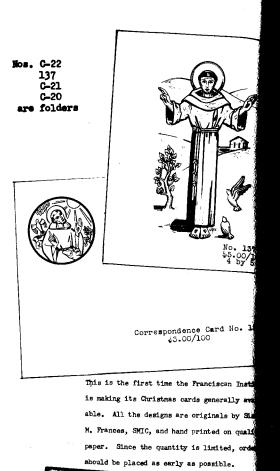


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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE FRANCISCAN SIMPLICITY

Whenever we preach or write about the personality of Saint Francis, we are pretty sure to say something of his wonderful simplicity. But strangely enough, when we are faced with the challenge of imitating his simplicity in our own Franciscan life, we shy away from it. The ideal of minoritas is difficult enough; simplicitas is just a little too much for us. Perhaps this is because we have come to associate holy simplicity with what is properly called unholy stupidity; we tend to equate the simple man with the simpleton. If this is the only reason for our difficulty, it is relatively easy to eliminate, being merely a question of semantics. But there may be, and very probably is, another and much deeper reason for our avoiding the challenge of simplicity, and the reason is that we are afraid of the radical attitudes holy simplicity will demand of us. There is no point in quibbling; the fact is that Franciscan simplicity has gone out of fashion among Franciscans. Yet it is an absolutely necessary ingredient in the formation of a true Franciscan religious, and to eliminate it is to devitalize our entire spiritual life. Without simplicity we cannot effect a true metanoia.

1. The Meaning of Holy Simplicity

Saint Francis made it quite clear to his brethren that a Friar Minor must be a lover of holy simplicity. "The spirit of the Lord," he wrote, "aims toward humility and patience, and pure, simple, and true peace of mind." "We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh (I Cor. 1:26), but simple, humble, and pure" (Letter to All the Faithful). And he greeted the Virtue of Simplicity together with Wisdom, the Queen of Virtues: "Hail, Queen Wisdom! The Lord save thee, with thy holy sister, pure Simplicity" (Salutation to the Virtues).

These few words of our Seraphic Father show us that simplicity is an integral part of Franciscan spirituality. Its importance is best made clear to us by Celano's story about Brother John the Simple. Brother John had great reverence for Saint Francis, and strove to imitate him as closely as possible. "Whenever Saint Francis stood

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somewhere contemplating, John forthwith assumed the same posturand imitated it exactly. If Saint Francis spat, he spat too; if Saint Francis coughed, he coughed too; if Saint Francis wept and groane he did the same; when the Saint raised his arms toward heaven, John raised his. He looked upon his model and copied everything he say The Saint observed this and asked him the reason. John replied: have promised to do everything you do. It would be dangerous is me to leave anything out." And Celano adds: "It is part of pick simplicity to live according to the advice of greater men and to reason the examples and principles of the Saints."

This story of Brother John invariably provokes laughter. if we look more deeply into it, we see how very seriously holy s plicity must be taken. "I have promised to do everything you It would be dangerous for me to leave anything out." Dare we d that we must say exactly the same thing? We agreed to embrace life under the law of total following of Christ, Christ, through servant Francis, has summoned us to follow him in the way of et gelical perfection. We have the Gospel to guide us-the path Christ set for us in his own earthly life. With the example of Master clearly before us, we have to admit that it is dangerous us to leave anything out. We have but to recall the Gospel s of the Rich Young Man to see how very dangerous it is ind Christ looked upon the innocent youth and loved him, and inv him to become his disciple. This young man had been observed the Law faithfully, and sincererly desired to do still more. But lacked the spirit of holy simplicity. He could not, simply and questioningly, do everything Christ asked of him. He omitted thing. This was dangerous for him. He failed, and the pitying g of Christ followed him.

"It is part of pious simplicity to live according to the advigreater men and to rely on the examples and principles of the St. The greater man according to whose advice we are bound and upon whose example we are to rely is our Seraphic Father cis. Through imitating him, we come to the imitation of Christ then can we be said to fulfill the obligation of our way of live way of evangelical perfection. Our vocation to the Order of

Francis is not an accident; it is a sign that God wills us to serve him as Friars Minor and as nothing else. When we first felt the stirrings of our vocation and responded to it, we already had something of the sense of holy simplicity. Then we saw our Seraphic Father as the greater man before us, and we were drawn by his example. We entered his Order with the firm intention of being like him in all things. If we have since fallen away from the spirit of youthful simplicity, let us pray God to renew it in us now. And let us convince ourselves beyond any shadow of doubt that total, unconditional, unquestioning, imitation of our Seraphic Father Francis in the way of Gospel perfection is the will of God for us, and that it is dangerous for us to leave anything out.

2. The Demands of Holy Simplicity

God will not give us the spirit of holy simplicity without wholehearted cooperation on our part, nor will that spirit remain alive in us of itself. Certain conditions and attitudes are required of us to make the virtue of simplicity vigorous and effectual in our spiritual life.

The greatest danger to simplicity, as to every other virtue, is our own ego. We see Saint Francis as the "greater man" whose example we are to follow, on whose advice we are to rely; but we hesitate. We are unwilling-consciously or unconsciously-to surrender ourselves completely to another, even if the other is Christ himself. And we hear the voice of Christ speaking to us from the pages of the Gospel or the Rule, we begin to grow wise in own conceits and resort to rationalizing. "Did Christ really mean this to apply to me? Am I really obliged to take all this seriously? There must be a way outplus a legitimate excuse." So we go along, interpreting the word of God to suit our clever little ego, taking it apart and turning it around, holding "reasonable thoughts" against it, and eventually we are right back where we started from-if indeed we ever moved at all beyond the first impulse of grace. Then, perhaps, in one of our better moments, we wonder with mild distress why we are still so very unlike our Seraphic Father, why we hardly seem worthy, even to ourselves, of the name Franciscan.

Not without reason did Saint Francis so frequently mention

simplicity and purity together. We have to stand before the Eterna God in total nakedness of radical simplicity and purity and hu mility. We dare not allow the least obstruction to separate us from direct contact with the divine will. The word of God must reach unhindered and unimpaired by even the thinnest wall of egoist Actually, the arch-enemy of simplicity is sophistication. Of cour sophistication is in vogue in our modern world, but a sophisticate mind can never be a simple mind, for it is incapable of moving in clean direct line from precept to practice. It wants to weigh an measure, to ponder expediency and profit, to consider advantage an gain for the ego. It never moves with the swift clean directness simplicity. So the moment we find ourselves hesitating and rational izing, we may be sure that simplicity has little or no part in us.

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"Holy, pure simplicity frustrates all the wisdom of this work and the wisdom of the flesh," said Saint Francis (Salutation to t Virtues). Whoever wants to meet the Lord directly must put an en to self-seeking according to the world and the flesh. He must refor his thinking and rid his mind of the twisted sophistries of world cleverness. He must remake his desires and aspirations according the will of God. Then God will have power over him and will spe and act through him. To make room in oneself for the thoughts at activities of God is the greatest wisdom, for then it is the omnipote Wisdom of God himself that rules the soul; and this is the greate security man can have—it is security forever. Therefore Saint France could speak of "peace of mind" as a direct consequence of pure six plicity.

Of course, none of this is new to us. We all know well enough how to write and preach about Franciscan simplicity. The difficul lies in acting according to our knowledge. If we would only reali how important it is for us to have the spirit of holy simplicity! least we can and should do this much: make an honest effort to tra ourselves in simplicity. The words of the Gospel come to us oft enough-we hear them, we read them, we study and teach the preach to others about them-then let us educate ourselves to in harmony with them. Once we have learned to take the dire and immediate step from knowing to doing, the power of simplicit will grow in us.

