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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

BLESSED'ARE THE PURE OF HEART II

In discussing the heatitudes as basic conditions for our transformation in Christ, we found the sixth to be the beatitude of the interior life. For as Francis put it, "They are pure of heart who despise earthly things and always seek those of heaven, never ceasing to adore and contemplate the Lord God, Living and True, with a pure heart and mind (Admon., n.16). The inner love life of the soul, in consequence, comprises two elements: one negative, the other positive. The first consists in "despising earthly things"; the second, in turning our gaze heavenward, uniting ourselves to our "tremendous lover" in adoring contemplation. We dwelt on the first aspect in the previous conference where we saw that separation from the world is essential to the religious life, for "all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (I Jn. 2:16). Deliberate attachment or love for the things that are in the world, St. John tells us, is the great obstacle to union with God. "If anyone love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (v.15). It is the deliberate element in this attachment that is the damning feature, however, for as we implied in the conference on the poor in spirit, spiritual povcrty reflected in unwanted sins of frailty and human weakness far from impeding a soul's union with Christ can even become its principal claim on His mercy.

In its positive aspects, the sixth beatitude implies a union of mind and heart with God, which is but another name for prayer. But the "spirit of prayer" as Francis loved to call it, is not only one of the principal or constitutive characteristics of the interior life. Prayer is also the chief means of achieving this union, in so 'ar as this lies in our power. "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:24). For the present, then, let us consider the practical problem of vitalizing our daily prayer life, reflecting how we can make it truly an affair of the heart that Christ may have no cause to complain of us as He shid of the religious at His day. This people honors me solds there has but their heart is far from me" Mk. 7:6)

The relationship of the religious to Christ can be described in either the bridal metaphor or the language of that rare and perfect friendship one man may have for another. Limitations of space prevent the development of both analogies. Since the majority of our readers are Sisters, our reflections on the life of prayer are couched in terms of spiritual marriage. We leave the interested reader to make his own adaptations for the love of perfect friendship.

I. At the Feet of Christ

There is something poignant about the following item inserted in the classified ads of a certain newspaper. "Lost, one wife, somewhere between wedding day and the fifteenth anniversary, in the vicinity of the kitchen sink, PTA meetings, WSCS Cub Scout den meetings, Dollar Day, preschool clinic, Community league, church socials, Brownie Troop meetings, Little League Baseball transportation, music school, grocery store, cooking school, bridge club and spring housecleaning. Has kind disposition, bites only when tired. Lonesome husband will be glad to get her back."

Paradoxically enough, a happily married couple may drift apart, may actually fail each other seriously, while seemingly doing only what is their duty. Marriage counselors and family service consultants have coined the name "middle-age-boredom" for a rather common malady that afflicts married people around their fifteenth anniversary. Each takes the other for granted and becomes increasingly more absorbed in their end of the marriage. The husband is immersed in business affairs, the wife in her household tasks and social engagements. Only superficially are they concerned with the events of each other's day. And thus imperceptibly and unconsciously the center of their respective worlds move apart, until that critical stage is reached where any serious quarrel or misunderstanding can imperil their marriage. And even where separation or divorce does not permanently sever the bond between them, their life together may become a hollow mockery, an outward sham. They are literally bored with one another.

And yet how often sisters make the same mistake. So absorbed

can one become in the work of Martha that she forgets how all important it is to be a Mary to Christ. We are shocked at times when religious who are apparently models of activity in the apostolate, seemingly selfless in the service of others and even hailed as "saints" by the world, apostatize from their order and the Church, because obedience called them to another assignment. Why did they go wrong? Where was the flaw in their service of charity? What did they neglect to do? In a revealing chapter written since his return to the Church, E. Boyd Barret puts a finger on the crucial weakness in his own spiritual development when he says of his early years as a religious. "My ideal was the missioner and above all the missioner-martyr, dying to win pagan souls to God. I saw virtue in terms of activity, of doing things for God. . . My studies would make me a great preacher and writer and apologist. I promised myself 'to wear myself out' in external labor for Christ. . . Of course, I meditated faithfully every day, and I spent my holy hours in pious adoration, but always I was impatient to get away to work. I admired those who, like Carmelite nuns, tried to live in the presence of God, but I thought the practice was unnatural and virtually impossible, I didn't understand what it meant. I felt sure it was not for me; in fact, that I would 'break my head' if I attempted it. . . Whenever I heard Christ calling to me to come up close to Him, to come into His presence, I was somehow reluctant to do so. I loved Christ-but I was afraid to near Him! Sure! I'd work for Him-I'd work hard! But, no, thanks! I wouldn't lie down to sleep at His feet!" (A Shepherd without Sheep, p. 16-18). Only too late did he come to realize that this intimate union with Christ, this sitting, so to speak, with Mary at Christ's feet, is the essential element, the "only one thing needful" (Lk. 10:42) in one's religious life.

When the novelty and thrill of those first years in Christ's service wear off, when spiritual dryness which alone can mature our love for Him replaces the consolation once felt in prayer, when the business of being a good bride to Christ appears realistically as ardous work requiring the continual curbing of self-love, then comes the temptation to hold something back from one's daily sacrifice. Mortifications diminish and even cease altogether on pretexts of health. While it is possible, the time of prayer is cut

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short in favor of "more pressing tasks." We are no longer so eager to spend our free moments in His presence. Only with reluctance we tear ourselves away from other tasks to attend the community prayers. Though we would not dare admit it even to ourselves, we are becoming bored with Christ. To hide the ugly insinuating suspicion from ourselves, we bury it beneath a flurry of activity. After all, is it not His work we are doing? Yet, were we but honest with ourselves, we would see it is His work rather than His Person that draws us. As we know from His revelations to Margaret Mary Alacoque and other chosen souls, the Sacred Heart must often feel like that lonesome husband. "Lost, one wife, somewhere between religious profession day and the fifteenth anniversary, in the vicinity of a schoolroom, a kitchen stove, a hospital ward, house visitation. . Will be glad to get her back."

Someone has said: "Making a marriage work is like running a farm. You have to start all over again each morning." Never take Christ's love for granted. Rather imitate the Little Flower who used her feminine ingenuity to prove anew each day her love for her bridegroom. This was especially true of her prayer life. Indeed so much was Christ a part of everything she did that one might say of her what was said of Francis, that it was not so much that she prayed as that she had "become a prayer" (Celano, Vita Secunda, c. 61). Religious sometimes forget that advancement in prayer should ordinarily accompany advancement in the spiritual life. We should not simply mark time, or rest content at some intermediate plateau. In virtue of our religious vocation, spiritual writers assure us, we are called to the highest forms of acquired prayer. And this is particularly true as regards mental prayer. To prove this thesis adequately, however, would take us too far afield. But the interested reader might read, by way of introduction to the subject, that excellent little work of Father Boylan, "Difficulties in Mental Prayer". In this conference, we shall content ourselves with some simple prayer techniques and considerations that may profit even the beginner in the spiritual life. For progress in prayer is ordinarily conditioned by personal effort. And this law seemingly holds good for all stages of prayer that are not properly mystical, even that of acquired contemplation.

