#### THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

#### Living Stones

Traditionally, the beginning of the New Year is a time of retrospection and resolution, of self ex-amination and serious reflection. We shall be quite in season, then, if we ask ourselves now, at the beginning of the year of grace 1955, "Do I know what I am?" At first blush this seems a broad and easily answered question. But when as religious, and as Franciscan religious, we ask ourselves this question, we are really asking whether we know what we, as Franciscans, are. Then this seemingly innocuous little question may prove mightily embarrassing to our complacency, for it prods us to the ultimate question: "Do I really know what I ought to be?" Obviously, none of as can answer this question with a simple yes or no. Rather, it forces us to a thorough self-examination of our whole life as Franciscan religious, of our aims and ideals and of our shortcomings, of what we ought to be and of what we are not. Accordingly, the monthly conferences for this year will be directed toward helping us measure ourselves against the lofty standards set for us by our Seraphic Father and the Rule of our Order.

By way of introduction, let us first consider our relation to the Order in general. And by Order we mean that particular organization—Order in the broad sense, or Congregation, or even Province—to which we belong. The question is: Just how do we belong to our institute? What do we mean when we say we are members of this organization?

#### 1. We and the Order Are One

It is definitely wrong and harmful for us to view our membership in the Order as something purely external, like membership in the Elks or the Holy Name Society. We are an intimate, integral, and inseparable part of our Order, just as our physical members are part of our body. Yet how often do we separate ourselves from our Order, not by positive declaration, perhaps, but certainly by attitude. We tend to allow our feelings, our outlook, and especially our beech, to betray the fact that we regard ourselves as separate entites, as beings quite apart from the organization we call "the Order." or some of us, perhaps, the Order has become no more than an or-

ganization, or-sit venia verbi-a corporation to which we are connected, which governs us, insures our livelihood, and demands certain services from us in return. With but slight exaggeration, we could say that our relation to the Order is pretty much that of em ployee to employer. Others of us may have a different but none the less oblique view of the Order as identified with a specific groupthe higher superiors, let us say, or the unofficial policy makers, or a certain caste. Then quite imperceptibly, the spirit of separation creeps into our thinking, feeling, and judging. The "Order" (that is, a certain caste to which I do not belong) is thus and so, but I, be it known, am quite otherwise. Or, the "Order" (that is, the policy making group) is doing this and that, but I will have no part in any such doings. A further example of the spirit of separation occurs in the seemingly harmless business of boasting about the Order. We shrink from bragging about our own personal achievements, for that, we know, would offend against holy humility. But we do not hestitate to trumpet, with long and powerful blasts, the glories of the great Franciscan Order. Sometimes we even blame ourselves for not telling the world more about this marvellous Order of ours. Bu let us be sober. In the final analysis, is this not an attitude that re flects our inner divorce from the Order we profess to love? If we were not convinced that we and our institute are separate entities, w would be as cautious in praising the Order as we are in praising ourselves. The same holds for criticism. In general, it is painful for us to criticize ourselves, and more painful still to take criticism from others. But we criticize the Order, sometimes bitterly and viciously without the slightest twinge of discomfort. And some of us are se spiritually askew that we feel positive satisfaction when our institute is lampooned by outsiders. For such religious, divorce from the Or der is total.

If each one of us takes time out during this season for a litt serious introspection, no doubt we shall all of us find many more a titudes that reflect the spirit of separation from the Order.

#### 2. We Are Living Stones in a Spiritual Edifice

Let us convince ourselves here and now that we and the Ordare not separate entities but a living unity. We are not individual who once entered the Order and now live our own individual li

part from the life of the Order. We are not pious members of a pious union whose membership we graciously increased by joining it. Nor again are we the party of the second part in a formal contract with the Order. What are we then? We are living stones in the spiritual edifice that we call our Order; we are integrated as living parts into a single organism; we are wedded to the Order in holy love; we are the Order, in one living unity. Thomas of Celano beautifully expressed this ideal when he wrote of the Order: "Indeed, there arose, built upon an enduring foundation, charity's noble structure of living stones gathered from all parts of the world, raised up as a lwelling of the Holy Spirit.1

When we entered the Order we received new life. There was n old custom in the ancient Roman world that when a child was born it was laid on the father's knees. If the father accepted the child, it would live; if not, it would die. Reminiscent of this is the ritual of our solemn profession. Before God and the representative of the Order at the altar, the candidate repeats the words of the Psalmist: Suscipe me secundum eloquium tuum et vivam. Take me up, accept me, and I shall live. And indeed, according to the theologians, our profession has an effect similar to that of baptism, though of course not a sacramental effect. In baptism we died to the old man and we rose with Christ to a new life which was given us through the charity of the Holy Spirit poured into our heart. In our profession, too, we died to the old man forever, we died to this world, we were sacrificed to the Lord. But in dying we received new life, the life of the Order; and now it is up to us to live this life. We have surrendered our individual life in order to live, as ersons, the common life of the Order. We have been integrated hto this spiritual structure wholly and entirely, but as living stones. This integration was pronounced by us when we took our vows; and such it simply meant our promise to integrate ourselves into this oble dwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is by no means the Order that tegrates us. True, our superiors assign tasks to us, they give us dictions, they tell us what they expect from us, and above all they that we receive spiritual formation by word and example. But are living stones, and therefore we must insert ourselves into the ole and become one with it. Each one of us. with the

Vita Prima, I, 38.

must incorporate himself into the organism, he must give himself wholeheartedly to the Order—live its life, share its ideals, rejoice in its successes, suffer in its trials, and work, not for it, but with it and in it. Thus it almost amounts to a contradiction in terms to say: "I and the Order." The only acceptable formula would be: "I in the Order." Let us therefore hammer into our head and heart the uncompromising truth: I am a living member of the Order and therefore everything that concerns the Order vitally concerns me.

### 3. We Live by the Spirit of the Order Expressed in the Rule

From the foregoing it is clear that obedience alone is not sufficient to make us living stones in the structure of the Order. We may indeed be painfully obedient, slavishly submissive; we may be scrupulous observers of every paragraph in our Rule and Constitutions, ordinations and customs, and yet be dead stones in the house of the Lord. In order to be living stones, we must actively embrace the life of the Order. We must not be merely stones that are set in place, but stones that place themselves. In the words of Saint Augustine: "God does not build His temple, as it were, of stones that have no motion of their own, that have to be lifted up and set in place by the builder. Not such as these are living stones. And you as living stones are built and building together in the temple of God (Ephes. 2:22, and I Peter 2:5). You must be led, but you must also be running."

We too must run whither we are led; we must lift ourselves up to that new life which we accepted in holy profession that it may both take form in us, and form us, according to the pattern laid down by our Rule. Only then shall we be living stones.

When we returned from the altar after pronouncing our vows, our fellow religious were waiting to embrace us in charity, to give us the kiss of peace and to receive us into the union of this new life. We were not merely an addition to their number, we were brothers and sisters, begotten by the same spirit. And for children of Saint Francis, this spirit is the life of the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful and total following in His divine footsteps. It is this spirit that is described for us in detail in our Rule and Constitutions, the ordinations and customs, that now must govern our life, its growth and its perfection.