We would do well to watch ourselves once in a while, to note how we act in the face of a clear precept from the Gospels, a definite restriction of our Rule. We shall find, perhaps, that even though we know exactly what we should do, we do not want to do it-at least not right away. And we procrastinate, and gradually our memory dims, and before long the impression of the words is gone and we have not obeyed. This habitual disregard is fatal to religious perfection. Unless we become men of one Master only, we shall always be struggling with discrepancies between our thinking and our doing, between what we are supposed to be and what we actually are. It is strange that we all see this clearly enough, yet we all, in some measure, try to get around it. There are precious few religious among us who are sufficiently unsophisticated to be easily and deeply impressed by the word of God, and who have the radical courage to pass directly from hearing the word to putting it into practice. Yet this is precisely the meaning of simplicity.

THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

It is ironical that our Seraphic Father, in his last and most serious document, his Testament, should have had to warn against deviation from the way of simplicity. But if his stern and solemn words were needed in his own day, among his own contemporaries, how much more are they needed in our day. "And I strictly command all my brothers," he wrote, "both clerical and lay, in obedience, not to put glosses on the Rule or on these words, saying: They are to be understood thus; but just as the Lord has given it to me to speak and write the Rule and these words simply and purely, so you are to understand them simply and purely and with holy practice to observe them to the last." This is what our founder and model expects of us above all else-the spirit of pure simplicity. The Church, too, expects this of us. Our vocation is to be the simplices in the Mystical Body, men whose direct, straightforward, and uncompromising following of Christ is to guide the faithful through the tortuous maze of modern sophistication to the pure simplicity of radical Christian-

It may help us to reach or regain the path of simplicity if we think back to the day of our religious profession. Then we made our unconditional surrender to Christ. Let us make it again, and meditate a little on the beautiful words of the Psalm: Lord God, in the

simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all things to thee. Go of Israel, keep this will.

3. A Reflection on the Importance of the Franciscan Life

Since holy simplicity has such a powerful bearing on Francisc life, we may do well to consider briefly how much more importa it is for us to be than to do. Not long ago, in Germany, a group secular and religious priests together with several ecclesiastical d nitaries met to discuss the problem of growing parishes. The disc sion passed on to the question of how to obtain pastors for the ma new parishes that would soon have to be established. One of secular priests suggested: "There are so many priests in the mon teries. We could secularize them and put them to work in the pari es. That would easily take care of the problem." The discussion et ed at that; it was of private nature only, and represented the opini of relatively few clergymen. But that such an opinion should openly expressed by the secular clergy in the presence of religion priests, both friars and monks, and of members of the hierarchy little less than shocking. It must make us suspicious of how seriou the matter may be discussed when members of the regular cle are not present. It is up to us to face the matter squarely. It is qu possible that we religious priests have so fallen away from the p pose of our way of life that we have become mere question marks our secular brethren. Perhaps we ourselves are responsible for the unspoken conviction that the activity of religious Orders is the most precious gift to the Church, and that every means should used to increase that activity. Perhaps it is our fault that the spin the ultimate reason for being of religious, is relegated to a positi of negligible importance.

Let us have the simplicity to ask ourselves a few pertinent quations. Just how much of the spirit of our Order do we reflect in a daily life? What face do we show to the secular clergy, to the faithful to the world at large? We rush like mad into any and every form exterior activity, and as long as something visible is accomplished as long as something tangible is produced, we feel justified before God and man. But we seem to know nothing about our life as ligious, and consequently, neither does anyone else. Whenever are faced with the "why" of our way of life, we point to our accomplished.

lishments and explain how much more effectively a religious priest can work, backed by the power of his Order, than a secular priest alone. How, then, are others supposed to see that the spirit and life of his Order is always the first and highest value of the religious priest if he himself fails to realize it? It is a matter for serious thought.

However, we are not supposed to jump back head over heels into the spirit and life of our Order merely to save our personal existence. Self-protection can hardly be a valid motive. If we admit that living the Franciscan life is our task in the Church and at the same time our gift to the Church, then we must realize that we dare not fail, not for our own sake but for the sake of the Mystical Body of Christ. A man in a religious Order does not live for himself alone. He may be at the height of public fame or buried away in a jungle mission; it is still his Franciscan life that is of importance to the Church. We have to play the record over and over again to force this conviction deep into our consciousness. We believe too faintly in the importance of our way of life. If activity, even Apostolic activity, were the purpose of religious Orders, then we would never be able to tell people anything more than: "Consolamini, brethren; our work is possible only because you exist."

There is one more point to be considered-the matter of religious vocations. If we truly love our Order and believe in its value, its growth and vigor will be of vital concern to us. But no Order can grow or even continue to exist if its spirit is dead or dying. A glance at the history of our Order will make us realize that whenever it enjoyed periods of great development and fruitful activity, there was a period immediately preceding of intensive contemplation and spiritual vigor. As long as the ideals of our Seraphic Founder flourished in the Order, the work of the Order flourished proportionately. But a dead ideal is of no use to the Church. Here each and every one of us faces a personal responsibility. Either we are Franciscan in spirit or we are masquerading in the religious garb. Either we are living our ideal to the full, or we are as good as dead to the Church. Either we are following the way of life set down for us by our Seraphic Father, purely, humbly, with radical simplicity, or we are following our own way-in which case no one can be blamed for suggesting that we be secularized.

Let us begin now to educate ourselves in the holy simplicity demanded of us by our vocation. Let us make simplicity our security Simplicity will strip us of nothing but our vices and failings, an will clothe us with nothing less than peace and joy and holiness.

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF BLESSED KUNEGUNDA

There is no doubt that each religious community, be it an of spring from an established congregation already existing in the Unite States, or be it a branch of European origin, has been founded with the inspiration and influence of the Holy Ghost. Studying the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Blessed Kunegunda, one is convinced that the Sisterhood, which blossomed and grew into a sizeable congregation American soil, is the work of God, inspired and guided by Divine Production.

In the designs of God, whenever a shortage of laborers in His via yard occurs, a sacrificial soul, buring with love of God and humanity, chosen to fill the gap and leave behind a rich heritage of noble deeds at examples for other God-loving souls to follow. So too, in the case of zealous soul filled with compassion for the handicapped, crippled, at aged, and destined to become Mother Mary Theresa, do we find Go plans materializing in the foundation of the Franciscan Sisters of Bless Kunegunda with its Motherhouse in Chicago. In her great humility, a never dreamed of becoming a member of a community, much less to foundress of a religious congregation.

Josephine Dudzik, a seamstress by trade, often wondered how Christian ideals in the aiding of the less fortunate, the helpless, a homeless aged, could be realized. She had made the sacrifice of caring her aged mother when her two younger sisters entered the convent. Jophine desired to include other needy souls and opened the doors of home to a crippled woman. This acceptance limited her generosity due her mother's strong objections. She prayed for God's holy will and inspired to share her views with other young noble minded ladies of parish. She suggested they join their meager savings and help the pemigrants and aged with shelter and food.

In 1893, Josephine made efforts to house the poor and engaged

help of an intimate friend, Rose Wisinski, ten years her senior. Rose, a Franciscan Tertiary member of Saint Stanislaus Kostka Church, Chicago, of whose group Josephine held the office of President, applauded the idea but prudently suggested that Josephine give a year's test to this impulse of charity. Should Josephine still feel the same zeal about sheltering and providing for the needy, she would come to her assistance, both physically and financially.

A year of anxiety, increased enthusiasm, and prayer spent in closest association with God determined the way for Josephine. In 1894, she presented her idea to the Tertiary group, with an immediate response from six of its members who were willing to become co-workers with Josephine and Rose. Somewhat disappointed, for the zealous soul had expected a larger number to be interested, Josephine presented the plan to the Reverend Vincent Barzynski C.R., her confessor and pastor of Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish.