-II. Public Prayer

Of all the prayers recited by religous, that of greatest intrinsic worth is their office, for as Pius XII puts it: "The divine office is the prayer of the mystical body of Jesus Christ offered to God in the name of and on behalf of all Christians when recited by priests or other ministers of the Church and by religious deputed by the Church for this purpose" (Mediator Dei). Deputed by their profession for this task, most religious realize, theoretically at least, the unique importance of this prayer which excels purely private prayer for the simple reason that it is not the individual but the Person of Christ who praises God in and through His mystical members. They understand too that the more completely they surrender themselves to Christ for this purpose, giving Him not merely their wice or the rubrical posture of their bodies to honor His Father, but mind and heart as well, so much the more will they share in the priceless fruits of this prayer. Intrinsically social in character, it can be their most effective way of helping those they love or of acquiring the special graces they need.

Practically, however, it is quite another matter. Despite all that has been written about the magnificent sentiments expressed in the psalms, the office remains one of the most difficult prayers to recte devoutly, particularly when the Latin language is used. Even if one knows Latin, the psalms are not readily understandable. Written in an unfamiliar idiom, replete with archaic expressions and the peculiarities of oriental poetry, their austere meaning and classic beauty can be fully appreciated only after much study. Because many are unwilling to expend the necessary effort, or because any hope of success seems practically impossible, they eventually resign themselves to reciting the office out of a sheer sense of duty, offering it to God in the spirit of sacrifice as they would do with any other uncongenial task. They have abandoned all hope of making it a personal prayer, or deriving from it any measure of sensible devotion as Francis and the saints seemed to do.

Surely this was not the ideal invisaged by the Poverello when he imposed an office for clerics and laics, particularly when the office was the only prayer specifically mentioned by the Rule. Its recitation was rather to be a matter of mind and heart, as Bonaventure assures us. Francis wished the psalms to illumine our minds and unlock the door of our hearts that the omnipotent God might enter therein to give us both the grace of compunction and a grasp of divine things (Expositio super Reg. FF. Min., c.3).

The bride of Christ may be more ready to make the necessary effort to recite her office devoutly, if she realize its importance to her divine Spouse. Men and women, we are told, view marriage in a different light. For a woman it is her whole world, whereas for a man it is but one aspect of his life. His work occupies a place and importance in his mind that a woman does not always appreciate. A wise wife, nevertheless, accepts the fact and adapts herself accordingly. She will develop an interest in her husband's career even though it be something foreign to her inclination and talent. This sacrifice of her own likes and dislikes for his sake creates a firmer bond between the two. Christ your bridegroom is also a man. And we know that He had to remind even the most perfect of women: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49). That business is not only the salvation of souls but also to "glory the Father" as the "firstborn of many brethren". On earth, this business was paramount. All other human relationships were pushed to the background as we know from that incident when His mother and cousins came seeking Him during a sermon (Mk. 3:31). In heaven too it is still His great concern, for as head of the mystical body He still "interceds for us at the right hand of God" (Rom. 8:34).

You can never fully share Christ's life, if you let what is so important to Him merely bore you. Elsewhere we have indicated some techniques for rendering that prayer more devout (Book of Life, p. 57-8). But there is really no substitute for chanting the psalms intelligently (Psallite sapienter! Ps. 46:8). A praiseworthy step in this direction is the introduction of the English version of the office in many communites of Sisters. Even this, however, does not dispense completely with a study of the psalms. To appreciate their hidden beauty and poetic imagery, we must know not only their literal or accommodated meaning but also circumstances of authorship and the conditions under which they were composed. Many of the psalms of the Little Office, for instance, were chosen because in an accommodated sense at least, they praise virginity

and stress the bridal theme and can thus be a constant reminder of your sublime vocation as "Sponsa Christi". A practical way to study the psalms, for instance, would be to select one each day as subject of spiritual reading, marking such passages as have a special personal appeal that they may aid your devotion during recitation the following day. The "Gloria Patri," etc. at the end of each psalm can remind you of the essential purpose of this task you perform for the mystical Christ. Even though the "Aperi" is not longer required in chord recitation, this prayer or its equivalent might well be recited privately in preparation. Note that essentially it consists in a glance upward to the Father in heaven ("Open my mouth, O Lord, that I may bless your holy name. Cleanse my heart, etc. . ") and a glance at Jesus tabernacled on the altar ("O Lord, I offer these hours to you in union with that divine intention with which you yourself while on earth offered praise to God"). What better way to remind Him and yourself that as His bride you are one mind and heart with Him in this most important aspect of His work!

As a sacrifice, perhaps, the Mass is more of the nature of an action than a prayer. Nevertheless, its essential action (consecration and communion) is enshrined in a truly beautiful prayer service that, with the divine office, forms the core of the Church's liturgical prayer. While there is no obligation to follow the mass with a missal, this can be highly profitable to the extent that it enables one to be more consciously united with the celebrant's action, emphasizing the truth that he represents you, a member, as well as Jesus, the Head, of the mystical body. In practice, however, the attempt to follow the priest often degenerates into a frantic dash through the missal that destroys all devotion. Far better is the practice of following the priest in leisurely fashion, reciting a few of the prayers reflectively and skipping over others. Varying the selections from day to day aids devotion. Like the psalms of the office, the structure of the mass and the meaning of its individual prayers can also be made the subject of spiritual reading. In this way, you can share more and more in the work of your divine Spouse, making His Father's business your own.