Have we ever thought of the meaning of our laws-those rules regulations, prescriptions and admonitions that we stumble so often, that curb our liberty, and plague our conscience when gnore them? Here again we have to ask ourselves what these laws en to us. Do we regard them as merely exterior regulations to ich we have to conform in order to retain a precarious foothold thin the Order? For it is not unheard of that a religious fails to e in the Order-that is, fails to live its life-and yet is unwilling live outside the Order-which in fact he actually does. If we feel hat our laws are only obligations which we are forced to obey if we want to avoid the consequences, we are still stones in the noble tructure of our Order, but we are dead stones, and we have yet to e stirred to life. As long as we consider our Rule and Constituions a set of laws that requires fulfillment—which is certainly required-and nothing more, we are dead stones. Our laws do not only fix limits which must not be trespassed; they not only express how much is demanded of us if we wish to remain within the community; they also formulate our very way of life, they show us the design of the structure in which we are to fit ourselves as living stones. But then it is required that we approach our laws, our form of life, as living beings. We must never approach them as a matter of the letter but as a matter of the spirit. The letter kills, the spirit vivifies. If we wish to become living stones, we must penetrate into the depths of the spirit of our laws and let them come alive in us, make them the form of our life, of our thinking, feeling, and willing, of our appreciating, of our working and praying, of our rejoicing and suffer-

How can we do this? Here are a few suggestions.

First and above all we must cultivate within us the deep conviction that our Rule and Constitutions are the form of our life, that precisely and exactly our own personal life is here at stake.

Then study the laws, not so much with the mind of a lawyer but with the heart of a lover. How many of us ever make the Rule and Constitutions a subject for our daily meditations? If we do this in the right spirit the aspect of "law" will disappear from them and they will became for us what in reality they are meant to be—the form of our life, the guide to our sanctification.

And then we have to pray for the right spirit Saint Francis re-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Sermo 156, 12; t.38, col. 857.

ceived the Rule as an inspiration from God. Let us now humbly ask God, daily, that this His spirit be strengthened in us, be stirred up and enlivened.

And finally, let us not forget to help our co-religious who are also living stones in the structure of our holy Order, and let us be watchful of ourselves lest through our fault we endanger this dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. It is our structure, and we are the structure; it behooves us, then, to do all we can to strengthen it and beautify it and make it a fit temple of the Lord.

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.

#### COLLOQUY AT THE CRIB

#### The Worshippers:

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Sleep, little Child, For day has gone into her occident chamber And the singing night wonders, Finding you heedless of lullaby.

Fold now on your warm breast The arms stretched day-long wide, And clasp the flowers of your reaching hands. Close now the shutters of your vigilant eyes. Sleep, little Child, For we must leave you now.

#### The Child:

O, it may be Someone will lately come. Some restless heart

May seek me in the night, Or some chance reveller See the glow of unshuttered eyes. I shall not sleep forever.

#### The Worshippers:

But sleep, little Child. Your worshippers are gone. All they who love you come by day, And night is for repose. Your feathered carollers Are round with sleep. The weary ox's dreams are bright With angel voices, and the ass sleeps on.

#### The Child:

And yet perhaps One broken soul will find me When the wheeling day has spun to rest. If all the night I hold out wide My arms, one outcast yet May pity me, and lifting me, Be saved.

I shall not ever clasp My infinite hands Nor shall I fold my everlasting arms. But if one day, too weary, I cannot hold out wide my eager arms, On that far day, behold! They will be nailed.

Sr. Mary Francis, P.C.

<sup>\*</sup>In this series of conferences we shall make use of material offered by Fr. Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., freely adapting it to the needs of our readers.

#### OUR LADY'S TECHNICIAN

Large-scale technical and scientific operations have become so much a part of modern Franciscan life that we rarely stop to wonder anymore it we are still in gear with the Franciscan ideal. It is more than just the problem of not being swallowed up in a sea of air conditioners, electric shavers, and sundry nuts and bolts.

Modern Franciscan life is rather a question of balance without compromise, of efficiency without laxity. Sometimes there is only a hair's difference between what is really useful and what is merely convenient.

God has pointed out a Franciscan of our own day to show us how to gear both our personal and community lives to modern circumstances and big-time operations. The name of this Franciscan is Father Maximilian M. Kolbe, OFM Conv. He learned that progress and poverty can be co-workers. He learned that the racket of machinery need not hinder the spirit of recollection, and that the efficient speed of scientific discoveries can be, after prayer, the first handmaid of the modern apostolate.

The last few Popes have spoken in the same vein about the usefulness of radio, movies, and television.

And this is the whole point of Father Maximilian's life: he joined the products of our century's keenest technicians with the resolve to use them for the Queen of Heaven.

And why not? It is part of the Franciscan way to love God's creatures in a special manner. Francis looked upon them as the reflection of God in nature, Duns Scotus as a part of cosmology, Roger Bacon as scientific phenomena, and Maximilian Kolbe as Our Lady's "ammunition," to use his own phrase.

Remember, of course, the effectiveness of ammunition depends on the skill of the marksman. So listen to the story of Maximilian Kolbe and judge for yourself if he was "on target." Remember, too, that his Marian apostolate had a distinctly Franciscan character. The missions he founded were also destined to increase the friaries of the Order. His work was carried out under religious obedience and within the framework of our Constitutions. His personal life, finally, was characterized by his abiding love for Franciscan poverty, by the charm of his Franciscan simplicity, and by that Franciscan fraternal charity with which he asked to die for another man.

We can pass over the events of his normal boyhood in Poland (no army of biographers, I hope, will succeed in making him a plaster saint)

with this single remark. He was moved by four convictions: his interest in things mechanical and scientific, a longing for a military career, a desire to become a Franciscan priest, and—for which history will remember him the most—the determination to champion the cause of Our Lady. Despite his own doubts how to reconcile them all, she saw to it that all were fulfilled.

It was while studying theology in Rome that Maximilian found the outlet for his convictions. At that time the Masons were a powerful force in Italy. They would gather in Saint Peter's Square itself and raise banners which depicted Satan conquering Michael the Archangel, all the while shouting curses upon the Pope.

Remember Saint Francis' own desire to convert the Sultan in North Africa? Maximilian had the idea of visiting the Grand Master of the Masons' Roman Lodge to convert him, but the Friar's rector thought it might be a trifle more prudent—and effective—to pray for him instead. Then it was, in 1917, that he outlined to six confreres his plan for winning not only the enemies of the Church, but every soul in the world, till the end of time, for the Immaculate—as he was wont to call Our Lady. With the permission of their superiors and subsequently with the blessing of the Holy Father, the seven Friars pledged themselves to this ideal. Their objective was to make everyone aware of the fact of Mary's mediation in his spiritual life.

This was the origin of the Militia of the Immaculate. Its main requirement is to belong to the Immaculate without reserve—so that even our ordinary actions are, literally, graced by the hand of Mary. In thirty-five years the membership has grown from seven to about two and a quarter million, in half a dozen countries.

After his studies Father Maximilian returned to Poland in the advanced stages of tuberculosis, aggravated by the dampness of Rome. He was hemorrhaging so violently that he was finally taken to a sanatorium to die. Although he spent his supposedly last few months in catechizing and counselling, Father Maximilian refused to make long-range plans, lest he seem to anticipate God's will to cure a hopeless case. It seemed as if the Immaculate were trying to impress her servant with his own helplessness.

Father Maximilian was discharged from the sanatorium as a man whose death was near, but not immediate, even though he appeared plump and ruddy. With the characteristic abandon of Our Lady's friends, he asked permission to edit a short bulletin to keep contact with the few members of the Militia. He wrote practically all the first issues. It

was evidently his conviction, rather than any literary grace, that won the hearts of his readers, for he remained a poor writer all his life.