Father Vincent, a pastor ever mindful of his flock, had foreseen the urgent necessity of helping the homeless and poor. When Josephine presented her heart's cravings, he very graciously approved, and understanding human frailty added, "You will not attain your purpose unless all of you bind yourselves with the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty, that is, become members of a religious community." Being a man of vast experience, Father Barzynski even then so very early in the embryonic stage of the community, foresaw the hardships Josephine had to endure later. Bewildered at his reply, Josephine managed to ask, "A religious community? But. . . who is going to found it?" Father Barzynski wished to entrust the task to her. In all sincerity Josephine confessed she had no conception of religious life. Father Vincent assured her of his genuine interest, guidance, and leadership in the entire project. However, he stipulated that she promise to persevere in her ideals and high objectives, regardless of what might befall her, be it defections of her followers, ingratitude of those she helped, or lack of the necessities of life and even persecution. This promise Josephine made unhesitatingly, for in her fervor little did she foresee what the future had in store for her.

With the approval of the Most Reverend Patrick Feehan, the Archbishop of Chicago, the new community was founded on December 8, 1894 in the home of Josephine Dudzik, at 11 Chapin Avenue, today 1341 Hadden Avenue, on the Northwest Side of Chicago. Although the eight Tertiaries did not begin life in common until December 23, 1894, December 8 is considered the birthday of the community, for that day Father Barzynski made the final decision to establish the new congrega-

tion. Since they had belonged to the Third Order of Saint Francis, the called themselves the Franciscan Sisters. They selected Blessed Kunegu da as their particular patroness because during her lifetime she he sheltered the homeless and the crippled. Father Barzynski also encounaged the choosing of Kunegunda as patroness because of his great personal devotion to her, and also because Rose Wisinski's mother, who Father Barzynski held in high esteem, bore the name of Kunegunda.

The group of eight, God-inspired women began the religious I by changing their Baptismal names to those they had received as T tiaries, adding the name of Mary. Thus Josephine was known as Sis Mary Theresa, Rose Wisinski as Sister Mary Anna, Constance Tapol ski as Sister Mary Angeline. Only these three staunch and steadfast so of the original group persevered. On this day Sister Mary Theresa we elected the Superior of the congregation, which office she held until C tober 4, 1898.

Under the ardent spiritual guidance of Mother Theresa and that Father Barzynski, and occasionally prompted by Sister Mary Leovi SSND, Mother M. Theresa's sister, the small group began their life prayer and labor, gradually developing into a contemplative—act religious congregation.

Saint Joseph's Home for the Aged was first opened to a friendle destitute centennarian and a bind woman. Because the influx of needy was so rapid, Sister Mary Theresa, to provide adequate facility rented three four-room apartments from Mr. Lewandowski on Ingraha Avenue, today 1354 Evergreen Avenue. In a short time, twelve aged a legless boy were the occupants of the new place. Meanwhile, Sisters' only means of sustenance was the sewing and laundering church linens, cleaning the rectory, and eventually soliciting in Sa Stanislaus Parish.

The work of the community was progressing, with Sister M Theresa drinking the bitterness of her chalice sooner and much m deeply than she had expected. Father Barzynski's predictions had b fulfilled—first came the disappointments in her co-workers who ab doned their ideals; then the dissatisfactions of those whom she shelter and finally the catastrophe Sister Mary Theresa feared most, that of h ger, for all the inmates were charity cases and sufficient funds were hing for further operation.

Supported by grace and by financial help from the neighboring ishes, and contributions from the Women's and Young Ladies' Ro

Sodalities of Saint Stanislaus Kotka Church, in Octorber, 1897 the corner stone of a new building on North Hamlin and Schubert Avenues was blessed. On March 23, 1898, the foundress, Mother M. Theresa and Mother M. Anna along with other Sisters and their charges moved into the new building at 2649 N. Hamlin Avenue, which serves as a Motherhouse for the community to the present date.

After five years of being garbed in dark-colored uniforms, the Sisters hoped to receive the religious habit. In 1898, Father Barzynski obtained the necessary faculties from the Archbishop of Chicago to invest the Sisters with the religious garb, Before the appointed date, Father Barzynski died, and Father Spett, C.R., appointed by Father Barzynski as his successor, invested the four Sisters on Pentecost Day, May 25, 1899, with habits designed by Mother Mary Theresa.

At the end of the canonical noviceship on Pentecost of June 3, 1900, the first Sisters made their religious profession. The community then consisted of four professed Sisters, eight postulants who became novices the following day, and four aspirants. The inmates had increased to twenty aged and eighty orphans.

Upon the appeal of the Bishop and priests for nun teachers in the parish schools, the foundresses responded to the cause. They engaged private tutors to prepare them to face the task. In 1901, the Franciscan Sisters took over their first mission school at Spring Valley, Illinois. The following year, on the Feast of Saint Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr, the first Chicago school was accepted. The same year Saint Casimir's School in Cleveland was staffed, and later followed schools in the Dioceses of Fort Wayne, Cleveland, Youngstown, Altoona, and Belleville. In the Archdiocese of Chicago the Sisters conduct four parochial schools, and Madonna High School opened in 1951.

Back in 1905, Mother M. Antonina and Sister M. Benigna initiated hospital work in the congregation. Today, the community prides itself on the efficient and able staff at their own Saint John's Hospital in Huton, South Dakota, which includes a nursing school. All of the other four hospitals operated by the community are located in the west. In 1940, the community took over the office work and domestic department at Boystown, Nebraska.

Since 1904 the Sisters are engaged at Saint Elizabeth and Guardian Angel Day Nurseries in Chicago.

Always conscious of the original aim of the foundresses—the care of the aged—the Sisters are now in charge of five such homes: the original Saint Joseph's Home for the Aged in Chicago, Saint Anthony's Home in Crown Point Indiana, Madonna Hall and Saint Joseph's Home in Cleveland, and Alvernia Home for the Convalescent in Parma, Ohio.

In 1924, the community purchased a vast territory on the outskirt of Chicago in Lemont, Ill. This magnificently terraced country site is the present home of the novices. On the same premises in 1936, a home for emeritus Sisters was constructed.

In 1939, the Holy See granted final approval to the Rule and Constitutions of the Congregation. Today, it numbers four hundred member engaged primarily in teaching, nursing, and caring for the aged and children in day nurseries.

Under the efficient guidance of the present Superior General, Mother Mary Jerome, who resides at 2649 N. Hamlin Ave., the community is fulfilling the ideals of its Foundress who was sincerely convinced that the founding of the Franciscan Sisters of Blessed Kunegunda was truly the work of God.

Sister Mary Clarenta Urbanowicz, O.S.F.K.

THE LETTER OF SAINT BONAVENTURE TO AN UNNAMED MASTER OF ARTS AT PARIS

1. TO AN unnamed Master, I cordially wish the spirit of understandinging the truth. You desire, my dear man, the solution of three questions on the Rule of the Friars Minor, points which for several reasons cause you to hesitate, namely, regarding poverty, manual labor, and the studies of scholars and masters.

Thus, since the Rule states that "the Friars may not accept money of themselves or through an interposed person," and again that "they

shall appropriate to themselves neither house not place nor anything," you think the Friars are disregarding this part of the Rule, as they appear to be receiving money through an interposed person and to have books and houses although they are unable to point to definite owners of such things.

Also, in the manual labor enjoined on them, as you think, by precept, they strike you as being guilty. For neither do the laics perform manual duties nor are the clerics engaged in copying books themselves. Rather, they have them copied at great expense, just as if they had masters of the mint in their very midst.