III. Private Prayer

Since monotony is the great bane of devotion, the wise religious will vary her prayers to some extent No intelligent wife feeds her husband the same dishes, regales him with the same stories, or wears the same dress day after day. In similar fashion, Christ's spouse will find a challenge to her feminine ingenuity in varying her way to saying the stations, or the rosary, or any other prayers which have commendably become a part of her daily offering to her Lord. I have indicated elsewhere how the Way of the Cross can be adapted to one's daily moods and needs (Book of Life, p.74). Father Milde, 0.S.B. has suggested some techniques for the rosary (Cath. Digest, Oct. 1944, p. 9). The Franciscan Crown can even more easily be recited in a variety of ways, particularly since it is only necessary to recite the decades to honor the mysteries, meditation on them not being required. With repeated Hail Mary's, it is difficult to be attentive always to each word. More feasible is the use of a "rhythmic method" where we emphasize only a single phrase of few words of each Ave. If it is a pressing need that prompts our prayer, we could stress "pray for us now. . . "; if it is for the dying or happy death that we pray, the account could be on "at the hour of our death." If we wish to meditate on the joys of Mary's crown, stress "the Lord is with thee", recalling at the same time how Christ was with Mary at the annunciation or incarnation, or how she became the first "Christopher" at the Visitation, or how Christ must have looked to her on Easter morn or the day the angels escorted her to heaven. Some complain that even though the Crown is the most highly indulgenced of the rosaries, occasionally they prefer to consider Mary's sorrows, especially when their own heart is heavy. However, there is no reason why the Crown cannot be recited while meditating on Mary's earthly martyrdom. For every one of Mary's joys was either prefaced or followed by some great sorrow. The annunciation, like every great grace, came in all probability only after God let his mother-to-be taste poverty of spirit as no other human person ever would. Psychologically there is no other way of explaining her reaction to the angel's greeting, or her "Magnificat" in praise of the humble. The visitation, too, was preceded by one of the most tremendous tests of faith any woman had to

endure. What proof did Mary have she had conceived the Son of God save the angel's word? How could see be sure this apparition was not an illusion, or the devil masquerading as an angel of light tempting her to pride? How long did she endure these torturing doubts? How long before God rewarded her faith through Elizabeth's inspired recognition of her hidden motherhood and those comforting words: "Blessed is she who has believed, because the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished" (Lk. I:45). The joy of Christmas, too, came only after weary hours of canvassing David's city from door to door, when by all human reckoning God seemed to have forsaken them. The joy of the Magi's visit was almost blotted out by the heartrending cries of those other mothers whose suckling babes were slaughtered before their very eyes. The finding of her boy in the temple became the joy it was only because it came as the sequel to an anguished and desperate three day search. The resurrection was prefaced by the nightmare of Calvary; the assumption and coronation by that sense of emptiness and homesickness that only the mother of such a Son could feel. Yet when Christ saw only a likeness of that lonliness in the Widow of Naim, He could not bear the sight but brought her son back to life. But Mary endured this martyrdom for years until, as some believer, her heart broke for very longing to be united with her Son. Indeed each joy of Mary was purchased at the price of a great sorrow. The beauty of the Franciscan Crown is that we can meditate on the one while honoring the other.

Lack of space prevents us from saying more than a word on mental prayer which is so essential to the interior life that it might almost be regarded as its spiritual barometer. We have already alluded to Father Boylan's "Difficulties in Mental Prayer" which should be required reading for every religious professed more than a few years. Among the countless profitable suggestions, he reveals how vocal prayers (e.g. the Our Father, or any of the community prayers) can be made the subject of our "meditation". In this way we often discover the many beautiful facets of these prayers that went unnoticed before, and thus our ordinary community prayers take on new vitality. We know that the present day methods of "meditation" represent an attempt to crowd the whole of the medieval monks' day into the space of half an hour or more. Their

spiritual reading period is represented in reading the matter of meditation. As they worked in silence, they reflected upon what they had read, applying it to their own life. These considerations prompted ejaculatory prayer during the day, but they bore especial fruit during the recitation of the divine office and during the periods at the end of the day or during the night hours when the religious were free to pour out their hearts in affective prayer before the altar. The general and particular examen resulted in resolutions which meditation manuals recommend as part of the period of mental prayer.

As one progresses in mental prayer as we are meant to do in virtue of our calling as religious, it is not too difficult to recapture something of original medieval practice of mental prayer by extending it throughout the day. This is but another name for the practice of recollection or living in the presence of God and represents the goal towards which we should strive in developing the interior life.

The cure for "middle age boredom" recommended by social psychologists is the development of common interests. Unlike the wife in the world, your divine Spouse is not just superficially but vitally concerned with everything you do. We read in the life of Sr. Josefa Menendez how Christ appeared to her one day as she was closing the convent windows. "Where did you come from?" Christ asked her. "From closing windows, my Lord," she replied. "And where are you going?" "To finish closing them, my Jesus." "That is not the way to answer, Josefa," He chided. "You must say, I come from love and I go to love, for upstairs or down, indoors or outside, you are ever in my Heart." It is not teaching, or cooking, or sewing or typing that you should be doing so much as loving Him. Words in themselves are but arbitrary sounds that are used to express our mind and heart and feeling. Every action that is not sinful can become the sign-language of your love. And this is what is meant by living in God's presence. It does not mean you must constantly think of Christ. A mother is not always thinking expressly of her children or husband while she is baking, or mending or doing some other work for them It is enough to be doing her work for that intention, for that purpose. So too your "day of prayer" begins with the morning offer-

ing. In diverse ways throughout the day, that intention is renewed. Lest we forget, Christ Himself reminds us, usually with those tiny splinters from His cross, so small at times as to be hardly recognizable, for instance, the bell when we are busiest, that impossible individual we have to work with, to be kept waiting when our time is precious, a little ache or pain, that feeling of tierdness, anything in short that irritates us, tries our patience or requires some special effort to master. With practice we come to recognize these cues and use then to renew our love for our Savior. Thus our work, far from "extinguishing the spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all things temporal should be subservient" (Francis, Regula Bullata, c. 5), will become more and more consciously an expression of our love. This is the perfection of purity of heart that is blessed with the vision of God everywhere, for we see Him in every face, we discover Him at every task, we find Him at every turn. Like Josefa, we too may say: "I come from love; I go to love, for Christ is ever in my heart."

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.

"Happy the soul to whom it is given to attain this life with Christ, to cleave with all one's heart to Him Whose beauty all the heavenly hosts behold forever, Whose love inflames our love, Whose contemplation is our refreshment, Whose graciousness is our delight, Whose gentleness fills us to overflowing, Whose glorious vision will be the happiness of all the citizens of that heavenly Whose glorious vision will be the happiness of all the citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem. For He is the brightness of eternal glory (Hebr. 1,3), the splendor of eternal light, the mirror without spot (Wisd. 7,26).

St. Clare of Assisi

THE LIFE OF MAN WITH GOD

The caption is the title of a book written by the Carthusian monk, Fr. Thomas Verner Moore, and published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, (New York, 1956). The all-important concept of this book, which is due to a combination of spiritual and scientific training, is to show us, as the author says, that each and every human being is destined to be a friend of God.