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Father Maximilian never got around to dying, but his periodical, Knight of the Immaculate— a title reminiscent of Saint Francis' own chivalric ambitions—grew to such proportions that he and his brother-helpers were sent to Grodno to set up shop. They bought a used press, which they called "Grandma." This was the beginning of what became the most expert publishing house of Central Europe.

When Father returned from the sanatorium after a second visit, supposedly to die again, the Polish Prince Lubecki donated a large tract of land near Warsaw to the Friar. This was the beginning of Niepokalanow, or "City of the Immaculate."

Father Maximilian and his brothers began to build a place for their presses; their own living quarters were simply a kind of barracks—as they were always to remain. There was nothing too modern for Our Lady's work, but the Friars themselves were satisfied with less than what the poor could afford. Father Maximilian had to kneel to wash himself, for he considered a table for his wash basin superfluous furniture in his room.

When the war broke out in 1939 and the Nazi Army marched on Warsaw, this is what Niepokalanow had accomplished in just twelve years of its existence. The brothers and priests had created the most expert printery and bindery in Central Europe. In addition, they had built a school for candidates, a novitiate, a hundred-bed hospital, an electric plant, a firehouse, a radio station and an airport. Father Maximilian was also planning to make movies with the best European stars and to operate a TV station, as soon as it became more practical. The last count before the war included over seven hundred Conventual Franciscans in the "City"—the largest religious community in the world. They were printing almost a million copies of the Knight every month, plus the Little Knight, with 250,000 circulation, for young lovers of the Immaculate. Among their ten periodicals they printed a journal of sports and a daily paper with the latest news service; the newspaper had more than 150,00 daily circulation—and this in a country of only thirty million people. Besides the periodicals, they printed countless pamphlets and books in several languages, including Arabic.

Amid all this activity with "brother ink" and "sister press," as Father Maximilian used to call them in his Franciscan idiom, he insisted that the Friars' personal sanctification be first on the list of things-to-do.

He was not interested in first fervors or vocations founded on emotions; he did not want men ill-suited to Franciscan poverty or temperamentally unfit for community life. But imagine the caliber of the religious! About seven hundred men, for example, applied to become brothers at the City of the Immaculate during the last year before the Nazi occupation; of these barely a hundred were even allowed to try the life of a novice.

Both priests and brothers were trained to keep the spirit of recollection in the midst of the clatter of machines. They did not become robots on an assembly line; they were frequently transferred so that their talents could be used best and so that they would understand all the processes involved in their work, from printing to plumbing. This technique was so successful that the brothers held a large number of patents.

Father Maximilian's intention was to found a City of the Immaculate in every country of the world. In 1930 he left Poland to carry out this ideal, and founded Mugenzai no Sono, or "The Garden of the Immaculate," in Nagasaki, Japan. At present it includes a minor seminary of about a hundred candidates, a major seminary which has begun to produce small classes of Japanese clergy, novitiate classes averaging twenty members, a community of lay sisters dedicated to the Immaculate, and an orphanage which the late Father Flanagan called The Boys' Town of Japan. These orphans are the ones left homeless by the atom bomb blast of 1945—from which the Friars' buildings were preserved intact, although they are within the limits of Nagasaki.

Besides this activity, as well as working in the several parishes established in other cities, the Friars of Japan are currently printing the largest Catholic periodical in Japanese. They are evangelizing the smaller Japanese islands by the modern means of motor launches and movie projectors—a method that would have been much approved by Father Maximilian.

In 1939 Father Maximilian visited India, following a previous visit to China, and arranged with ecclesiastical authorities for a new City in Ernaculum. But when he returned to Poland in September of 1939, he was caught up in the outbreak of World War II.

The tale of his arrest and the dispersal of his religious community and the confiscation of their presses runs like a hundred other stories in Europe. Father Maximilian was accused of underground resistance and was sent to the prison camp at Oswiecim (Auschwitz). With scarcely anything left of his lungs and just recovering from pneumonia, he was sentenced to hard labor, first in carrying sand and stones in a wheelbar-

row, and then in clearing a swamp of trees. After their liberation, his companions told the story of the brutal floggings he received when he stumbled from exhaustion. Yet he warned others not to help him, lest they suffer too; the Immaculate would sustain him, he said. Whenever they suffer too; the Immaculate would hear confessions and aid the dying. he had the chance, he braved death to Block Fourteen when one of the

Father Maximilian was in Cell Block Fourteen when one of the prisoners escaped. In reprisal, ten of the other prisoners were sentenced to die, among whom was a young doctor with a family. When he realized to die, among whom was a young doctor with a family. When he realized to die, among whom was a young doctor with a family. When he realized to die, among whom was a young doctor with a family. When he realized to die, among whom was a young doctor with a family. When he realized to die sob. Father Maximilian then stepped from the lines and asked to die to sob. Father Maximilian then stepped his wish. They were sentenced in his stead. The commandant granted his wish. They were sentenced to die by starvation.

The Polish orderly assigned to check the death cells daily and remove the dead has left us the touching story of Father's last fifteen days on earth. No curses, no weeping, were ever heard from the cell of those on earth. No curses, no weeping, were ever heard from the cell of those on earth. No curses, no weeping, were ever heard from the cell of those on earth. No curses, no weeping, were ever heard from the cell of those said the rosary with his fellow sufferers, and with their cracked voices said the rosary with his fellow sufferers, and with their cracked voices they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymns, too. But they were taking too long to die; they managed a few hymn

But the memory and spirit of father Maximilian Kolbe has not passed away. A handful of his brothers have continued their work at passed away. A handful of his brothers have continued their work at Niepokalanow under the eyes of the Communist regime. They have been able to print at least a few issues of the Knight—but in different cities when and wherever they collect enough paper for the magazine. At present they have themselves completed the construction of a mammoth basilica in modern-Slavic architecture—despite the Communist restrictions—where they carry on perpetual adoration.

Father Maximilian's work has been the subject of countless articles and at least a half dozen books in as many languages. His conviction that the figure of the Immaculate would soon reign above the Red Star on the Kremlin in Moscow has received much currency in Central Europe, including western Russia itself. What is more important, his ideal of conquering every country of the world by a city of the Immaculate of conquering every country of the world by a city of the Immaculate has taken root within his own Order. Two more Cities—in addition to Mugenzai no Sono in Nagasaki—pave sprung up, where his ideals

are being lived and disseminated, coupling the Franciscan spirit with the Marian apostolate. One establishment is in Italy, the other in Kenosha, Wisconsin (Marytown).

I think Father Maximilian's message to modern Franciscans may be summed up in what he told his brothers, almost in prophecy, even before the war broke out. His words are recorded in Maria Winowska's book, Our Lady's Fool (p. 129):

"Fundamentally, Niepokalanow is not so much our visible and exterior activity, be it inside or outside the cloister. The real Niepokalanow is our souls. All the rest—even skill—is secondary. Progress is spiritual, or is not progress at all! Therefore, even though it were necessary to suspend our work, even though all the members of the Militia abandoned us, even though we had to be dispersed as leaves swept by the autumn wind, we would say, my Brothers that we are truly progressing if the ideal of Niepokalanow continues to shine in our souls."

Fr. Anselm Romb, OFM Conv.

