, merciful and gentle" (RNB XXIII, 9). He likewise calls all who would follow him not merely to express gratitude when the occasion demands it; it is to consume our everyday consciousness.

His is not the God of the philosophers or of the poets, but the God revealed in the Lord Jesus, the God who is ever present with his inexhaustible and

unconditioned love, the God who now at this very moment is recognized as present, past and future Giver. "The Lord granted me. . . . The Lord Himself led me. . . . The Lord gave me. . . . The Lord gave and still gives. . . . And after the Lord gave me brothers. . . . the Most High Himself revealed to me. . . . The Lord revealed to me a greeting. . . ." (Testament).

Though Francis and the brothers were "out of their minds for God", though they were considered by many as fools, and though Francis himself insisted that he was a "new kind of fool" — none of this indicates in any way that they were out of touch with reality. They were, indeed, possessed of a sanity, a freedom, an enthusiasm which the world has always revered. Franciscan gratitude provides a basis for an incredibly balanced life.

5. New Testament Life and Gratitude.

It should not surprise us that Francis, a man one would think "had always dwelt among the Scriptures" (II Cel. 104), should accept thanksgiving as so essential to the Gospel Life. Thanksgiving is for the New Testament people the essential Christian posture before experience. This theme becomes predominant in the Epistles of Saint Paul: "Dedicate yourselves to thanksgiving" (Col. 3:16). The believer is to be "overflowing with gratitude" (Col. 2:9). Interestingly, the Greek word Paul uses for thanksgiving in these and many other passages is *eucharistia*, eucharist. This is the original meaning of a word we now fittingly apply to the Lord's Supper.

Why does thanksgiving become so important to the early Christian communities? The outpouring of the Holy Spirit has brought them to the realization that in thanksgiving we enter the "Yes" of Jesus. To be thankful is to enter into the inner dynamism of His life, which was always to give thanks. He lived out our humanity and reached into the history of every human heart to empower us to be grateful and to give praise.

How beautifully this is presented in the Matthew's Gospel (11, 25-27). Here, as the clouds of death begin to gather over Jesus, we hear him uttering the deepest prayer of His heart, and it is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving:

I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. . . .

This prayer, as Joachim Jeremias, reminds us is "the only prayer of Jesus of some length from the time before his passion" and it is a "thanksgiving in spite of failure."⁶ Jesus praises and thanks the Father for His special revelation "to the childlike."

Jeremias explains that Jesus is not merely following the Jewish practice of

the *berakah*, the spontaneous prayer of thanks by the believer for God's intervention in his or her personal history. Rather, Jesus is indicating the characteristic stance of those who believe in and live in the Kingdom: it is one of gratitude. Thanksgiving is one of the foremost characteristics of the new age: "So when Jesus gives thanks he is not just following custom." The new thanksgiving is the living response to the actuality of God. The novel element is that the "childlike" recognize the actual presence of the living God in the person of Jesus. God is no longer known indirectly in the many blessings of life; He is now known directly, in the Son. Jesus tells us that the new thanksgiving is our living response to the actuality of God.⁷ In thanksgiving we actualize the Kingdom. This enables us to recognize how remarkably a gospel person Francis was!

Where life is full of complaints and resentment, where there is a grabbing at the heart of life, we are not living in the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus came in the power of the Spirit. He catches up in his "Yes" our ingratitude, our apathy, our biases and prejudices. He consecrates life once-and-for-all: past, present and future. His gratitude is nailed with Him to the cross, eternalized in the Resurrection so that He lives forever in his grateful humanity, sealed forever in the Father's gracious acceptance.