Lastly, you condemn the Friars engaged in the teaching and study of philosophy. Though the Rule says that "those who are ignorant of letters should not be anxious to learn," the Friars as a whole, students as well as masters, and even those who as laymen pursued little if any philosophy, now study and avidly read and write; moreover, they attack, refute and construct all manner of doctrine. You are of the opinion likewise that the title "master" cannot belong to men who profess such great humility, since in the Gospel the Lord seems to forbid this name to His Apostles whose imitators, as professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we claim to be.

These things, as you assert, beget anxious scruples for you regarding the state and welfare of the Friars and disturb your peace of mind. To this, moreover, you add the statements of certain persons who have tried to force upon you such an evaluation of the Friars.

2. Mind therefore what I am going to say: for through the intercession of the glorious Virgin and the Blessed Francis the Lord will give you a right understanding in all these things. You feel the Rule commands poverty, commends labor, and forbids idleness lagree with you. As a result you detest those who receive money, or who act as though they owned books and houses. I also censure such abuses. Indeed, all of us

The above letter is most interesting both because of its author and its recipient. On the solid evidence of manuscripts and contents, it is recognized as the work of Sain Bonaventure during his regency at the Franciscan Studium of Paris, most likely in the year 1254, while the Master cloaked with anonymity seems to be Roger Bacon. It is very possible that Bacon and Bonaventure were fellow-students in the Arts-faculty of Paris before the latter entered the Order of Friars Minor.

From the contents of the Letter we gather that Bacon's proposal to join the Friars Minor (which he carried out about this time) had met with opposition on the

part of the Friars Preachers. Perhaps they hoped that Roge, already a famous Master of Arts in the University, would come to them and ably succeed his uncle Robert Bacon, a Dominican of advanced years. Perhaps they cast a jalous eye on the Franciscans, who had attracted so many doctors and masters to their ranks. At any rate, the Letter mentions the "scruples" which such a campaign had awakened in Bacon's soul, and offers him light and counsel in his dilemma.

Evidently the Letter brought matters to a head betwen the two great Orders. On February 2, 1255, the two Generals, Blessed Humbert & Romanis, on the part of the Preachers, and Blessed John of Parma, agreed on a measure of peace. Thereafter members of their respective Orders would beware of attempting to change the resolution of anyone who was determined to enter the other Order.

firmly forbid and condemn such things. So far we agree. But that you believe the Friars are such, or if you do not believe it, that at least you are suspicious of it: in this we surely disagree. For I neither believe nor suspect this but hold the very opposite to be true. I am not saying that there may not be such a Friar in the Order who could not be blamed for such abuse, since not even among the twelve Apostles was this to be found. But I have undertaken to defend the true tenor of our way of life, a you too understand it.

- 3. Consider therefore what you should think about the acceptance of money. I call on God to be my witness that in all that follows I will speak the truth as my conscience dictates. I do not believe you have an doubts whatsoever that no matter what degree of poverty they may have vowed the poor are allowed to accept alms, unless they wish to commi suicide; if then the latter is forbidden, the former is allowed to the Friars. No one of sound mind would deny this argument. It is consi quently not against their profession if some rich man ministers alms them by his own hand. But if he would not wish to give it in person, I may take care of the alms through his servant. To go a step further, the servant were indisposed and wished to delegate another, there seen to be nothing wrong in using a third party. Therefore, why should the be any fault in having as many as ten persons involved? Again, if the rich man has the money but does not have at hand the food or clothin needed for the Friars, cannot he himself buy them? Why then can not give the purchase-money to another and thus through many agen expend it on behalf of the Friars to relieve their wants, without involving the Friars? Does any sane man doubt this? The money still belongs the owner; even though he gives it into the hands of an intermediar it is just as if the owner had kept the money in his own possession. course, someone could perhaps be so foolish as to say that because t money was handed to a servant, it thereby passed into the ownership the latter and no longer belonged to the owner. This, surely, is absur
- 4. If you say that the owner intends to give it simply and uncondition ly to the Friars, I would say that no sane person means to give anythic to them except as in accord with their Rule and profession. Who wou give them alms to make them lose eternal life? The alms then is give in the manner permitted the Friars; that is, by committing it to anoth who in his own name will use it for those things which the Friars maccept. Thus, no matter through how many hands the money may pait belongs in no way to the Friars because it always remains the possession

of the first owner. It is evident from this that the Friars receive money "neither of themselves, nor through an interposed person." Before God 1 confess that in the consciences of the Friars this is the true outlook.

- 5. If perchance you do not believe me, by all means believe the Pope himself, who, learned in both civil and canon law and zealous for both our Order and Christian perfection, himself testifies that he assisted the Blessed Francis in forming the Rule and that he thus had a deeper insight into the Saint's intention. At the request of the Friars, the Pope gave this declaration: "To those who wish to make them an alms the Friars can present one of the faithful to receive it. The one thus presented is not their representative even though he is presented by them; rather, he is the representative of the person at whose command he makes the payment or of the one receiving it." These are his very words. Who is so foolish as to conclude that if I say to a person: "That man will faithfully carry out or watch over what you commit to him," thereby whatever he receives becomes mine? Even though these words may not always be expressed, they are always in our mind and we trust they are always thus accepted by others. Who, therefore, is so evilly inclined as to dare assail this truth which is confirmed by the sane and discreet moral sense of so many men, by such great evidence of fact and, that nothing be lacking, by the Apostolic See? I am sure that such a man will bear the penalty, whoever he may be.
- 6. Hear me now on what I have to say about books and tools needed for work. The Rule sets forth in no uncertain terms that the Friars have the right and duty of preaching. To my knowledge, this is not found in any other Rule. Now, if the Friars are not to preach fables but the words of God, and these they cannot know unless they read and cannot read if they have no tools, then it is most evident that it accords with the perfection of the Rule for them to have books as well as to preach. Again, as it is not detrimental to the poverty of the Order to have missals for singing Mass and breviaries for reciting the Hours, so also it is not detrimental to have books and Bibles for preaching the Divine Word. The Friars are therefore allowed to have books.
- 7. But does not the Rule contradict itself when in another part it commands the Friars not to have anything? God forbid that there be contradiction in it, just as there is no error, since it is wholly drawn from the well-springs of the Gospel, as would be easy for me to show. On this point I say that the use of these things is granted to the Friars, but the

ownership is forbidden. For the Rule here does not demand that the Friars have nothing nor use anything, which would be unreasonable but rather, "that they appropriate nothing to themselves." To whom then, is the ownership to be attributed? My answer is this, that whoseso ever it is, it is not mine nor that of the Order; and this satisfies the purit of my conscience. Not to appear to evade the question, I say further that the power, authority, and care over such movable objects have been entrusted by the Lord Pope to the Cardinal who is governor and protecto of the Order. For thus the Lord Pope declares: "The Friars may not sel movable things nor exchange them outside the Order nor alienate ther in any way, unless that Cardinal of the Roman Church who is the governor of the Order shall have given authorization or consent thereto to the General or Provincial Ministers."

8. But you may ask: "Surely those who give Bibles to the Friars do not do they, intend to give them to the Pope or even to the Cardinal?" T this I answer: does a father who gives his Friar-son a Bible intend to be smirch the Order and make his son a son of the devil? Your answer wil surely be no. Hence in giving it to his son he has no thought to sully the poverty of the Order, but that thereby the Order should have the use of the book while its ownership rests with him who has been designated by the shepherd of the Order and the Church. Do you not believe that a father could give a book only through the hands of one whom he could rightly suppose to be not a despoiler of his son but rather his shepherd would he not indeed give it that his son might have the use of it? Such an arrangement indeed, by the providence of God, is far better for the Order. For if the ownership of books were to remain with the parents the ministers would then be unable to take them away from the Friar and they would, as it were, be perpetually at their use for life. As it is they do not appropriate anything to themselves in matters of books, since on the one hand the ministers cannot sell or alienate the books by their own authority, while the Friars on their part who are subject frequently give them back and books are given to them and taken away from them a the will of their ministers. I am certain that this is the conscience of the Friars.