## THE SPIRIT OF MARY IMMACULATE AND THE MODERN TEACHER

It would be incongruous and intolerable if the holy enthusiasm of the Marian Year swept over our souls and left Christian education untouched. What a Marian education might mean, and what it could do, came home to the writer during the Marian Congress in Rome, and began to take shape in my mind as I listened to the Holy Father speak. What question did his allocution pose for us?

Certainly, it is not a question of more "devotions," of any multiplication of external practices in our schools. It is the far deeper and neglected problem of creating a spirit, of discovering the secret and sacred springs of motivation in the human heart of both teacher and pupil. It means enlivening that hidden essential relationship between the soul of child and teacher in our modern age and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The text of the Allocution given by the Holy Father on November first, 1954, is found as "Le Testimonianze," in Osservatore Romano, an. 94, n. 255 (Nov. 2-3, 1954).

Blessed Moth 1er, and drawing forth from this live center of supernatural love and power a love of truth, a desire for knowledge and goodness, having, if possible, the force of a holy passion. A Marian education can mean nothing less, essentially, than activating the graces of bap tism, of faith, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and making them huitful in the educative process. How can this be done at all? How hall we approach this kind of problem?

THE SPIRIT OF MARY IMMACULATE

The address of the Holy Father was not merely a discourse on the high theoretical level of general principles. As he warmed to his subject, he struck again and again an intensely practical note: "in the present situation. . . . in this hour of history." The timeliness of the new feast of the Queenship of Mary appears as an effective means of challenging the present-day restless world and of compelling it to see a truth "which can supply a remedy for its evils, deliver it from its anguish, and direct it on the way of salvation which it anxiously seeks."2 Now, if the gracious truth about our Blessed Mother can fulfill this triple function for the world at large, it can do the same for educaion in the modern world. The word of a Pope is not to be taken lightly.

What then does the Holy Father promise himself and us as the fruits of this new feast? To invoke Mary as Queen, to invite her with the united voice of Christendom to establish her rule over a ravaged and restless world, is itself, first of all, a revival of Christian hope in the divine promises, a bestirring of mankind out of its stupor, a laying of the nightmares of desperation. This new-born hope will surely gain her response. She will not only bring to naught the dark plans of evil men who work to destroy the peace and unity of mankind. Even more, the Holy Father confidently expects that she will bestow upon us some portion of her spirit.

The Spirit of Mary and of the reign of Mary! Here is something positive to guide us. The phrase strikes a spark, lights up a vision to fire the imagination, even the imagination of teachers beaten dull by sententious "educational" talk. Instead of omnipotent "methods," we have the Madonna, mulier amicta sole! A Marian education then is simply one which has captured the Spirit of Mary Immaculate.

We are thus compelled to ask: what is this Spirit of Mary Immaculate and how can it transform modern education?

#### 1. The Spirit of Mary Is a Strong and Daring Spirit

"We understand by this (spirit) the courageous and even daring will which, in difficult situations and in the face of dangers and obstacles, unhesitatingly shapes the resolutions which are called for and carries through their execution with indefectible energy, in such a way as to sweep along in its wake the weak, the weary, the doubtful, those who no longer believe in the justice and nobility of the cause for which they should fight." It means to catch the spirit of Mary's Magnificat, "a song of joy and invincible confidence in the power of God, on which she counts to produce results and which fills her with a holy daring and with a force unknown to nature alone."8

Anyone who sees the facts of modern education will have no difficulty in seeing also the necessity of such a holy daring and of an invincible courage. For we need to refurbish our confidence in the goal of education. The most crippling defect of secular education is the lack of a clear and well-defined goal; and as we breathe this air of vague and wandering finality, we begin to grow unsure and vague ourselves; we begin to draw into our souls this crippling lack of purpose, and with it dire and discouraging consequences.

Mary supplies the answer. "The purpose of all education is to form the true and perfect Christian" (Pius XI), just as through her co-operation was formed the true and perfect Christ. Simple, unadorned words which contain a mighty truth, a truth which makes of education a maternal task and privilege. As Saint Pius X says in Ad diem illum, as no one can teach us so well about Christ as Mary, so no one can so well fire us with a strong conviction of the purpose which governs all our educative work. ". . . And since it is through Mary that we attain to the knowledge of Christ, through Mary also we most easily obtain that life of which Christ is the source and origin."

Again, we need to realize that Mary became the valiant woman

<sup>2</sup>Pius XII, ibid.

<sup>8</sup>W. J. Dohney-J. P. Kelly, Papal Documents on Mary (Milwaukee, 1954), p. 138.

and manifested this holy daring in that decisive moment when she spoke her wonderful Fiat. It was her complete dedication of herself to God's purpose and disposition. That moment, says the present Holy Father, illumines her whole person and mission. In that moment she became Mother and Queen, and received the regal office of watching over the unity and peace of the human race. This basic daring dedication of ourselves to God and whatever He may choose to do with us, this wholly courageous and supernatural spirit of adventure, this alone must be the ever-living source of the Catholic Teacher's unwavering devotion to his or her task.

#### II. Several Related Truths

Applying this thought further to education, this completely personal acceptance and realization of what our divine purpose is, we note several related truths.

First, Mary became Queen when she spoke her Ecce ancilla Domini. Before we can hope to teach others to master themselves with purpose and to be above the cricumstances of their lives, we must first achieve this mastery in ourselves. "To serve God is to rule." No one can give what he does not possess. And if the children we teach are consistently restless and difficult and distracted, we may well ask whether this unhappy attitude is not a reflection of ourselves, whether it is not their assimilative reaction to our own habitual disquiet of soul. "Tranquillize the minds of the young," said a recent Pope. We ourselves, then, must be vessels of tranquillity, radiating centers of peace. That is, our whole interior life, like that of Mary, must truly be centered on the jewel of a genuine Fiat.

Secondly, in the courage of her complete Fiat mihi, Mary became the Queen of Peace. This peace of heart in complete dedication to God's purpose for us individually is what the Psalmist means when he says: Inquire pacem et persequere eam (Ps. 33, 15); it is what Saint Francis meant whenever he made cautionary remarks about learning, that is, about mere secular learning, a learning not poted in the tranquillity of a life completely prayerful. This peace, more technically theological sense, is what Saint Bonaventure often and means thereby the whole richness of the inthe state of contemplation.

This peace we must have within ourselves before we step into the classroom to civilize and Christianize those lovable little barbarians, our children. And nothing less is required of us than a perfect Fiat, a daring daily, hourly Fiat of the complete gift of ourselves to God, a never-shrinking willingness to be used as His instrument. "Shine through me (prayed Cardinal Newman), and be so in me that every soul with whom I come in contact may feel Thy presence in my heart; let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus." This is the first and fundamental legacy in us of our Blessed Mother's spirit. It is a spirit of holy daring and divine audacity, for it was from the beginning, as the event proved, a dedication to the Cross, to the Passion. The Fiat mihi of the Annunciation is at once the Fiat voluntas tua of the Agony in the Garden, of the rock of Calvary, of the Cross.