The technique which the author makes use of in this work was the questionnaire method—a method for which he was eminently prepared, because he spent some fifty years of his life in study, teaching, and research in the fields of psychology and psychiatry where the correct appreciation and analysis of the returns to a questionnaire plays an important role. In choosing this approach to the problem of spirituality, Moore followed the example of William James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience". But whereas James "dashed about in the lives of the saints like a bull in a china shop, holding up to ridicule what he is incapable of appreciating," Fr. Moore makes a careful and honest analysis of his data in an attempt to find out what is the usual devout life in the Catholic Church and to present a general picture of the stages of the spiritual life through which man passes in his ascent to God. In an appendix, he gives a successful rebuttal to the objections that might be raised against his technique.

The response to the questionnaire was very gratifying: two hundred answers were received. The respondents—or collaborators, as Moore sometimes called them—were requested not to sign their names, in order to secure greater freedom and reliability. The answers seemed to be honest statements of facts that really occurred. They came not only from priests and religious, but also from the laity; from a steamfitter and a physician, from housewives, invalids, nurses and teachers, from missionaries and parish priests, from hospital sisters and cloistered monks and nuns; not only from college graduates but also from a tubercular Negro who, although illiterate, learned miraculously to read religious material and that only; from converts and from those who left the house of the Father and were brought back again; from persons who never committed a mortal sin in their lives, and from those who in their youth never heard that sin was an offense against God, but at the most an offense against nice people.

Hence the returns came from ordinary human beings, living in our day, in the midst of modern activity, surrounded by temptations, harassed by distractions. The author used these returns as pictures to illustrate the typical spiritual experiences to be found in the Church. Rather than drawing on the lives of the saints, the author drew largely on the experience of ordinary members of the faithful. This fact makes the book the more valuable.

The first part of the questionnaire which Moore constructed was a modified version of a scale published by Dom J. B. Chautard, "The Soul of the Apostolate." It consists of a seven-point scale, presenting the seven degrees of spiritual life from the zero level to its very heights. Each individual to whom the questionnaire was sent was requested to estimate honestly the lowest degree he or she ever was in and also the highest.

By spiritual life is meant an earnest attempt to lead an inner life of prayer with Christ and to deny ourselves and take up our daily cross and follow Him. In short, spiritual life is a life of perfection. What is perfection? According to St. Thomas, the ultimate perfection of a thing consists in the attainment of its end. How, man attains his end in the love of the Creator, which Aquinas calls charity. Hence the essence of perfection is charity.

Charity is an act of the will by which man accepts the divine will. When man does so completely and without reservation his charity is perfect. Hence perfection consists essentially in the perfect fulfillment of the will of God—that is to say, His commandments. The essence of perfection, as St. John of the Cross says, "come to pass when two wills—namely the will of the soul and that of God—are conformed together in one, and there is naught in one that is repugnant to the other."

Charity, and therefore the interior life, admits of several degrees. When it is well developed, the interior life is a habitual life of union with God which seems, independent of personal effort, to remain in the Divine Presence or to come before God by frequent acts of recollection in the course of the day. This consciousness of union with God becomes continuous only at the very height of spiritual development. Many persons do not reach that height and are just struggling along to keep the commandments.

As was said, the Chautard scale is a kind of speculum perfectionis, as it presents the seven degrees of perfection—or lack of it. These degrees are briefly the following:

- (1) Hardness of heart: obstinacy in mortal sin; stifling of remorse; prayer completely neglected.
- (2) Christian only outwardly: mortal sin is considered as a slight evil

- committed on any occasion; prayer dictated only by temporal interest.
- (3) Moderate piety: week resistance to mortal sin; venial sin looked upon as insignificant; some vocal prayers.
- (4) Intermittent piety: loyal resistance to mortal sin; weak resistance to venial sin; mental prayer attempted but often neglected.
- (5) Sustained piety: mortal sin never or very rarely committed; rarely deliberate venial sin; daily mental prayer.
- (6) Fervor: never deliberate venial sin; imperfections heartily resisted; often a quiet, silent gazing into the face of God.
- (7) Positive perfection: imperfections energetically avoided; habitual life of prayer; various infused graces of contemplative prayer.

After the respondents had estimated the lowest degree of spiritual life they ever were in, and also the present level, they were asked to answer 30 questions to indicate how far they had advanced and by what means. Example: Can you say that you seek God without ceasing? What works of self-denial and bodily penance do you usually practice? Have you ever entered into a state in which you lost all awareness of your surroundings and sensation of all kinds and were completely absorbed in God?

The ascent to the higher levels of interior life is made from various starting points. Some persons have to climb up out of the depth of serious sin. There are in the book several examples of people who lived in a state of habitual mortal sin, deliberately suppressing all recourse to God, for twenty or more years, but changed their way of life and reached the top of the mountain. Others reached the summit after living for some time in a state of lukewarmness; which belongs to the third and fourth degree of Chautard's scale. They never or rarely commit mortal sin but for years showed little effort or cooperation with God. Out of two hundred answers, eight said that stage six was the lowest in their lives, which implies that four percent of those leading an interior devout life never had committed a coldblooded fully deliberate sin. This poses a problem, for the Council of Trent condemns the statement that it is possible "throughout an entire lifetime to avoid even all venial sins, except by a special privilege of God as the Church holds of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Father Moore, with some other theologians, tries to solve the problem by making a distinction between voluntary and semivoluntary venial sins. He believes that it might be possible, without a special privilege, for one to have lived his life without committing deliberate voluntary venial sins. But

no one could avoid all semivoluntary venial sins, that is to say, sins that one slips into without a cool deliberate choice, such as acts of impatience which one commits without really choosing to do so, but because of weakness of emotional control. Because one is bound to control his temper, such acts are sins, and not mere imperfections. An imperfection, according to Moore, is an offense against a regulation we have imposed upon ourselves, as something over and above what God demands. But the author admits that this concept of imperfection is not shared by all theologians; some deny the existence of any imperfections that are not venial sins.

THE LIFE OF MAN WITH GOD

An intriguing problem is posed by the strange fact that those who are leading a sinless life believe that they are lower and viler than all. Examples are found in the lives of the saints, and a number of positive answers to one of the questions in Moore's questionnaire brought out the same fact. The author feels that perhaps the Thomistic explanation is the only one possible. A holy life leads the soul to see the divine in others, but the human in himself. A truly devout person unconsciously compares the human in himself with the divine he sees in others, and as he grows toward perfection he sees more and more of the divine in others.

If we can expect, writes Fr. Moore, that Christ is going to renovate our whole being, we can hope for the disappearance of sins and imperfections in such a manner that we cannot attribute their disappearance to our own efforts alone. The number of the respondents have noted that. Sometimes the change may come quite suddenly and may be attributed to a special action of Divine Grace. These sudden changes in the moral and spiritual life of man may come as a "conversion experience" in which one suddenly puts an end to a life of grave sin with no preliminary warning or mystic grace of any kind. Or they may come as the apparent result of a mystic grace that suddenly appears in consciousness. These sudden changes, according to Moore's data, take place more frequently in those already leading a very good and holy life. When they come, some or nearly all the clouds of imperfection suddenly and permanently disappear. These facts, the author adds, should hold out hope to one who is struggling against sins and imperfections without apparent success.