The early Christians came to acknowledge this in a most unusual way. Early in the second century, in the 100's, they began to gather for thanksgiving, for Eucharist. *Eucharistia*, thanksgiving, becomes a uniquely Christian word: it will from now on stand for the Lord's Supper.⁸ To celebrate and reenact the sacrifice of the Lord is to enter into the dimension of Christ's thanksgiving. Now the words of the eucharistic prayer, "He gave you thanks and praise," take on a new significance. Now we understand why special words of thanks precede the solemn moment of the Holy, Holy. We are being led liturgically to the special moment of glory when the thanksgiving of the great heart of Jesus takes and transforms our unwillingness and inability to render thanks so that we may become truly eucharistic people — people of thanksgiving like Francis.

PART TWO: St. Bonaventure on Gratitude

1. The Liberality of God in Bonaventure.

Early in his theological career while lecturing on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Bonaventure manifests his sensitivity to the liberality of God.⁹ In commenting on the question regarding the application of the words *datum*, the given, and *donum*, the gift, Bonaventure remarks that as regards God both terms are applicable, but *donum* or the actual reality is preferred for two reasons.¹⁰ One is that *datum*, the given, which is either a participle or verbal noun, pertains to the realm of temporality; but the word gift prescinds from that. And because all

divine realities are beyond time, in speaking of divine realities gift itself, *donum*, is to be preferred to *datum*, that which has been given. The other reason is that the word *donum* besides the aspect of gift adds the condition or aspect of liberality, or something for which one cannot reciprocate (*irreddibilitas*). This constitutes its condition of great nobility and therefore it pertains in its greatest aspect to divine gifts. And this is the reason why the word *donum* is appropriated to gratuitous gifts, not only to the Holy Spirit himself who is the principle or source of all gratuitous gifts. "Liberality, then, inspires all His acts for which reason everything which comes from God deserves the name of gift. In this very broad sense, all the goods that man possesses, whatever they may be, are gifts of God."¹¹

It is obvious that Bonaventure cannot conceive of reality except in terms of God's unfailing prodigality. The human person especially is the object of this unceasing goodness of God. The most sublime of these gifts is supernatural grace. It is the supernatural gifts which more than any others bear witness to the liberality of God. For this reason, the appellation of gift, a title which designates the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is particularly suited to them. When scripture speaks of the gifts of God, therefore, it is primarily to grace and the virtues which flow from it that it refers. Bonaventure never wearies of quoting the Letter of St. James (I, 17): Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. In general, however, Bonaventure will broaden the word grace to extend to both the gifts of creation and recreation. His consciousness, too, is pervaded by the loving awareness of God's beneficence. His *Major Life of St. Francis* reveals his sensitivity to the place of gratitude in the every day life of Francis. Furthermore, twice in Chapter Eleven Francis refers to ingratitude as "sin" and as "vice."

2. Prayer and Gratitude

In a Sermon entitled "On the Manner of Living" Saint Bonaventure reminds his audience of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians (4,1): Persevere in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.¹² His comment on this exhortation of Paul is that "thanksgiving, the act of thanks," must claim for itself the greatest portion of prayer; and this not so much in the sense of multiplying words as in terms of love and affectivity. This affectivity both in prayer and in thanksgiving arises from the concentrated and fixed meditation of our destitution in the face of the mercies of God, both general and special, communal and particular:

For no one can seek ardently unless he believes that he has need of that which he seeks and has confidence that he will be heard. Nor can anyone devotedly return thanks to God unless he is attentive to the magnitude of the divine gift and the lack of merit on his part. . . .¹³

3. Gratitude in the Triple Way.

Bonaventure ascribes an important place to thanksgiving not only in prayer but in the entire spiritual journey of the gospel person. We see this especially in his mystical work entitled "On the Triple Way." Throughout this writing gratitude operates as a persistent theme. Bonaventure uses an unusual image to express the dynamics of gratitude; repeatedly he speaks of it as expanding the heart.¹⁴ It liberates spiritual energies that take us into a loving relationship with God.