THE SPIRIT OF MARY IMMACULATE

Again, in the courage of her complete Fiat, Mary made her decision once and for all, and accepted all that was to come. In this spirit alone you may rightly step into the classroom. The Fiat mihi of your self-consecration to God's purpose is at once acceptance of the classroom difficulties, and this acceptance is new self-mastery and sanctity. You will go to face them confidently because you go with Mary Immaculate, who drew all needed strength from God: Fecit mihi magna qui potens est. These classroom demands are the instruments of the Passion by which God pierces your heart and enters therein. Then you will be (and should be) to every child struggling with its first efforts on the hard road of knowledge, the very embodiment of the strong, encouraging goodness of the Blessed Mother.

You will achieve this not so much by what you say, but by what you do and are. It is a symptom of unhealthiness in modern education that it feels it must ever be busy about many things. (It talks too much; many school-texts chatter in a way that makes an intelligent child feel sorry for grown-ups.) You will succeed in this fundamental task of conveying the sanctity of purpose in life and in school by what you are. This is the way of Saint Francis, the way of Our Lord who "did and taught." Thus will the child, anxious and frightened (either shrinkingly or belligerently) by its problems,

consistently find in your understanding and compassion a cause of its joy, a gate of heaven, a star of the morning, the health of the sick and even the refuge of sinners!

Lastly, this holy audacity of Mary Immaculate might well induce many of us to have greater confidence in the ability of our pupils (God helps them too!) and, contrary to a contemporary downgrading of the educational process, encourage us to expect more from them. Many teachers today do not, as the Holy Father intimates, recognize to what extent they too have succumbed to a "dangerous psychological depression," to "a kind of weariness, of resignation," and "no longer truly believe in the justice and nobility of the cause for which they must fight." That is, they have forgotten the power of the supernatural in which Mary's courage was rooted. Much educational theorizing, I feel, is only a rationalization of the weariness and resignation inherent in this unconscious naturalism.

The Holy Father goes on to apply to the political world his thought of the Spirit of Mary as a strong and daring spirit. He notes in rulers of men today "a sort of weariness, of resignation, of passivity, which prevents them from advancing and facing with firmness and perseverance the problems of the present moment. They let things drift, instead of mastering them with sane and constructive action. They lack the full awareness of the dangerous psychological depression into which they have fallen." What they need, through Mary, is the grace "to conquer depression and weakness in an hour when no one can permit himself an instant of repose, when, in many places, just liberty is oppressed, the truth obscured by a mendacious propaganda, and the forces of evil, as it were, are spreading over the earth."

Apply this political thought to education: for the heart of a child is a little polity with eternal possibilities. You, the teacher, are to enter this small political world which is the open heart of the child only as a true Madonna, as a woman, clothed with the sun. . . How can you represent that Woman, unless with her you have spoken your *Fiat mihi* with courage, and with her know that within your heart the mystery of God's coming has taken place; and the Word has become incarnate in you and your life—that Word which

is eternal Truth—that He may dwell among the habitations of men. Here lie the supernatural springs of that reverence in which must be steeped every word that is spoken by the Catholic teacher.

#### III. The Spirit of Mary Is a Tender, Loving Spirit

Pope Pius XII uses no words more readily when he speaks of Mary than the words "tender," "tenderness," or "sweetness." In doing this he is conscious of acting as the mouthpiece of all Christian hearts: "Desirous as we are to interpret the sentiments of the entire Christian world," he says at the end of his address, which then turns into an ardent prayer. And his face, as he greets the pilgrims, shines with the spirit of a great heart brimming with compassion for all men, with an immense, alert and searching solicitude; with constant concern to give himself to alleviate the painful lot of men today. The prayer of the Marian Year breathes the same deep and sensitive affection.

In setting this quality of tenderness and graciousness before us as the second outstanding characteristic of the spirit of Mary and presenting it as at once a contrast and a complement to the first quality of strength and holy daring, the Pope makes the personality of Mary come vividly alive, as he wants it to live in the heart of Christendom. It is this surprising combination of paradoxical qualities which makes every great personality so completely fascinating to us. Strength and beauty are her clothing (Prov. 31, 25).

It is this quality of immense mercy which in a special way gives a distinctive character to the Reign of Mary Immaculate. Not power, but pure benevolence, is its very soul. "She continues to pour out," says the Holy Father, "all the treasures of her affection and her sweet concern upon suffering humanity. Far from being founded on an insistence on her rights or on any will to have dominion over others, the reign of Mary knows only one aspiration: to give herself completely with a most noble and complete generosity. This is how Mary exercises her queenly power, by accepting our homage and hearing even the most lowly and imperfect of our prayers."

What again are the implications of this quality of the Spirit of Mary for the Catholic teacher? What, but that in this heavenly affection and tenderness of her rule we have the principle of all true motivation and discipline in Catholic education?

Only out of the trust and confidence engendered by sincere love does the child gain that courage to put forth his best efforts and try the powers of his mind in the enterprise of learning. Only in an atmosphere of loving acceptance and noble unwavering affection can a genuine Catholic discipline of heart come into being. For all true discipline must be radically self-discipline. It is not a force imposed from without and felt as a will to dominate or as an insistence on certain rights. Such is not the reign of Mary, says the Pope; but true discipline is the loving evocation of the unspoiled perseverant good will of the child, responding to pure benevolence and seeking, from within outward, the noblest good. This good has come alive—a radiant and alluring prospect-in the madonna-like goodness of the teacher. The spirit of Our Blessed Mother is a heavenly source of truly powerful motivation, of authentic self-discipline and self-development.

Why is it then that all too often the child grows up with a strong sense of unpleasantness attaching to religion and the religious teacher? Something certainly of the spirit of Mary is lacking in those teachers whose presence in fact or in memory stirs painful experience. Is it not often the lack of that supernatural benevolence and warmhearted affection to which confidence and courage so readily respond? Under the guise of asceticism, personal interest in the child is discouraged or even forbidden in some quarters, as if it were not possible to be mature enough or enlightened enough to distinguish sentimentality from a tender and sincere love like that of our Blessed Mother. "As she enfolds the Divine Child in her mantle," the Holy Father prays, "so may Mary deign to enfold all men and all peoples in her watchful tenderness." Then, pointing the way for the teacher, he adds: "May she deign, as Seat of Wisdom, to make shine the truth of the inspired words: By me kings reign, and lawgivers decree just things; by me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice" (Prov. 8, 15-16). The two thoughts, of tenderness and of truth, are not casually joined. The modern world, and the modern child, cannot receive the truth unless it comes with manifest love. The tight-lipped teacher freezes something far more precious than her own ramrod dignity: she freezes the heart of a child.

The spirit of Mary is what the restlessness of the heart of man needs. The spirit of Mary is a strong and daring spirit. The spirit of Mary is a tenderly loving spirit. Modern education, as all modern life, needs the Madonna, and needs all of you who are teachers as so many multiplied madonnas, so many incarnations of the Spirit of Mary Immaculate.4

Fr. Pacific L. Hug, O.F.M.

### THE FOURTH JOY-THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

And entering the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they worshipped him. And opening their treasures they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Matt. 2:11)

Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful, and certainly one of the most highly indulgenced Franciscan prayers, is the Crown of Our Lady's Joys. As members of the Franciscan family we are privileged to gain a plenary indulgence each time we recite the "Crown of Joy." (Ecclus. 1:11 6:32) Although meditation is not required to gain the indulgence, the particular Joys which we commemorate in this prayer provide fruitful subjects of meditation for us. The following is the first of a series of meditations on the Joys of the Crown which will appear at intervals corresponding to the liturgical occurrence of the seven joys of our Blessed Lady.