Whatever the starting point may be, all those who aspire to lead an interior life have to fight temptations, practice self-denial and penance, and culivate a life of prayer. The author's psychological analysis of temptation is worth reading. Despite the fact that a person's mind may harbor high intellectual ideals of morality, in the hour of temp-

tation man enters a world of sensory cravings in which the intellectual ideals sink below the level of consciousness. And they remain there unless the power of volitional control comes into play. This power exerts its most effective influence by bringing from the subconscious the vanishing intellectual ideals and former resolutions of fidelity. However, this natural conflict between reason and sensory cravings does not tell the whole story. There is also the supernatural element. inasmuch as God takes an active part whenever we are tempted by giving His grace, if we ask for it. The author discusses also the satanic element in many temptations—an element which was clearly brought out by the answers to his questionnaire.

Three questions of the questionnaire tried to find out something about the subject's habitual mental prayer, his life of self-denial and his attitude toward sufferings and humiliations. The answers of the respondents exemplify Moore's five essays on the life of prayer and of penance.

Moore's data confirm the well-known fact that there are two ways by which a subject may attain to perfection. One is the ordinary way; the other includes the experience of various mystic graces, such as the prayer of quiet, the prayer of union, visions, spiritual betrothal and matrimony.

One may attain to perfection without any of such extraordinary experiences. For, as was seen, the essence of perfection is charity, the love of God; and perfect charity may be attained without any of the mystic graces. The answers to the questionnaire made it clear that such is the way of many devout Catholics. The other group gave evidence of mystic experiences with greater or less frequency.

What is meant by the mystic graces? These are spiritual experiences that unite the soul with God in an intellectual awareness of His presence, or inflame the will and the affection with an ardent love of God, or both things simultaneously. It is characteristic of mystic graces that they establish the soul in peace. The basic principle of Christian mysticism is that true mystic experiences come from God and that man, by his own efforts, can do nothing to bring them about.

Since mystic graces are given independently of a person's own activity, the question arises whether there are mystics, in the theological sense, outside the Church. The answer seems to be that if there are true mystics outside the Church, sanctifying grace must have been bestowed on them by the baptism of desire.

May one desire and ask God to grant him mystic grace? Moore,

with other spiritual writers, makes a distinction between the prayer of quiet, otherwise termed infused contemplation, and the other mystic graces. It is generally admitted that infused contemplation is something that may be desired, but Fr. Moore admits that certain neurotic individuals would constitute an exception to this rule. As for the other mystic graces, the answer of approved spiritual writers is an emphatic "No".

Moore's book deals rather extensively with the mystic graces. Half of the questions of his questionnaire refer to those extraordinary phenomena. The highest degree is spiritual matrimony with Christ, the lowest is the prayer of quiet. Some authors do not number the latter among mystic graces, and Moore on the basis of his questionnaire data, is inclined to think that the prayer of quiet is not a necessary preparation for receiving the other graces.

The prayer of quiet or infused contemplation, as manifested by its psychological characteristics, consists in a quasi-perceptual realization of the Divine Presence and a peace experience which glows with the warmth of the love of God. These psychological manifestations are caused by a gratuitous action on the soul through sanctifying grace. Such a peace experience is by no means a rare phenomenon. Children commence to experience it in its beginnings when they receive Holy Communion. Thousands know it in their morning Mass, their Holy Communion, and during mental prayer. Thus, in a broad sense, the interior life commences when one starts to attend Mass and receive communion habitually every day or to make a daily meditation or both. At first, this peace experience may last only a few moments but it has a tendency to flow over from our morning devotions into the activity of the day. For those who have reached the higher stage of spiritual life, that is to say, who have completely or almost completely overcome mortal sin, this peace experience becomes habitual. But the returns to the questionnaire show that the peace experience of prayer may occur sporadically also in those who have not entirely excluded mortal sin from their lives. In fact, forty-six percent of the respondents who considered themselves to be only in stages three and four of Chautard reported to have had at times this peace experience.

The various stages of infused contemplation are steps in the growth of the love of God. A peaceful love is of the very nature of the prayer of quiet. But, in the beginning, it is what St. John of the Cross terms dark love. When the soul enters into the habitual enjoyment of infused contemplation, it passes into the passive night of the spirit, as the same saint calls it. The formal and essential principle of the pas-

sive night of the spirit is the peaceful glowing love of God. But this love produces suffering in various ways.

Some of these sufferings are due to direct action of God. At some stage the soul commences to really suffer because it has offended God in the past. God gives "His suffering" at first in touches that come and are gone in a moment, but are very keen while they last. St. Teresa of Avila tells us that her sorrow for her sins became so intense that it was painful for her even to live. However, one must not think that the dark night of the spirit is one long continuous period of suffering. It is rather a long stretch of time in which day follows night and night day, but the length of day and night is not constant but subject to wide fluctuations. Besides, we must recognize that God can lead some souls to perfection without making them pass through this dark night of the spirit.

The sufferings that many devout persons undergo during the winter of the spiritual life are not all imposed by divine action. Some are due to natural disturbances of emotional life. Some temperaments will have a tendency to far deeper and more prolonged spells of sadness than others, or to discouragement. The main sources of emotional disturbance are fretful anxiety, including scrupulosity, the tendency to mental depression and—the most dangerous of all—the schizoid tendency to isolation from friendly contacts with others.

After one has entered into closer contact with God by the prayer of quiet and maintained it for some time, one may be given one or more of the other mystic graces.

One such grace is the prayer of union. This is, according to St. Teresa, a state in which the soul "can neither see nor hear nor understand. God implants Himself in the interior of that soul in such a way that, when it returns to itself, it cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God."

Many holy souls never experience at all the prayer of union, but the author finds several examples among his respondents. He asks the question, whether there is any connection between devotion to mental prayer and the prayer of union. Returning to one of his former statistical hobbies, he comes to the conclusion, on the basis of Yale's coefficient of correlation, that devoting all the time that one possibly can to mental prayer is more likely than not to be associated with the prayer of union. But he admits, on the other hand, that one cannot bring about the prayer of union by devoting all one's free time to mental prayer.

Fr. Moore finds in his material a rather large number of visions,

ecstasies, and locutions—that is, interiorly spoken words. A number of his respondents mention having heard words that seem to come from God, of having been outside themselves, and of having experienced a valid awareness of Christ, the Blessed Mother, or one of the saints.