More explicitly, Bonaventure refers to gratitude in direct relationship to the Illuminative Way which, he says, "consists in the perfect imitation of Christ." Already in Chapter I, 2 he takes his readers on a meditative journey; he desires that we turn the "ray of intelligence" to the past, the present, and the future. Very much like Francis he wishes us to give careful attention to the inexhaustible and totally unmerited goodness of God in the entirety of our human history.

Bonaventure wishes us to recall not only our forgiven sins but even "the sins we could have fallen into if the Lord had allowed it." He then applies the ray of light to the three classes of gifts bestowed on us by God which pertain to nature, grace, and "superabundant gifts of love." It is worthwhile to see how Bonaventure's own consciousness is so Franciscan in its acute appreciation of the reality of our Christian existence in all of its human richness:

Certainly God has complemented our nature.
Consider that He has given us a body —
A body with integrity of members,
Health of constitution,
And the nobility of sex.
Let us look upon the senses:
Has he not given us good eyesight?
Has He not given us keen hearing?
Has He not given us power to speak?
And with regard to the soul:
Has He not given us a clear intelligence?
Has He not given us true judgment?
Has He not given us a desire for good?¹⁵

Bonaventure moves from these gifts to those which directly relate to our lives of faith: the grace of baptism, the Sacrament of Penance, the grace of priesthood whereby we are nourished with word, forgiveness, eucharist. He tells us that God's "perfect benevolence renders us full of awe and amazement." He directs our attention to the gift of creation itself, the gift of "His only-begotten Son, . . . who is both Brother and Friend to us", the Church, the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that the Christian soul is friend, child, and spouse to God. "Can the

soul be anything but grateful to God, meditating on these gifts?" he asks.

But Bonaventure has not completed his journey of thanksgiving. He reminds us of God's promises "to those who believe in Him and love Him." God's promise includes "a place among the Saints, and the very fulfillment of every desire, in Him."

He concludes in words which we could easily imagine coming from the mouth of Francis:

For God is the source and the end,
The Alpha and the Omega,
Of every good.
God considers those who love and desire Him
For Himself alone
As worthy of His goodness,
Which is so perfect that it exceeds every petition;
Far surpasses every desire;
Exhausts every thought!
Must we not desire Him and only Him
With every affection possible?¹⁶

There is no doubt in Bonaventure's mind regarding the essential place of gratitude in our Franciscan journey. He calls us to a crucial decision in our daily lives. To walk in the truth, to awaken to the really real of ourselves, of others, of the world around us, of God himself, we must begin our day in gratitude. Too often our first moments of awakening are occupied with what we have to do rather than who we are. As noble as our ministerial tasks may be, as committed as we are to attending community prayers, they should not occupy our first conscious thoughts. Rather, it is imperative that each day's awakening be dedicated to the kind of reflection Bonaventure gives us in the *Triple Way*.

When we put our activities, our doing before our being, our ego can insert itself and rob us of the reality of our true identity before God. If my first moments of consciousness are directed toward what I have to do this day, I have overlooked the most important and most essential aspects of who I am. Over a period of time this can easily lead to a secularistic way of approaching our lives, even when they are dedicated to work for the Kingdom. My consciousness becomes filled with things I have to do and I immediately launch out into a day where I have taken so much for granted. For example, ask yourself at this moment of the day how much of Bonaventure's list you have already taken for granted. When did you last thank God for the gift of imagination, of communication, of speech, of thought, of listening, of reading, of writing, of so much more? When did you last thank God for your life, your health, your vision, for food and clothing, for shelter, for the people with whom you live and work?

When did you last thank God for the gift of faith and the other virtues, for baptism and the other sacraments, for His Word, for Church, for being able to celebrate eucharist, for life in the Blessed Trinity? When did you last thank God for being Franciscan? Isn't our identity and worth already established before we do one thing? Should we not awaken to this identity each day through a discipline of expressing gratitude before thinking of anything else?

*without an awakening exercise of giving thanks
to God we really fail in our Christian-Franciscan
lives.*

Conclusion.