In Saint Matthew's remarkably concise and candid account of of the visit of the Magi to the Infant King, many points strike the reflecting reader. Perhaps he pauses on the humility evidenced in

<sup>4</sup>This article is the substance of a paper delivered at the Third Meeting of the Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods (Buffalo, N.Y., Nov. 26, 1954). It will be incorporated in the Proceedings of that meeting (to be published soon by the Franciscan Institute).

the scene by the silence of the Child and his Mother; or he may ponder the devotion and determination which brought the wise Kings journeying from the East to Jerusalem; long would he be occupied in fathoming the significance of Christ's manifestation to all the world, a subject which the Fathers never tired of elaborating.

While appreciating the richness of the manifold facets of the story of the Magi, let us search for one particularly meaningful consideration which as Franciscans we may use in meditating on the fourth of Our Lady's Joys.

We do not know the extent of the Magi's appreciation of the divinity which dwelt in the Child before whom they fell down and worshipped. We do know, however, on the testimony of the Apostle, that God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts, to give enlightenment concerning the knowledge of the glory of God, shining on the face of Christ Jesus. With this knowledge of the glory of God in our hearts we are impelled to render the utmost homage to the King of kings as we commemorate his manifestation to the Gentile world. We are offered a suggestion concerning our worship and gifts to the Christ Child in the Epistle for Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany. There Saint Paul exhorts us to a height of perfection which is characteristically precious to, and please God, preciously characteristic of the seraphic heart: I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God-your spiritual service.

In following Christ and Saint Francis we began our spiritual service, yet the sacrifice entailed in its perfection continues until the time of our deliverance is at hand, gradually leading us to know the joyful emptiness which permitted Saint Paul to say: I am already being poured out in sacrifice.

A search of the history of our Order, from its first Saint, our holy Father Francis, to its last Beata, the humble Sister Maria Assunta, reveals one trait which capsules Franciscan homage to Christ—sacrifice. In final analysis can we chronicle or eulogize Saint Francis with more comprehension or commendation than the words so frequently said of him throughout his Office: God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom

the world is crucified to me, and I to the world? True, in many ways Francis revolutionized a continent, he won thousands to the true Faith, he established friaries to dot all Europe, he enclosed his Second Order and enlisted the greatest spiritual militia this world has ever seen, his Third Order. Yet all these strains that God's own troubadour made his symphony in this world were sustained by the dominant chord of his own self-effacement, self-sacrifice, self-death, and we can conjecture that quite probably his work derives its present vitality from this note alone.

But what of us? It may be said that the whole notion of seraphic sacrifice rests in and flows from the Eternal Sacrifice of the Mass, wherein every day we celebrate or participate in the mystical, unbloody Sacrifice of our redemption. If we are true Franciscans, the Mass courses through our day with the fire and force of lightning, for herein is the Flame of Love which burns out self and enkindles in us the desire to turn to the Babe of Light or the Christ of Calvary, one and the same God, who became incarnate to save us, and was crucified to redeem us. Contrasted to the true source of Franciscan greatness, how foolish and fragile become our great external pretences if they are not protected by the cross daily. Our teaching, nursing, parochial duties, whatever our service may be, does it really have any meaning at all unless it be permeated and perfumed with the odor of sacrifice?

II

The Magi saw the star and they rejoiced exceedingly, so the Evangelist narrates. We see the Star shining forth every morn, with a brillance which would have blinded the eyes of the Wise Men. Do we rejoice exceedingly? Does the idea of sacrificing ourselves in the Sacrifice of the Mass—becoming therein nothing for the sake of Christ—really mean joy in our hearts, peace in our words, goodness in our deeds? Have we any other heritage to seek now or to leave behind as true Franciscans besides sacrifice? Can we really convince ourselves that souls are looking in us for anything more or less than they found and still find in our holy Father? If we do, well may we reflect the sublime and pregnant words which Holy Church speaks of him in his Office: "I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in

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my body." Saint Bonaventure tells us that Francis, once converted, lived only the life of the cross-walking in its imprint, savoring its sweetness, preaching its glory.1 Here is the reproach to our reluctance to enter into the life of Christ, the life of the Mass, the life of personal sacrifice.

For the most part our rules, constitutions, or state of life, if we be secular Tertiaries, indicate how much of the world's goods we may or may not possess. And true, they demand a modicum of abandonment and detachment. But this is something regulated for usand if we will ever bear the semblance of Franciscans we have no choice but to observe them in degree. Yet there remains a part of us that no rule, constitution, nor precept will govern. For none of these can force us to say from the depths of our hearts with Saint Paul: With Christ I am nailed to the cross. Such an assertion, such a dedication, can come only from one's self.

The self-sacrificed religious can be a veritable pillar of sanctity and strength to the whole Order or community, even though by any worldly standard he accomplishes little or nothing. A friar, nun, or Tertiary sacrificed of self with Christ and in Christ and through Christ in his Sacrifice of the Altar may be, and often is, the channel, hidden but mighty, through which flows all the success and blessing of the greatest external works of others. Ultimately, observance means little; but oblation means much. Observance essentially denotes conformity, oblation, for the Franciscan especially, implies configuration. Conformity is required in externals, configuration is from within. The greatest Oblation ever offered is renewed daily on our altars, and the tragedy is that we refuse to lose ourselves in It.

There is one gift of the Magi that captivates our attention, for it symbolizes in a lofty yet concrete way the concept of seraphic crifice. Frankincense is rare and costly, yet it must be exposed before it can yield its richest fragrance. So with us. If in of the Fourth Joy we offer ourselves to our dear Lord other in the spirit of sacrifice, we will truly be g spirit of our Order, seraphic love, and

n. 10 (Aanal. Fran. X, p. 620).

thus give off what Saint Paul so magnificently calls the good odor of Christ. Disciplines, mortifications, fasts, and the virtues are an integral part of our life, and yet they can mean very very little, in fact they may not escape the nomenclature of mere observance if they are not truly burning with seraphic ardor. No one can make a religious take up his cross daily, nor can anyone make him love; nonetheless experience reveals that the cross, or sacrifice, is intimately proportioned to love. Without love Franciscan sacrifice is stinted, and Franciscan love is sterile without sacrifice. Love and sacrifice: for the one is the measure of the other.

Having found the Christ Child, the Magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. The account does not speak of their sentiments, nor of the conversation that must have ensued during their visit. We do know, however, that they returned to their own country by another way. So with us, for our coming to the religious life does not take us from the world. The strictest Franciscan cloister in fact is very close to the world, for therein consecrated souls live and pray and die for the salvation of the world. Just as our coming to the altar every morning to confect or receive the veiled Christ does not mean that we are to become pure spirits, neither does Franciscan life. But both Franciscan life and our daily participation in the great Sacrifice should and do mean that we are to become both spiritually pure and purely spiritual. From both we return to our own by another way.