At this juncture, the author brings up the problem of the reliability of such phenomena and of mystic experience in general. He steers a middle course between the one extreme of blind, uncritical credulity and that of scepticism. Most non-Catholics, particularly psychiatrists, consider all visions and "hearing voices" as mere hallucinations. Many good Catholics do not go so far; nevertheless they are very suspicious of these phenomena and they think it best to eliminate them from serious consideration. They believe, too, that those who "suffer" from mysticism are in serious spiritual danger. The author recounts the opinion of a Catholic priest who was not a psychiatrist: to him, St. Paul was an epileptic because of his fall at the time of his vision of Christ, St. Teresa of Avila was a case of dementia praecox, and the Little Flower, a constitutional psychopath.

The author's position is that the various phenomena classified under the phrase mystic graces may be caused directly or indirectly by God. He admits that some of these phenomena have a natural origin and are counterparts due to a heightened imagination; some have a preternatural origin and are due to the father of lies. But the author maintains that some are truly supernatural in character. The author, who practiced psychiatry for many years, thinks that one who has seen, conversed with, and studied typical cases of dementia praetox, and who would then study St. Teresa of Avila in her ordinary life would never be able to say that she suffered from dementia praecox; on the contrary, he would find her a thoroughly normal person. Besides, the author feels that some visions and other mystic graces tare so simple and innocent that it is hard to see how they could be in any way a danger to the spiritual welfare of the soul. Instead, the truly supernatural mystic experiences contribute to an increased love of God and to growth in virtues. In order to decide the origin of such phenomena, the author presents the criteria of genuine and false mystidal experiences.

The highest degree of interior life is reached in the experiences that are known as spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage.

The phrase "spiritual betrothal with Christ" is applied to a scene in which Christ in some manner manifests His presence to the soul and in which there takes place a little ceremony whereby Christ beatroths Himself to the soul and the soul betroths itself to Christ. Needless to say, this scene should arise within the soul, without the soul attempting by imagination or any kind of effort to bring it about or to continue it once it commences.

There are several preparatory stages and conditions of the spiritual life which lead up to this mystical grace. The first stage is one which often lasts for years and which sometimes is a bitter struggle with temptation. During this period the soul is likely to receive some, perhaps many, of the mystic graces already described. However, that is not necessary. The usual termination of this period is due to, or accompanied by, the entering upon a habitual life of mental prayer. At the same time, there commences a vigorous life of self-denial, for an essential condition for spiritual betrothal is being completely purged from all affection for creatures.

Spiritual matrimony, as St. John of the Cross remarks, is incomparably higher than spiritual betrothal, but no one enters it without having first passed through the stage of spiritual betrothal. St. Teresa gives the following account of spiritual marriage. The soul "is brought into this Mansion by an intellectual vision, in which by a representation of the truth in a particular way, the Most Holy Trinity reveals Itself in all three Persons. . . It sees these three Persons individually, and yet by a wonderful kind of knowledge, which is given to it, the soul realizes that most certainly and truly all these three Persons are one Substance and one Power and one Knowledge and one God alone, so that what we hold by faith the soul may be said to grasp by sight, although nothing is seen by the eyes, either of the body or of the soul, for it is no imaginary vision." During this scene there are various symbolic exchanges of all personal goods, indicative of a true marriage. Christ bestows on the soul not only the joy of sanctity and the consolation of the mystical graces, but also the inestimable privilege of participation in His sufferings and trials and thus He allows the soul to participate with Him in the salvation and sanctification of men. In the state of spiritual marriage there will no longer be painful periods during which the Beloved is absent. The soul may still have various duties to perform and will never omit or in any way neglect a single one. But it will feel that its main occupation in life is to commune in love and adoration with the Eternal World.

Although spiritual matrimony is the highest degree of interior life, the author once more reiterates that it is not necessary to attain the theight of perfection. The heights of perfect love of God may be attained without any of the mystic graces at all, or only a very few. So

that one who might even be in the state of spiritual marriage could most say that by that fact he is superior to an individual who has never received any such favor. For the essence of perfection is not found in the mystic graces as such, but in the perfection of charity to which they conduce.

If a person reaches the height of perfect love of God without experiencing the mystic graces, he reaches the non-mystical equivalent of spiritual berothal or marriage. This equivalent involves the complete renunciation of all that does not concern one, persevered in till the soul arrives at a habitual state of freedom from all fully deliberate venial sin and devotes itself as far as it is possible completely to the service of God.

This remarkable book deserves a rather lengthy review, because the vast experience of the author in the field of psychology as well as spirituality enabled him to make this book, as the publishers observe "the most comprehensive description of the spiritual life available anywhere." The present reviewer has used, for the most part, the author's own words, without continually resorting to quotation marks, which would make the reading rather laborious.

The reading of the book will not only give a great deal of information about the interior life but will also prove practically useful for anyone who aspires to the greater development of his own spiratual life. For further study, one may find in Appendix I, a rather extensive list of spiritual literature.

A full study of the spiritual life could not neglect the mystic graces, but it cannot be said that Father Moore placed undue emphasis on these extraordinary phenomena. If there is one lesson which this book wishes to impart, it is that Christian perfection does not neccessarily consist in the experiences of extraordinary graces, but that it essentially consists in the perfect love and service of God.

Fr. James Van der Veldt, O.F.M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN $$\ensuremath{^{\text{SPIRITUALITY}}}\xspace(V)$

CELESTIAL BEATITUDE

We have seen that the merit of all human actions depends on charity. Supernatural value cannot be measured according to the exterior act, but according to the interior disposition of the soul and the fervor of the love that motivates the act. It is charity, considered as a habitus and as an act, that merits celestial beatitude.

All theologians teach that beatitude consists primarily or essentially in the operation of the rational part of the soul, and that for integral, complete beating both vision or act of the intellect and enjoyment or act of the will are essential. But there is some disagreement as to which of the two makes up the formal element of beatitude—in other words, is it in the operation of the will or in the operation of the intellect that God, the object of beatitude, is formally and immediately attained.

According to Saint Thomas, beatitude is an operation not of the will but of the intellect, and of the speculative intellect rather than of the practical intellect. It consists in the contemplation or vision of the essence of God through immediate insight. Also, "the happiness that follows beatitude pertains to the will....; for the joy itself is the consummation of beatitude."

The Seraphic Doctor, however, although he holds the primacy of the will over the intellect, follows a middle course and teaches that beatitude consists essentially in both the vision of God and in beatific love of God.