9. That no stone remain unturned, let us discuss houses. I maintain that houses do not belong to the Friars. But if you ask about the ground on which they stand, I say it belongs to the donors and patron. If you question be in regard to the buildings, for like reason they belong to those who built them or to those who own the land, because (according to civil law) a building erected on another's property belongs to him who owns the land; thus they belong to one if one builds, or to more than

one if several build. I am right in this because the Pope has said (that the Holy See would own all), "saving the ownership of those places and houses whose owners are known." By "places" he understands ground; by "houses" the buildings erected on the land. Whence we neither appropriate to ourselves a "place," since we say it belongs to those who have paid for it, or it accompanies the ownership of the ground. Neither do we appropriate the use, save in accord with the will of those who concede such things to the Friars. I am certan that this again is the conscience of the Friars. Nor is it an obstacle if sometime you have seen the contrary, which I do not believe, for the indiscretion of one should not be twisted to the condemnation of all.

10. If you say that as "strangers and pilgrims" we ought to go from house to house, God spare him who first thought up such foolishness! Did not the Blessed Francis build places? Or do you think that like a pilgrim he tramped the roads all day? Or did the Blessed Peter, when he says in his first Epistle: "I exhort you as strangers and pilgrims, etc.," mean that everyone should go from house to house? Since Ecclesiasticus says: "It is a miserable life to go as a guest from house to house," both Peter and Francis as well would have imposed not a holy life but a worthless one on their sons and disciples if they had bidden us be like pilgrims according to the foregoing interpretation. But understand this saying, not in an extremely literal sense, but as meaning that we are not to cherish or consider our own the houses we live in, just as the pilgrim travelling toward his homeland does not love a half-way house as his own, but uses it as something belonging to another. Who perceives the matter otherwise shows by his own foolishness that he perceives nothing at all. For how could there be any government or hierarchy of superiors, which is definitely demanded in the Order of the Blessed Francis, if none had an assigned place but could roam the world at will? No one thinks thus, save him who has no concept of an Order.

11. I now come to manual labot, on which you are greatly concerned whether it is a counsel or a precept. The Blessed Francis, to my mind did not wish either to command, counsel or admonish us to do manual labor. Rather, given the admonition of the Apostle, he provides the manner of working for such Friars as were too greatly or too little solicitous about labor. Certain ones were so taken up with manual work that the devotion of prayer was killed in them. Because this was so dangerous, since the active life must serve the contemplative, the saintly Father gave them this formula, that those who wished to work and knew how and were capable of it should so labor as "not to extinguish the spirit of holy

prayer and devotion." This phrase follows immediately in the text of the Rule. Note, then, that he does not say "I command" or "I counself the Friars to work; nor does he say that the Friars who are able to labor or who know how to work, should work. Instead, he says: "those to whom the Lord has given the grace of working," which not only includes the ability but also the will to work. If, in like manner, he were to say that the Friars to whom the Lord has given the grace of tears should were moderately, so that they do not lose their eyesight, he would not be commanding them to weep. So also he understands the present point.

12. Francis put small value on manual labor, save as a means of avoiding idleness. Though he himself was the most perfect observer of the Rule I do not believe that by his hands he ever earned as much as twelve pend or their equivalent. Instead, he greatly admonished the Friars to prayer fulness, nor did he wish that they extinguish that grace for any material profit. It is the duty therefore of the Ministers Provincial not to permit their Friars to be idle. And I agree with you that if there are such Friars they should be rebuked and chastized as wicked and lazy servants. Ye let not the Order displease you, because in it you will find an abundance of labor both in the pursuit of truth as well as in the exercise of piety humility, and all the other virtues. For the Friars have the task of seeking alms, of cooking, serving the sick, washing the dishes, and of working a many other menial duties, all of which are far sweeter to them than many offices of dignity.

13. But what shall I say of those who take the professor's chair, since the Rule declares that "those who are ignorant of letters should not seek to be called masters?" I maintain that the Rule does not forbid study to the literate, but to the lay-brothers and to those who do not know letters. For, according to the Apostle, Francis wishes that "every man remain in the calling in which he has been called;" so that no laic is to desire to enter the clerical state; nor does he wish that clerics become lay-brothers by rejecting study. Otherwise Francis himself would have been a transgressor, for, though he was not deeply schooled in letters as a youth, he afterwards advanced in learning in the Order, not only by praying but also by reading. And that you may appreciate how much the study of Sacred Scripture delighted him, let me tell you what I heard from one of the Friars who witnessed what happened when once a New Testament came into his hands. Since no more than one could use it at a time, Francis divided it by folios and distributed it among them all, that each might study it and none be a hindrance to the other.

Moreover, the clerics whom he received into the Order he held in greatest reverence, and at his death bade the Friars venerate the doctors of Sacred Scripture as those from whom they received the words of life. If he thus venerated the name of "doctor," he must have understood that the Gospel does not forbid this. Otherwise too, Paul the Apostle would contradict the Gospel, for he calls himself "the teacher of the Gentiles" in his first Epistle to Timothy; and this seems much more like boasting than if he were called this by others.

14. I say that according to the words of the Gospel all ambition and ostentation regarding this name must be condemned and is in no wise to be sought after, but that the duty or office must indeed be assumed. For whom does it more befit to teach the Gospel than those who profess and observe the Gospel? Since the Gospel says: "Whoever carries them out and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven," who of right mind would say that our master and brother Alexander (of Hales) should, when he was rich, have preached and taught: Blessed are the poor in spirit," and when he himself became poor should have kept silence on such a text? Surely, if it becomes the Friars to learn the Divine Words and to "chew them over" like "clean animals" and if they are able to supply themselves with teachers, who is so stupid as to say that the doctrine which it befits them to do and to teach they must like beggars obtain from those who do not carry it out? I therefore condemn, as you do also, any show of pomp in the office of master, but I commend the office itself; I condemn the presumptuous Friar and maintain that he is entirely unworthy of the magisterium; but I would praise the diligent Friar-student, since I believe that to such a one above all belongs the authority to teach the Gospel of Christ.

about Friars who profess philosophy, that here as in other things we may likewise be in agreement. Let me say that as curiosity displeases you, it also displeases me, indeed, it displeases the Friars of virtue and displeases both God and His angels. I do not defend those who waste time over useless writings but detest them just as you do. One thing I advise for both of us, however: that we have zeal according to knowledge and do not despise more than behooves or does not behoove us. Perhaps curiosity should be reckoned among the petty and venial sins. For the grain can scarcely be gathered without the chaff and the Divine Words without the human. These are separated by the fire of compunction and devotion, which separates the wheat of truth from the chaff of words. And perhaps

some seem curious who are instead studious. For if anyone were to stude the doctrine of heretics that by avoiding their teachings he might bette understand the truth, he would not be curious, nor a heretic, but a Cat olic. But if the words of the philosophers are sometimes of much value in understanding truth and confounding errors, we do not depart from the purity of faith if we sometimes study them, especially since there a many questions of faith which cannot be settled without philosophy.

16. Wherefore, if we are too strict in our judgment, we shall perhad accuse the Saints themselves of being curious, which would indeed irreverent. Thus, no one describes the nature of time and of matter be ter than Augustine as he searches into and discusses them in his Co fessions; no one has explained the origin of forms and the development of things better than he in Super Genesim ad litteram; no one has bette treated questions on the soul and on God than he in his book De Trin tate; and no one has better explained the nature of the angels and of the creation of the world than he in the City of God. To put it briefly, the masters have set down little or nothing in their writings that you wi not find in the books of Augustine. Read Augustine's On Christian Do trine, wherein he shows that Sacred Scripture cannot be understood without familiarity with other sciences. He shows moreover that as the children of Israel carried off the vessels of Egypt, so also the doctors d theology should make their own the teachings of philosophy. Man things, then, which we have not learned from the philosophers, even of the maxims of philosophy, we learn from the Saints. You should no therefore be astonished if those who enter with little knowledge acquir much knowledge in the Order.