It was by coming down from and leaving their thrones that the Magi arrived at Bethlehem to participate in the new Kingdom. The Seraphic Doctor sagely observes of us that we often wish to come to the Kingdom of Christ, yet we do not wish to drink his chalice, nor to be despised with him, nor to be confounded with him, nor to suffer with him. Yet Saint Bonaventure tells us that if we truly wished to be seated in his Kingdom we must drink the chalice of sacrifice.2

So often we hold out in this matter of sacrifice, ever reserving the little speck of self for self. Thereby our whole spiritual life be-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Bonav., In Epiphania, Sermo 1 (IX 149a).

comes crippled, as Saint Bonaventure observes, by our refusal to surrender. We walk the way of Christ on one foot-the way of the world on the other. And so the pure who retain self in pride, the humble who retain self in impurity, the self-styled virtuous, who cannot part with the identification "self." But there is no middle path, for it is wholly necessary either to walk towards Christ or walk away from him.3 Every man is capable of directing himself as he wills. If he goes forward to Christ, his staff is sacrifice; if he turns away from Christ, his staff is self. With but little addition then, the story of the Magi reveals again the contradictions of life, the contradictions of self. There were two kings. . .one with his frankincense of sacrifice, who left his throne to reign with Christ-the other with his conceit of self who clung to his throne to reign with satan. Herod raised his haughty head and with soft words sought to kill Life itself to gain damnation, but the wise man fell down to worship, and in silence sought to lose his life, his self, to gain eternity.

Talk of sacrifice can become morbid, but never the thought of seraphic sacrifice. The Adoration is ever a mystery of Joy, and anything less than holy joy in considering sacrifice is hardly Franciscan. The friar, nun, or Tertiary who learns to mingle the few drops of this world's waters of discouragement, insult, disillusionments, ugliness, thanklessness, be it ever so bitter, with the wine that is to become the Precious Blood of Sacrifice at the Altar, knows how truly joyful sacrifice can become.

Well does the solemnity of Epiphany follow on the New Year, the time of resolutions. And well can we keep in mind the spirit of sacrifice in our resolutions as we pray each day the Pater and Aves of the Fourth Joy of the Mother of God. The eleven prayers lend themselves to a like-lettered word, sacrificium. Whatever we propose for Christ for the New Year is ultimately unneeded-dare we say unwanted- unless it is purified in the greatest act performed on this earth, his Sacrificium. Look about you some time and behold the truly great and holy souls that grace the Order or community. They are the great lovers of the Mass. It is their lives that bring the fragrance of Christ into all our houses, the fragrance compounded of two perfumes blended at the altar, love and sacrifice. Perhaps this is why they understand the Mass so well. The Mass is the Sacrificium Christi, and it makes much more sense when said or participated by one who knows how to become a sacrificium ipsius.

Today the world holds very little praise, indeed no honor, for true sacrifice. For the most part it cushions us against it and protects us from it. Yet if we would truly rejoice exceedingly as wise men destined for a Kingdom, we will ask the Child with Mary his mother to teach us how to blend the frankincense of our sacrifice with the seraphic spirit of love, that we may truly become the fragrance of Christ for God. In so doing we cannot escape becoming holier and happier Franciscans.

William J. Manning, T.O.F.

### THE LITTLE SHEEP OF GOD

Stories of Brother Leo from the Medieval Liber Exemplorum

Friar P. said that the following story was told to him by Friar Leo, the companion of Saint Francis: When I was newly ordained, I used to prolong the Mass whenever I offered it. For I felt divine consolations and therefore it was a great joy to me to tarry over it for a long time. Then one day the Blessed Francis called me and, speaking to me like a father, said to me: "Friar Leo, my son, will you do what I say? Celebrate your Mass in a becoming manner, and do not delay too long while saying it, but conform yourself to the other priests. If God gives you some special grace, wait until your Mass is finished; then return to your cell and meditate there and enjoy the divine consolations given you from heaven. I believe that it would be better and safer to follow this method. Because of the people present some vain glory or other inordinate tendency might come upon you and the devil could quickly rob you of the merit of apparent devotion. But in your cell, where no one sees you, you can securely give yourself to your devotion and the devil will not so

aBonav., Ibid., Sermo 5 (IX 162a).

easily be able to find an occasion for temptation. It can also happen that those who hear such a lengthy Mass may become weary or may sin by judging that priest, who seems to be moved by such devotion, delights in mere appearances." (n. 70)

This incident is told us by Friar John, a friend of Friar Leo, the companion of our Holy Father. For four years Leo had worn a very old winter tunic which had many patches of sack cloth. One day I said to him: "Brother Leo, let me get you a better tunic; that one gives you little or no protection against the cold!" Brother Leo answered: "I feel weaker than usual lately: perhaps it will please God to put an end to my labors. Therefore I do not want another tunic now because I want Sister Death to find me a poor man." Within the year he died, a poor little man with the same poor habit; and we believe that pious and poor he entered heaven rich in virtue. (n. 71)

Friar Bonaventure (perhaps the Seraphic Doctor) says that Friar Leo once told him: "I had a very great desire to know whether by a bad thought, though without any consent to action but nevertheless with passing pleasure, a man can sin mortally. One night when I went to sleep, it seemed to me that I saw on the branch of a tree a beautiful dove with white feathers. But underneath the tree was a serpent watching the dove very attentively. Finally, after a long time the dove looked down at the serpent and immediately fell dead from the serpent's glance, even though they were far apart. Then I began to think and to give thanks to God because He had willed to give me certitude in my doubt. For I thought that the dove was a symbol of the soul which seems pure and innocent, but the glance of the serpent stands for the temptation which the devil sends into our soul, especially in regard to the vice of carnal pleasure through illicit and impure thoughts. And as the dove fell dead merely at his glance, so through impure pleasure in a thought alone, even without consent to the external act, the soul can lose the life of grace." (n. 72)

Friar Leo also had this saying which we should often ponder: "Joy of the spirit is to the soul what blood is to the body. For as the body cannot live without blood, so neither can the soul live without spiritual joy." (n. 145)

Friar Leo said that once he visited the Poor Ladies at the monastery of Bologna. The abbess there had forbidden the Ladies to look out of a certain window, but one of them through levity disobeyed and forgot to confess her fault.

After a while she became ill. While she was sick in bed they carried her into the room where that window was, and looking up she saw a devil there showing her the punishment prepared for her sin. Three times she jumped out of bed but each time she was put back in by her sisters. When the abbess asked the reason for this, she answered that a great punishment was prepared for her because of a sin of disobedience which she had not confessed, adding that she was frightened by the devil and the punishment which he had shown her. After she had made her confession she died.

But she had made a promise to the abbess that she would return. When she returned she told one of the sisters that she was condemned to the pains of purgatory for fifteen days, suffering great heat in a place planted with burning trees through which she had to pass. When the abbess heard this, she was very insistent that the Ladies pray for her only, putting aside all other intentions.

After eight days the dead sister again appeared and said that she was freed and was about to enter heaven, for her punishment had been shortened through the prayers said for her. (n. 133)

#### A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

At the recent meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference a questionnaire relative to *THE CORD* was distributed. About forty answered it, representing (we hope) the opinion of the various Franciscan Sisterhoods. The comments without exception were favorable, and

the suggestions for improving *THE CORD* were quite helpful. We feel encouraged to continue the policy adopted at the beginning of this enterprise, that is, to cling tenaciously to our own Franciscan tradition and heritage, without forgetting that according to the holy Gosepl there should be *nova et vetera*. We know that many improvements are still to be made, but we shall conscientiously refrain from making *THE CORD* a fashionable modern magazine.

In response to numerous requests, there will be an index at the end of this forthcoming volume of *THE CORD* covering the first five volumes. Every subsequent volume will have its own index. For this reason the Table of Contents of each issue of *THE CORD* will be found on the inside cover, leaving an extra page for the articles. We hope that this arrangement will prove satisfactory to the librarians.