There is much more that can be said both about Francis and Bonaventure as regards thanksgiving. I do hope that what I have written is sufficient for deepening in us the realization that without an awakening exercise of giving thanks to God we really fail in our Christian-Franciscan lives. We do not cease to be Christian or Franciscan, but we are not recognizably so. As a matter of fact, we could be living in illusion — illusion regarding ourselves, those about us, the world, and God Himself. Through gratitude, Francis and Bonaventure lead us into reality in the only way possible for those who wish to live creatively and enthusiastically for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

In closing, I would like to share with you some extremely pertinent remarks included in an article by Henri J.M. Nouwen which appeared in *America* magazine some time ago.¹⁷ The author wrote the article in Peru during his stay among the poor. He states that for the poor everything is the free gift of God. "This basic sense of gratitude is indeed one of the most visible characteristics of the poor I have come to know." For them, "all of life is a gift, a gift to be celebrated, a gift to be shared." They experience everything as God's gift. "Children and friends, bread and wine, music and pictures, trees and flowers, water and light, a house, a room or just a bed, all are gifts to be grateful for and to celebrate."

Nouwen calls the poor "a Eucharistic people, who know how to say thanks to God, to life, to each other." They provide a great challenge to all of us: "to live and to work out of gratitude." Francis and Bonaventure tell us exactly the same.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Collations on the Six days* trans. Jose de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild, 1970) II, 29.
- ² For an excellent analysis of the entire Chapter XXIII of the *Regula non bullata*, see "Gratias Agimus Tibi": Structure and Content of Chapter XXIII of the *Regula Non Bullata*, Leonard Lehmann, O.F.M. Cap. in *Laurentianum* V (1982) 312-375; reprinted in *Greyfriars Review* V (1991) 1-54.
- ³ David Flood O.F.M. and Thaddee Matura O.F.M. *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis* trans. Paul Schwartz O.F.M. and Paul Lachance O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975) 49-50.
- ⁴ *New York Times*, Tuesday, June 3, 1986 C1. The material in the article is based on the book *Naikan Psychotherapy: Meditation for Self-development*, David Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- ⁵ Reynolds, p. 11.
- ⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*. (Naperville, Ill.: A.R. Allison, 1967) p. 78.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ See: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* trans. and ed. Geoffrey N. Bromeley. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-77). V. 9, 414-15.
- ⁹ See: for example, *IV Sent.* d. 33, dub. VI, t. IV, p. 764a where Bonaventure writes that "all good, whatever we possess, are the gifts of God and the favors of God."
- ¹⁰ See: *I Sent.*, d. 18, q. 3, t. I, p. 327b.
- ¹¹ Sr. Emma Therese Healy, *Saint Bonaventure's De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, A commentary with an Introduction and Translation. (Paterson, N.J.: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1940) p. 77.
- ¹² Sermo 1. "De modo vivendi." *Opera Omnia* Vol. IX, 724a.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ See: *St. Bonaventure. The Enkindling of Love also called The Triple Way*. trans. and ed. William I. Joffe (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1956) 29, 31-32.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 14
- ¹⁶ Ibid. 16
- ¹⁷ "Humility," Henri Nouwen. *America* December 11, 1982, p. 372.

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Book Reviews

When Our Love is Charity, by Chiara Lubich, NY: New City Press, 1991. 150pp. \$xxx.

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M. Assistant Professor of Theology St. Bonaventure University.

When one reads certain periodicals or newspapers today, even those publications with a Catholic orientation, one can sometimes get the impression that the traditional teachings of the Church offer empty words to a tortured world. Words of popes and bishops, words of Church Fathers and Scripture, can often seem out of touch with the real needs of justice and the demands of liberation.

Faced with such emptiness one might find some encouragement in the works of Dorothy Day. With masterful skill Dorothy Day brought together the traditions of Catholicism with an active love for today's poor. She forged a union between the traditional and the contemporary, a union of word and deed.