17. But suppose that these things were reprehensible and to be punished: you would not be rebuffed by this, that he is not rejected by the Order but is rather the more esteemed who scorns such things; nor do the superiors command such deeds, but rather punish those who go to excess. Nor should you think badly of many innocent persons because of three or four evil ones. And if some abound in books for a time, these can be divided among other more needy Friars, as there are many more who lack books than have them.

18. Nor should you be disturbed over the fact that in the beginning the Friars were simple and unlettered. This ought rather to strengthen the more your faith in the Order. I confess before God, that this is what has made me love so deeply the life of the Blessed Francis, that it is like the beginning and perfection of the Church, which first began with

simple fishermen and afterwards progressed to such brilliant and learned doctors. You will find the same thing in the religion of the Blessed Francis, that God may show thereby that it was not effected through the prudence of men but through Christ. And as the works of Christ do not become less but grow, this work is proved to be of God, since learned men have not disdained to join themselves to the company of simple men but have heeded the Apostle: "If any one of you thinks himself wise, let him become a fool that he may come to be wise." I beg you, dear friend, not to appear too great in your own eyes, nor believe yourself more prudent or better than all those whom the Lord has called to this state; and if He has called you, do not refuse Him.

19. I have not reviewed in detail each point that you advanced, both because this seemed too lengthy a task and because the foregoing would show that some of them at least, if you consider carefully, rest on false suppositions. I firmly believe that once you have begun to regard the Order with love and admiration, these things will be seen not as solid reasons against it but as figments of someone's phantasy. If you would find it pleasing, I shall show you face-to-face how invalid they are.

20. Concerning those men of whom you say that they have persuaded you of such things, I prefer to say nothing save God have mercy on those who out of malice, or more likely I think, out of ignorance have not hesitated to pass such rash judgments. This I know, however, that the greater and better among them claim they have the best and happiest opinion of the state of our Order. Hence they lie either to us or to you, and in either case would not be worthy of belief. Yet I have never seen any among them stubbornly rooted in such convictions save one, and he was a "white-washed wall" and, as we know full well, convicted by his own brethren of many lies. I know too that the Minister Provincial of England questioned their Master General; and the latter answered that he had given no authorization nor had he such an opinion of us; that instead such a procedure was completely abhorrent to him. From this the Minister concluded to himself: "Either he is lying or we are." But it seems more credible that that manifest and treacherous slanderer lied rather than such a great man worthy of our trust. We are given to believe moreover, that that detractor by reason of his slanders, for love of which he did not observe the obedience imposed upon him, has been expelled by the Friars as rebellious and incorrigible. I know too that many of his brethren had a very bad opinion of him for this very reason, and said that they did not know how to excuse him from mortal sin.

21. If all this suffices for you, give thanks to God and the Blessed Vin Mary and the Blessed Francis. If anything remains to be said, I beg not to hesitate to speak to me directly, that I may show you more frand plainly not only that such objections are nil but also that the Rul the Blessed Francis, which is so perfect, so moderate, so wisely given, no equal as a sure way to heaven and is, in a word, nothing else but law of the Gospel in shortened form.

Forgive the length of this, for a long question needs must have a answer; nor should we spare the parchment when the salvation of a is at stake, since Our Lord Jesus Christ poured forth His Blood in a dance for its salvation. Farewell in Christ, Amen.

The End of the Letter of Bonaventure which explains certain Articles of the Rule. Thanks be to God!

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (transl.)

THE FIFTH JOY: THE FINDING OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

...and his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart. (Luke 2:51)

Before the institution of the Feast of the Holy Family, it was custom of the Church to designate the Sunday within the Oc of the Epiphany in honor of the Finding of the Child Jesus in Temple. In spite of the change of the feast, the Mass of this Oc Sunday retains the same Gospel—that of Saint Luke, recalling finding of the Christ Child amidst the doctors. Interestingly enough we find the same Gospel recounted in the beautiful October F of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus it would so that the unfolding of the loss and subsequent finding of the C bears a unique connection with the Maternity of Our Lady.

And yet the Feast of Our Lady omits a phrase shared by the other feasts. For the Franciscan heart, this short phrase pierces engraves itself in its very substance. In corde suo! "And his more kept all these things carefully in her heart."

Perhaps the phrase is dropped in the feast of the Maternity cause the time is not fitting to reflect on all that would be kept the heart of the Mother of God. The singular prerogative of

Motherhood of God is too early to reflect on the great sorrows which would be hidden in her maternal heart. Yet in meditating on the fifth joy we do well to attend on the import of the words: In corde suo.

It is truly tragic and tragically true that few in the world today have a love for solitude. Yet solitude is the virtue that cries from the simple statement: in corde suo! How few today can sit in solitude, in silence; how few can bear to be alone with themselves, alone with their thoughts. Yet the Mother of God spoke only seven times in her life, and God knows that her heart harbored seventy times seven and then more thoughts of the events which unfolded in the mission of her Son. She spoke only seven times—and then only concerning heavenly things.

In contrast to Mary, how much we murmur, criticize, declaim, and deride—and all these faults and vices are but manifest contradictions to the virtue of silence, of solitude.

We will never be able to fathom the silence and the solitude of the Mother of God, especially at the Cross. Throughout the Passion and Death of her Beloved, not a word crosses her lips. She is at the Cenacle for the Advent of the Holy Spirit—and yet she is there in silence and solitude and all gather around her to share the depth of her understanding. She is simply there. How difficult it is today to find a true confidant, one whom we know will not betray our heart to the world. How few are the ears ready to listen to—to understand in silence—the daily cares of men.

Saint Bonaventure tells us that we cannot pray without silence; but what is more, he further says that it is impossible to have silence without having solitude. He then relates the story of one of the fathers who approaching death left only these salutary words: "Brethren, I see nothing better than silence." Truly there is a great message hidden here. How many times in our own lives have we not tegretted the word spoken in hatred or haste. How often have we lot had to say: If only I had not spoken!

T

Yet we must be cautious lest our seeking of solitude does not beome a cloak for idleness, for such solitude is exceedingly dangerous. In the contrary, let the solitude and silence that we seek be that of

the holy man, who when asked how best to please God and men, plied: "Speak little and do much." To these observations we mig reflect how seldom would we speak if we were working hard, at how much work we would accomplish if we seldom spoke. In t silence of her work and the work of her silence, the Mother of G became the Co-redemptrix of all mankind. It is given to each of to be the co-operators in our redemption by imitating her in this.

How often rumors—whether malicious or facetious—can up the religious life. How many hours are wasted in idle discussion rumors which have no more substance than a child's bubble. Tru Saint Bonaventure cautions us well when he says: "Flee rumors, I by your repetition you author another."

Saint Peter directs us: If anyone speaks, let it be as with words God. Our Blessed Lord had set it down conclusively: Ex abundant cordis os loquitur. How magnificently this is seen in the life of O Lady. Can we read any of her few words, without realizing that s spoke as with words of God—and do not her words prove the dep of her heart? Here are no idle rumors, no wasted words.

How much does the great silence of the night mean to us. Sai Bonaventure says that night automatically should silence the voice a true religious, for the night is a time of silence and quiet. Ho fraught with meaning are the words of Wisdom in this respect: Whi all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of he course, thy almighty word leapt down from heaven from thy roy throne, as a fierce conqueror. How often have our hearts and sou been too busy with the world to allow the Word to plant in the wilderness of the night?