Duns Scotus, whom many Franciscan theologians follow, places the formal ratio of beatitude in an act of the will or an act of love of God, and says that vision of God is required antecedently only as a condition. For beatitude, our ultimate end, is simply the highest or supreme Good; but the supreme Good must be willed in the highest degree. Moreover, willing is not the consequence of knowing, but just the reverse. Certainly the beatific Object is attained also by the intellect, but it is not as complete and perfect a possession as possession through an act of the will. For "an act is not the more perfect unless it be united to a perfect object. Now an act of the will is united to a thing in itself, as it is in itself. However, an act of the will is not united to a thing except as object in the knower. But the beatific Ob-

ject is absolutely more noble in Itself than it is in the one who knows It. Therefore, an act of the will is united to the absolutely beatific Object under a more noble aspect." Consequently, it is not through an act of the intellect, "but solely through an act of the will that the blessed is distinguished from the non-blessed."

According to the further opinion of the Subtle Doctor, the act of the will in which beatitude formally consists is not an act of desire or longing preceding the possession of the highest Good. It is absolute enjoyment. For he says that to enjoy is "nothing but an act of clinging to the object because of itself." In other words, "it is an act of friendship (actus amicitiae), by wishing God well in Himself, . . . and this act is properly called charity."

IV. CHARITY, THE SOUL OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

From what has been said thus far concerning the sources of Franciscan spirituality, especially concerning the nature of Franciscan charity, we can conclude without hesitation or dubt that the center, soul, and life of the Order of Friars Minor is divine charity.

Indeed, it is generally held by Catholic theologians that charity, the state of friendship with God, is the highest virtue and the essence of perfection. Seraphic spirituality claims no monopoly for itself in teaching this. It is simply that the Franciscan school gives more practical importance to charity than do the other schools. Franciscan theologians and ascetics, moreover, attribute many qualities to charity that are denied, ignored, or only slightly recognized by other schools. Among these qualities are the kinship between charity and sanctifying grace, devotion to the Sacred Humanity of Christ, ecstatic love, appreciation of the affections of the heart, love for creatures, spiritual joy, virtual intention of charity as a requirement for merit de condigno, and the act of love as the principal element both for infused contemplation and celestial beatitude. Moreover, Franciscan spirituality confers such high excellence and splendor upon charity and adorns it with such noble and outstanding attributes that it is properly called Seraphic love.

Hence it is that charity must be named as the basic quality, the peculiar and fundamental characteristic, of Franciscan spirituality.

As we have remarked before, there were many Spirituals of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries who denied this. Eminent among them was Ubertino of Casale. These man contended that

the distinguishing characteristic of the Friars Minor is poverty and that it is poverty that properly constitutes evangelical perfection.

In more recent times, Father Ubald d'Alencon holds an opinion that is quite similar to the teaching of the Spirituals. In his work, L'Ame franciscaine, he asserts that the formal element of the Franciscan spirit is poverty or absolute detachment from creatures, that it is the principle and distinguishing Franciscan virtue, and the origin, foundation, and form of all the other Franciscan virtues. Moreover, he affirms that "poverty is the source and the form of all virtues: this seems for us the essence of Franciscanism."

In favor of this opinion we could quote our Seraphic Father himself. "You are aware, brethren," he said, "that poverty is the special path of salvation, as the nourishment of humility and the root of perfection, whose fruit is abundant but hidden. For it is the treasure hidden in the field of the Gospel, and to buy it everything must be sold." And in his second Rule the Poverello wrote: "This is that height of most high poverty, which, my most beloved brethren, has set you up as heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven and has made you poor in goods but has exalted you in virtue. May this be your portion, which leads you into the land of the living." 10

But as far as we know there is no other writer who explicitly agrees with Father Ubald. Scarcely had his work appeared (1912) when many writers openly opposed his position, especially René de Nantes and Bracaloni.¹¹

To form a correct concept of the piety of the Friars Minor we must look into the spirit of our Founder. All historians without exception have stated clearly that Francis was wholly evangelical and that he had an eye for nothing except to follow the teaching of Christ and to imitate His example as perfectly as possible. As Celano wrote: "His chief intention, his principal desire and supreme purpose, was to observe the holy Gospel in and through all things, and with all watchfulness, all zeal, all the longing of his mind and all the fervor of his heart, perfectly to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and walk in His footsteps. He would recall His words with assiduous meditation and dwell on his works with the most penetrating consideration." The reason for his intense and steadfast zeal is found in his tremendous love; for we do not will what we do not love. Indeed, love arouses the lover to adopt the feelings and the manners of the beloved and to be conformed to his as far as possible.

The most outstanding characteristic of our Seraphic Father was

his love for God. For in all his acts he desired nothing except to manifest a pure and immense love for God. It is evident that the immediate object of the Poverello's seraphic love was Jesus Christ, Whom he loved with an intimate and burning ardor.

However, the charity with which Francis loved the humanity of Christ necessarily impelled and forced him to imitate the life and the virtues of his beloved Lord as faithfully as possible. No one denies that he excelled in the practice of evangelical perfection to an admirable degree, even to the very highest degree, as Celano bears witness: "Francis, the herald of God, trod in the footsteps and path of Christ; and he did not withdraw a single pace until he had in a more perfect manner accomplished those things he had set out to do in a perfect manner." 18

The Seraphic Saint did not practice the various virtues for their own sake, but because they had shone forth so brilliantly in his beloved Master. By striving to practice them himself, he expressed his love for Christ. Yet it is evident that Francis strove toward charity in a special way. Jesus Christ was the exemplar of all the virtues; but He was the exemplar par excellence of charity, for God is charity. (I Jn. 4:8 and 16). Moreover, charity is the greatest and the first commandment of the Lord, on which the whole law and the prophets depend (Mtt. 22:40), and it is the special command of the Saviour (Jn. 13:34; 15:12). It seems obvious that Francis, because of his love for Christ and desire to imitate Him, favored and practiced charity above all other virtues.

The other virtues that glowed so brightly in our Seraphic Father sprang from the one root of charity and were, in a sense, nothing else but different facets of his love. About the middle of the thirteenth century the great cardinal, Otto de Chateauroux, speaking of the life of Francis to the General Chapter of the Friars Minor, said emphatically that "no science or letters entered into a form of life such as Francis had led; only fervor and devotion to charity. For men would not be led to this life except through a burning ardor and charity." And Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter, Rite expiatis, after having spoken of the main virtues of Saint Francis, adds this: "Is there anyone who cannot see that all these virtues proceeded from the one and same fountain of divine love?" 15

What can be said concerning the virtues in general can also be affirmed of poverty. Francis loved it with a deep love and fostered it with great care. Yet he did not embrace it because of itself or as an

end in itself, but because he longed to imitate Christ our Lord Who for us was born poor, lived poor, and died poor. As Celano writes: "Taking care that his poverty be similar to the Son of God's, which was already scorned by the whole world, he wished to wed it with everlasting charity." In like manner the Seraphic Doctor says: "Francis often with tears brought to mind the poverty of Jesus Christ and His Mother, the Queen."