This change, however, means an additional expense. We are loath to raise the subscription rate as long as we are not really forced to do so. But we need more subscribers. Do we really reach all the Franciscan houses? Any help in this regard will be sincerely appreciated. Nostra res agitur. If there is a sufficient increase in subscriptions, we may be able to add more pages.

Since THE CORD is running so close to the margin, we ask you to help us avoid the expense of unnecessary change of address. We know that many times it is unavoidable, but a certain Superior General has made the following suggestion: When a superior subscribes to THE CORD for her house, she should subscribe under her title of "Sister Superior" and not under her own name. Thus when a transfer occurs, "Sister Superior" will still be getting THE CORD and we shall be spared the expense of making a new plate for a new name.

Our sincere thanks goes to everyone who has helped to bring you the Franciscan message through *THE CORD*. We are reaching not only the great Franciscan family at home and abroad, but also may other religious Congregations with Franciscan leanings. Thanks to those who have helped by their subscriptions, and to those who do the routine jobs connected with publishing a periodical.

It is our fervent hope that THE CORD will make us all more conscious of our Franciscan heritage, and especially that we in turn may give it to the poor suffering world that so badly needs it.

May the Lord give you peace.

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. Editor

#### FRANCISCAN REVIEWS

OUR LADY AND SAINT FRANCIS. Edited by Raphael Brown. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press. 1954. Pp. X-80.

The Franciscan Herald Press is offering this little volume (pamphlet size, paper bound) as the first of a series to be entitled Saint Francis Texts, containing passages from reliable historical sources dealing with specific topics in the life of our Seraphic Father.

The present volume is divided into six parts, each of which treats of a certain aspect of Saint Francis' devotion to Mary. All the passages are selected from early sources, and edited and translated in such a way as to form a simple, smoothly-reading text, with the degree of authenticity of the sources unobtrusively but reassuringly indicated. There is also a good bibliography for the guidance of the interested reader.

The well-know and active Tertiary editor, Raphael Brown, is to be congratulated on this first number of the promised series. It is a step in the happy direction of making the historical Francis emerge from the sentimental clutter of the fictionalized Francis.

Sister M. Michaeline, O.S.F., has designed the cover, title page, and chapter divisions.

GETTING WISE IN THE WAYS OF GOD. Albert Nimeth, O.F.M. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press, 1954. Pp. 64

This is excellent material for the pamphlet rack. Fr. Albert gives a good outline, in pointed language, of reasons for becoming a Franciscan Tertiary and a saint. A few of the chapter titles suggest what the pamphlet covers: "Holiness is for You," "The Third Order—a Means." "Sin—a Betrayal of Love," "Sublimity of

Sex." "Need of Self-Denial," "Getting Down to Cases," etc. Interspersed at just the right places are groups of questions for the reader to answer for himself. They are pertinent and penetrating, and if the reader answers them honestly, the right conclusions will inevitably follow. Especially recommended for college groups and young people in general.

DEVOTION TO MARY IN FRANCIS-CAN TRADITION. Christian Eugene, O.F.M., transi. from the French by Sr. M. Bonaventure, O.S.F. Chicago: Franciscan Heraid Press, 1954. Pp. 53.

Another booklet in the Franciscan Herald Press' new pamphlet series (this the Pax et Bonum series) is this little survey of the history of devotion to Mary in the Franciscan Order. It covers not only the personal love of Saint Francis for Our Lady, but also touches briefly on Marian art and the cult of Mary in general among the Friars Minor from the Thirteenth Century to the present. Sister Michaeline, O.S.F., did the cover and the other little symbolic designs that are scattered throughout the booklet.

EVERYMAN'S SAINT. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M. Paterson: Saint Anthony's Guild Press, 1954. Pp. xi xi 195. Illustrated by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P. \$2.00

The clients of Saint Anthony are counted by the million all over the world, yet perhaps only a few of them know the history of the devotions they love or the many indulgences attached to them. How many of us, for example, know why we put S.A.G. on our letters? How many can explain about Saint Anthony's lilies? Or Saint Anthony's Bread? How many are familiar with the dramatic story behind Saint Anthony's Brief?

The history of these devotions and many more besides, together with the indulgences attached to them, are charmingly presented in Father Marion's book. There are also chapters on Saint Anthony's life and the miracles authentically attributed to him, together with an appreciation of him as a follower and teacher of the Franciscan way of life. Apostolic Letters on Saint Anthony by Popes Pius XI and XII, and an Encyclical Letter from Minister General Valentine Schaaf, O.F.M., complete the book.

This latest work of Father Marion's first appeared as a series of articles in Everybody's Saint Anthony, a monthly

periodical issued by the Franciscans in Bangalore, India. Certainly a book on the historicity and authenticity of legends and devotions surrounding Saint Anthony is as badly needed in this country as in India. But lest the reader of this review be led to suppose the book is dry and technical, we must say that it is quite the contrary. The historical facts behind the popular devotions make Saint Anthony seem so real and alive, so attractive and lovable, that anyone who reads this book will surely find himself cherishing and promoting more spiritually sound devotion to Saint Anthony than ever before.

# SISTERS YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE

Because we have learned that so many Franciscan Sisterhoods are strangers to each other (which is a shame, really) we decided to alternate THE CORD'S regular biographical sketch with a short history of some one of the various Franciscan Congregations. We have no doubt but that you will do your best to cooperate, for surely you want the rest of the family to know about you as much as you want to know about them. So, here's what to do. Write up an informative, factual, interesting history of your Institute, to the length of about eight or nine typewritten (pica or elite) pages. Leave an inch margin all around, double space, and indent paragraphs three spaces. Send us the manuscript as soon as possible; or, if you have a printed pamphlet or some other literature on your Congregation, you may send that to us and we'll select what we consider pertinent.

Please let us hear from you soon. The whole Franciscan family is waiting to meet you.

# THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE THE SPIRIT OF THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION

To be true religious, we must become living stones in the spiritual edifice of our Order. Only as such can we become fully integrated into the Order and partake of its life. But living stones are not passively set in place; they strive to place themselves, to integrate themselves into the organic structure of the Order which has been built as a holy temple of God. Therefore it cannot be said that we partake of the life of the Order if we simply let it surround us; we must actively live it by absorbing it into our heart and mind, for only then can we hope to become living stones—which in fact is what our vocation demands of us. Naturally, this presupposes that we are conscious of the spirit that animates our Order. But before we take up this question, there is another and more basic point that we must pause to consider-a point that is really a matter of spiritual life or death for us: What is the meaning of the religious vocation? We do not mean the spirit of our Order, but rather of the religious life in general. The answer to this question is clearly given in the Gospel. The religious vocation is the call to follow Christ in total surrender to God, by separating ourselves from the world, and by carrying our cross daily with Christ.

#### 1. The Spirit of Consecration

The spirit of consecration to God is basic for the religious vocation. When we pronounce our vows we give ourselves completely to God, not only by an act of worship, not only by a devout promise, but by the sacrificial act of vowing. In virtue of our consecration we are removed from the profane sphere and made holy to the Lordeven to the extent that an injury done to us becomes a profanation and a sacrilege. More than all other creatures of God, more than all other Christians and in a higher sense than these—we are marked with the divine seal as the property of the Great King. Through this consecration we become a constant act of worship, a living prayer, an unceasing immolation.

Now, if this spirit of consecration is alive in us and if it permeates all our activities, we should have no worry about purity of

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