Chiara Lubich offers a similar encouragement. Founder of the *Focolare*, a lay movement whose spirituality focuses on unity, the author draws on some of the best elements of the Catholic tradition to speak a credible word for the world today.

When Our Love Is Charity is the second volume of the author's spiritual writings. The text actually is a compilation of three independent works with the first being the book's title. The other two sections are "Jesus In Our Midst" and "When Did We See You Lord?" Each part of the text offers

a spiritual reflection on the basic theme of the gospels and the *Focolare* — love God and love neighbor.

Some people may find the message "too simple." And, the message is quite simple. It is, however, the simplicity of a Francis of Assisi or a Teresa of Calcutta in its basic message. But, one should not confuse the simplicity of the message with a lack of sophistication. The fountains from which Chiara Lubich draws her insight are plentiful and rich. From the tradition Lubich draws on John Chrysostom, Cyprian, Origen, Augustine, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, along with many others. This is complemented with a critical use of biblical texts. The author shows intelligent familiarity with the texts of Vatican II and a range of thinkers which include Lagrange and Congar.

One might expect that such a traditional focus would be too limited in its scope. The topics, however, do offer a consideration of "Christ and the Non-Christians." The overview of the Great Religions of the world is unquestionably brief, but the author identifies significant themes. More importantly, Lubich suggests an authentic respect and love for all people which arises from the lived experience of *Focolare* which informs her presentation of ideas.

When Our Love Is Charity can provide good reading for a day when one feels down about the credibility of the Catholic tradition for the world today. And, better yet, the text can offer inspiration for anyone making a sincere effort simply to love their fellow human beings and thereby love God — the goal of the *Focolare*.

Glad You Asked: Scriptural Answers For Our Times, by John H. Hampsch, C.M.F., Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. Huntington, Indiana, 1992, 155 pages.

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.

At a time when Americans are looking forward to the publication of the English publication of the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, the Latin edition of which was published by the Vatican last year, one may wonder about the reason for the publication of a new book of questions and answers about the Catholic faith. **The SCRC Vision** is a monthly magazine published in Los Angeles by the Claretian Press. A column written for that publication is entitled **Glad You Asked**, by Father John H. Hampsch, C.M.F. This new book is a compilation of several of those columns.

Father Hampsch has been a Claretian priest for more than forty years. His experience as a writer and a lecturer is the background for the answers he writes to the questions he has received over the years. The author considers his method of answering questions as reason enough for the book. His method, the heuristic method, is

“an attempt to discover truth by questioning each answer to a previous question in logical... sequence” (page 7). The result of such a method is a “tight, well-structured and relatively complete body of knowledge” (page 8). Father Hampsch is a seasoned author and a priest of long experience in lecturing and writing about the Catholic faith.

The subject matter of the book is quite diverse: any question about what the Catholic Church teaches and what Catholics do in the practice of their faith. The author's approach to answering questions is to offer scriptural bases for his answers. In sixteen chapters, Father Hampsch orders his questions and answers under such important headings as: Angels, Saints, and Heaven; The Bible; Catholic Leadership and Authority; Catholic Piety and Practice; Personal Morality; Prayer; and other subjects. Written from a Catholic perspective, the book will prove interesting and informative to all readers, Catholic or not.

This reviewer recommends this little book to all readers interested in understanding the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. Scripture and Tradition are the foundation stones of Catholic teaching and Father Hampsch makes use of both in formulating his answers. A special help to the reader is an index in the back of the book.



Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular, of the Brothers and Sisters of the United States

The Franciscan Federation is offering a Summer Enrichment Experience at St. Bonaventure University from July 3-24, 1993:

— Participants will have daily presentations given by the faculty of the Franciscan Institute and other noted Franciscan scholars and lecturers.

— The Program is designed to provide a summer refreshing to mind, body, and spirit.

— A special component will be directed toward those preparing for final commitment.

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