III

Most of us, perhaps, feel that our contacts in the world must of the world in order to be effective. Yet the admonition of Deute onomy, cited by Saint Bonaventure, is none the less true of our date for it is a perverse generation, and unfaithful children. How tho oughly frank and wise is Saint Bonaventure's caution in our dealing with the world. "Beware lest you speak any but useful and decended with seculars. Even should the conversation of the world or dwars or of other useless things be introduced by them, never follow them, even if you are more wise in these things; but let your word

be with the Psalmist: My mouth has not transgressed in the manner of men; I have kept the ways of the law." What a perfect model in this respect is Our Lady at Cana. Truly she reveals herself to all her followers here as one in the world but not of it.

Again, how great should be our discretion with words before the world, for even a parable coming out of a fool's mouth shall be rejected, for he doth not speak it in due season. Well does the Seraphic Doctor say that the wise man prudently considers when he must be silent and when he must speak.

IV

What one of us, young or old, cannot look back on great accomplishments he or she had promised God at one time or another for the salvation of souls? How many of these have remained undone, a result of the loss of silence, the loss of solitude? Saint Bonaventure tells us the cause of this in the words of Saint Gregory: "The mind, which does not have walls of silence, is easily penetrated by the spear of the enemy." And how the enemy joys in the chattering, gossiping religious, with his idle rumors, carping chatter, caustic criticism—especially when all these bring the affairs of the monastery, convent or home, before the eyes of the world. Well do we consider that to belittle our own or other religious is to portray ourselves as far from being steadfast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Would to God that we had the same silence before speaking the word, as that silence which the word evokes from us on its return.

Each one of us as Franciscans can find much food for meditation in Saint Bonaventure's terse commentary on the few words spoken by Our Lady at the Finding: "She spoke little, as becometh a virgin." This is nothing more than to say that those who are dedicated to God have, or should have, little time other than for God.

The lack of silence can many times be a salient indication of the lack of prayer in our lives. How often when we hear of tragedies in the Order or among our loved ones do we not hear the lament: "If I could only say a few words." One wonders if this desire were replaced with the actuality of a few prayers, would not many situations right themselves.

A true love for the virtue of silence and solitude never with-

draws us from reality, and we can be sure that Saint Bonaventure not advocating an Order of catatonics. It is unfailingly true, howeve that those who are most alone with God—who know and love silen—have, with the Mother of God, more time than we can understate to give to those who need them. These souls know that all thin have their reason, and in their times all things pass under heave and thus there is truly a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

Surely we have no better silence to keep than the silence in Christ—no better solitude to love than the solitude of Christ. In me tating on the Fifth Joy we find that same silence and solitude in h mother—in corde suo! Let us pray to her:

O Beautiful Lady of Silence, whose heart was filled with joy the Temple when you beheld him who was lost, teach us the solitu of silence and the silence of solitude, that our hearts may be dispose to know even as you knew that "the wisdom that is from above first of all chaste, then peaceable, moderate, docile, in harmony wit good things, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation. Teach us that the fruit of justice is sown in peace those who make peace, and grant that our tongues may only ble God the Father, and never curse men, who have been made after the likeness of God.

Your humility—your silence and solitude—was exalted by Go Teach us to be silent before the face of the Lord God and to sit sol tary and hold our peace, that we may know him and him alone.

May the profound words spoken of you: in corde suo, inspire to love silence and solitude that we may keep all the good thin that we know of Jesus carefully in our hearts. Give us the great grac of knowing that the tongue is a little member, but it boasts mightion. .a fire, the very world of iniquity. Help us to withdraw from the noise and carelessness of the world in order that our hearts may ever ponder and proclaim with you the perfections of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Lastly, O Virgin of Solitude, learning your solitude and silend may we better prepare ourselves for the marriage supper of the Lamproving that we love not in word, neither with the tongue, but it deed and in truth—in cordibus nostris.

Fr. William J. Manning, T.O.F.

IF THIS MIGHT BE...

(To Brother Francis from Sister Clare)

If thou as shining light And I was warming flame (Begot of Him Who is The everlasting Lamp of Truth The all-consuming Fire of Charity), Might destined be, Here in this vale of darkness and of tears, To glow and burn Unitedly In this adorable sweet Name:-If by the Spirit's breathing Thou and I together brought Might give ourselves As luminous flame And loving light To rout From blinded minds the night of error And the gloom of doubt, The demon of despair, the fiend of paralyzing fears From hearts where love is dead Or starved Or yet unborn... If this might be, Beloved one in Christ, If this might only be Our Heavenly Father's will For thee and me!

Sister M. Rose Agnes, O.S.F.

SCRIPTURE READING WITH SAINT BONAVENTUR (Comment. in Joannem, ch. XVIII, vv. 33-37, Opera. Omnia, Tom. VI, pp. 488.

Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus, as said to him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: Say, thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation, and the chief priests, had delivered thee up to me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered: I kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, a servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore sate to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I as king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (Jn. 18: 33-37).

According to Saint Bonaventure, there are four significant stions of this text treating of the Kingship of Christ: the *inquisitio* the *origin* of the inquisiton, the *answer or response* to the inquisition, and, finally, the *breakdown* or (discussion) of the inquisition. prelude to this examination by Pilate, the Seraphic Doctor mere mentions here the previous betrayal by Judas and the subseque handing over of Christ by the Jews to Pilate.

First there is the inquisition itself. Immediately we notice the Christ is questioned directly as to the cause brought against Hir This is unusual, for ordinarily the accusers advance the reasons of the cause against an alleged criminal. Further, there should be least two witnesses to the crimes of the accused man: By the mou of two or three witnesses shall he die that is to be slain. Let no make put to death, when only one beareth witness against him (Deu 17:6). Or again: One witness shall not rise up against any make whatsoever the sin or wickedness be: but in the mouth of two three witnesses every word shall stand (Ibid. 19:15).

However, in the case of Christ, there was no conclusive evidenthat He was a criminal. Previous to the present inquisition, Pile had tried to find evidence of some crime: Pilate therefore went a to them and said: What accusation bring you against this man? The answered, and said to him: If he were not a malefactor, we would

not have delivered him up to thee (vv 29f). That they were merely begging the question is evident from the fact that they answered with a hypothetical "if." Thus Pilate's answer gave the lie to their subterfuge: Take him you, and judge him according to your law (v. 31). Their deception became clear when they tried to evade his challenge; for they pretended to invoke a Roman law forbidding them to condemn a man to death: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death (v. 31). Here they tricked Pilate, who thought they appealed to Roman legislation. Had he known the Old Law, he would have realized they were prohibited by it from killing without the required witnesses. Restrained by this, they would not have dared break the Law of God by directly trying to kill Christ.

So Pilate perforce returned to Jesus and questioned Him directly: Art thou the king of the Jews (v. 33)? This question was like a bait or a lure: for if Christ answered in the affirmative, Pilate had a case against Him. He could accuse Him of setting Himself up against Caesar, who ruled the Jews. But Christ answered with a question: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of me (v. 34)? Our Lord knew the right answer. But, He asked the question because, by the query and its response, the evil source of His examination would be brought to light.

Pilate's reply is the origin of the inquisition. Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? (v. 35), as if to say: "I did not impose this on Thee." And he continued: Thy own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee up to me (v. 35); which statement was an admission of the origin of the inquisition. And yet, even though they had originated the heinous proceedings, the Jews were powerless to conclude the cause; for they had no proof of any crime of Jesus. And so, ridiculously, in the absence of any factual accusation, Pilate the Judge must ask the accused: What hast thou done (v. 35)? In modern law, the judge would be morally bound to dismiss the accused-both for lack of a cause and for lack of evidence. But Pilate, weak and bewildered, asked Christ why the Jews had accused Him. What a perverted jurisprudence! The judge must ask the supposed criminal for a reason or cause to condemn Him! But, where a criminal would seek a way out, Christ answered with the all-pervading truth of His Kingdom.

And this answer of Christ is the third part or the response the inquisition: My kingdom is not of this world (v. 36). In response the Saviour immediately confuted the depraved intention the Jews. For they sought, through their trickery, to provoke Pi against Jesus. They were unable to word it directly, but they ho that Pilate might infer that Christ was setting up a temporal k dom against Caesar. But our Redeemer dashed their hope when excluded a worldly reign: My kingdom is not of this world (v. Saint Augustine asks: "What more do you want, Jews and natio Christ is not impeding your worldly domination; for His is an ot world Kingdom." And Christ indicated how they should recogn that His Kingdom was not of this world: If my kingdom were of world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be livered to the Jews (v. 36). This is His major premise; that He is an earthly King. And His minor premise is contained in the m that is, no one now defends Him. And, logically, since He is and now so defenseless, He can consistently conclude: but now kingdom is not from hence (v. 36).

This is a timely reminder for any servant of God who might tempted to seek worldly power. At such moments, like the disciplent to seek worldly power. At such moments, like the disciplent to pray (Lk. 11; 1). And the message of the Master, echoing do through the ages, teaches us to pray: Thy kingdom come (Ibid. v. We should be ever conscious that our Kingdom is in the next we this end, the Beloved Disciple warns us to despise the thing this world: We know that we are of God, and the whole work seated in wickedness (I Jn. 5:19). Saint John also points out value of being always aware of our eternal inheritance: Who is that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the of God (Ibid. v. 5)? And, conclusively, Christ Himself reassure of our safety in awaiting His Kingdom: In the world you shall he distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world (Jn. 16,

Pilate was forced to admire the cogent reasoning of Christ. he expressed his wonderment aloud: Art thou a king then (v. 3) The Seraphic Doctor says that Pilate seemed to be asking Ch why He professed to be a King; for, from His words, it seemed the wished to reign. Thereupon, Christ gave the breakdown to

examination by establishing His position. For, as the King of all Truth, He shatters any further inquisition against Himself: Thou sayest that I am a king (v. 37). In other words, Christ answers Pilate: "I do not deny that I am a King." And what is this Kingdom? It is Truth: For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth my voice (v. 37). But: What is truth (v. 38)? Saint Bonaventure concludes that Pilate should have waited for Christ's answer. For, in His own words, He is Truth: I am the way, and the truth, and the life (Jn. 14, 6).

Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

OUERIES AND REPLIES

QUESTION: We are building a new hall at our College and should like to dedicate it to Saint Clare but in doing so should prefer to use her family name. Can you give us the historical information needed?

ANSWER: It is quite definitely established now that Saint Clare had no family name! In the past, several biographers have said that she was a daughter of the ducal Scifi family, but this has been disproved. In a parallel attempt to give Saint Francis a noble origin, seventeenth and eighteenth century writers claimed he was descended of a noble house from Lucca, and that the Lady Pica was of a famous family of Picardy.

Undoubtedly, Clare's family was noble and rich, but without any title of nobility. Moreover, it was not the custom in Italy at the time to use family names. Children were called after their parents and grandparents. Hence Francis would be Francesco di Pietro (his father) di Bernardone (his grandfather); Clare would have been called Chiara di Favorone di Offreduccio.

Ref: Cf. Arnoldo Fortini, "Nuove notizie a S. Chiara d'Assisi," Archivum Franciscanum Historicum, XLVI (1953), pp. 4-19.

Sophronius Clasen, OFM, "'Furstin der Armen'—Neuerscheinungen zum Klara-Jubilaum 1953," Wissenschaft und Weisheit, XVII (1954), 81-98.

I. C. B.

QUESTION: Did Saint Francis compose the prayer known as Absorbeat ("Let the sweet fire of Thy love. .'")? Can the Adoramus Te, which Franciscans use so much, be certainly attributed to our Founder?

ANSWER: The first of these prayers is known only through the Arbor Vitae Crucifixae of Ubertino da Casale (d. 1305) and the Lenten series De Evangelio aeterno of Saint Bernardin of Siena, who manifestly took it from Ubertino. It is not found in

any of the ancient collections of the writings of Saint Francis. Nor does Ubertino pressly say it is an authentic prayer. Hence on the side of manuscript evidence it must be rejected. Furthermore, it is redolent of twelfth-century Benedictine and Cisterci writers, and seems to be the work of a scholarly mystic. In fact, it is found in great part at least in the Liber Meditationum, c. 35, once ascribed to Saint Augustine. It possible, of course, that Saint Francis knew and adopted the prayer as his own.

The Adoramus Te is found in the Testament of our Seraphic Father: "The Logave me such faith in churches, that I would simply adore and say: We adore Th most holy Lord Jesus, (here and, words not in original text) in all Thy church throughout the world, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast deemed the world." Saint Francis does not claim that he composed the prayer or inspired to compose it; and liturgical scholars would, no doubt, point out that in p it was already to be found in the liturgical books. One finds part of it also in we seem to be twelfth-century directives on religious life, the Documenta vitae religion (Patr. Lat. 184, col. 1177), in which the monk is told that as he approaches to cross on entering the church he should say: "Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus ti etc." Until evidence is found, however, that the complete prayer existed before the ti of Saint Francis, we may surely hold that its Franciscan form comes from the Serap Patriarch.

Ref: 1) For Absorbeat:

Jacques Cambell, OFM, "Les ecrits de S. Francois d'Assise dev le critique," Franziskanische Studien, 36 (1954), pp. 261-63. Fred. ab Antverpia, OFM Cap., "De fontibus litterariis vitae S. Francois," Collecttanea franciscana, I (1931), p. 440.

2) Adoramus Te:

Kaj. Esser, OFM, Das Testament des hl. Franziskus (Munster, 1949 Jacques Cambell, OFM, art. cit., 205-207.

I. C. B.

THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

AND ALL YOU ARE BROTHERS

"And wherever the Brethren are located or meet one another, let them act toward one another like members of a family. And each should with assurance make known his need to another; for if a mother nourishes and loves her child in the flesh, how much more eagerly ought one to love and nourish his brother in the spirit? And if any one of them should fall into illness, the other Brethren ought to serve him as they would wish to be served themselves (II Rule, VI)."

These words of our Rule are certainly familiar to us. We have read them so often and heard them so often that we know them by heart. But if we pause to ask ourselves how we fulfill them in actual practice, we will very probably find ourselves embarrassed for an answer. It is an old Franciscan dictum that a man knows only as much as he does. If we apply it here, most of us will have to confess that we know very little about the meaning of Franciscan brotherhood.

1. And all you are brothers (Mtt. 23:8)

It is not in any way surprising that we should call ourselves brothers, nor is it anything especially remarkable that we should speak of our Order as a brotherhood. Anyone who takes his Christian life seriously normally thinks in terms of brotherhood, for we are brothers not primarily because we belong to the Franciscan Order, but because we are all baptized in Christ.

Frequently and in various ways Holy Scripture speaks of the new life that is ours through baptism. When, for example, we are told of the union of the baptized with each other and with Christ, we are given the figure of the vine and its branches. Saint Paul speaks of the mystical body of Christ, in which the faithful are the members and Christ himself the Head. And again we have the words of Our Lord explaining to us: One is your Master, and all you are brothers (Mtt. 23:8). These words have certainly not been forgotten by the Church; she uses them again and again throughout her liturgy. But one cannot help wondering at times if they have not been forgotten by Catholics. We cannot deny that non-Catholics—even non-Chris-