Besides this, Francis looked upon poverty as absolute renunciation and therefore useful and necessary to attain to evangelical perfection and to lead the apostolic life.18 For poverty, as Saint Bonaventure puts it, "is able to root out sin firstly, through the expiation of past faults, . . ., secondly, through the lessening of the occasion of sin. . ., and thirdly, through the cutting off of the corrupted roots" of avarice, lust, and pride.19 Poverty also has tremendous value for the practice of perfect virtue, firstly, because through it acquired virtue is tested. . ., secondly, because through it proved virtue is protected. . ., thirdly, because through it protected virtue is more easily guided to its end."20 "Consequently poverty has great worth for the relishing of interior joy, firstly, because of its extrinsic security. . ., secondly, because of its hope for reward. . ., thirdly, because of its superinfused consolation;"21 "and fourthly, it has great power for the spreading of the Gospel, first of all because it makes it more credible. . ., secondly, because it renders it more efficacious..., and thirdly, because it makes it more acceptable."22

Considering the remarkable effects of poverty, we do not wonder that it was extolled by our Seraphic Father as the root of perfection and as abounding in fruit and virtue. It conforms perfectly to the teaching of Jesus Christ Who said: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell thy possessions and give to the poor, and thou shalt possess a treasure in heaven (Mtt. 1921). For poverty is the best way and means to evangelical perfection. However, in itself it cannot be called perfection. For perfection consists in imitating Christ, not only in tending toward poverty but also in striving for the other virtues, especially charity, which is the essential characteristic of Christ and the formal means of reaching perfection. It is for this reason that after Christ recommended the giving up of all temporal goods, He added: And come, follow me. (Mtt. 19:21).

The exterior poverty of Saint Francis was widely known and greatly influenced his own times. It was, so to speak, the visible expression and mark of the Poverello's spirit. But it was Seraphic poverello

erty, and the soul of Francis is essentially distinguished by a burning and all-consuming love for Christ. The poverty of Francis both springs from charity and prepares the way for charity. The virtue of charity is at once the foundation and summit of the life of our Seraphic Father.

Blessed Giles of Assisi, who absorbed most completely the spirit of our Seraphic Father, confirms the fact that poverty was esteemed by Saint Francis as the imitation of the poor Christ and the means for acquiring evangelical perfection. As Giles says: "Love poverty so that you may be able to imitate the poor Christ and be more free for God."23

Since Francis was consumed with a burning love for Christ, it follows that he would communicate this spirit to the whole Order; accordingly he explained clearly to this followers that "the Rule and life of the brothers is this, to live in obedience, in charity, and without property, and to follow the teaching and footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁴ Thomas of Celano, who just a short time after the death of Francis wrote his *Vita prima*, described the founding of the Order in the metaphor of building a noble structure of charity.

The anonymous author of the beautiful treatise called Meditatio pauperis in solitudine, explained most clearly the question concerning the main, proper, and characteristic virtue of the Seraphic Order. He set up three virtues peculiar to Francis and the Friars Minor: poverty, humility, and charity. This last virtue perfects the servant of God; yet it is not all-sufficient in itself but must be accompanied by works of poverty and humility. For although charity formally brings about the perfection of the Friar Minor, it contains in itself humility and poverty, which flow from it as from a fountain. "From what has just been said it is clear enough, I think, that a Friar Minor, through an act of perfect charity-that is, an act of love of God and of neighboris a special worshipper of God. But in accordance with the opinion of the Lord that no man is able to serve two masters, namely Himself and the world or the riches of sin, there is no alternative but to eliminate the latter choice of masters. Since the small cloak of charity cannot cover both, it is necessary to be a true contemnor of the world. But because the Lord so severely curses pride, His worshipper must also completely avoid pride and to despise himself so as to be a perfect servant of God, spurning all pleasures and lusts of the body by charity, rejecting the riches of the world by poverty, and entirely avoiding honors and glory by true humility."25

Although the spirituality of the Friars Minor is drawn mainly

from the spirit of Francis, it also obtains much from the spirit of the theology that flourishes in the Order. Actually, the Franciscan school puts less emphasis on the question of poverty than on the various aspects of charity, for it is charity that has won the widest attention among our theologians and holds primacy in our theological system.

Saint Bonaventure, who after Saint Francis is the outstanding figure in the history of Franciscan spirituality, is distinguished from other theologians by the ardor of his love, the unction of his words, and the intimacy of his union with God. Not without reason has he been given the title of Seraphic Doctor. John Duns Scotus, who in speculative theology has exercised tremendous influence among the theologians of our Order, is truly the doctor of charity. His entire religious construct is raised on the foundation of love and is completed in love. In general it can be truly said that our theologians have not only seen more clearly and in more detail than others the various powers of love, but have also considered theology itself as a practical science of affective and effective love. Likewise, the ascetical writers of the Order, with the exception of the Spirituals who placed poverty ahead of charity, have explained and expounded charity as set forth and commanded by our Seraphic Father, and have left our theologians to establish it as the hinge and foundation of the spiritual life. Therefore, not only because of the spirit of our Seraphic Father but also because of the theological and ascetical teaching of the Seraphic Order, charity appears with unmistakable clarity as the center and soul of Franciscan spirituality.

We are now in a position to make a comparison between the school of the Friars Minor and the other schools of spirituality which lay special emphasis on charity. From this comparison it will also be quite clear that Franciscan piety is affective and rests on the basis of charity.

Tanquerey considers Saint Francis de Sales as setting up his affective spirituality on the basis of many authors of the Benedictine and Dominican schools.

The Benedictine school has quite a number of affective writers, among whom the most illustrious is Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. The liturgical worship of God is the distinguishing mark of Benedictine spirituality. The Divine Office is the *Opus Dei* and it must be given preference to all other things.

The worship of God is the fountain and center of the spiritual life. In the liturgy, God is especially regarded as the supreme Lord of all things and most worthy of religion (devotion), reverence, and worship. Christ is looked upon mainly as the King of Glory to whom the highest

praise, honor, and worship must be given. The purpose toward which Saint Bernard and his school direct their spirituality can be summed up in this: That in all things God may be glorified (I Pet. 4:11); that is, subjectively by reverence and objectively by external liturgical worship.

The entire pattern of Franciscan spirituality, however, is affective. Charity is its foundation, center, and scope. It considers God especially as a God of love and as a true Father. From this springs a tender filial love toward Him. It regards Christ principally in His humanity, sees Him as our Brother, leading a poor and humble life and subjected to many sorrows. From this arises a familiar love for Jesus Christ and an earnest desire to imitate Him and to become like Him as far as possible. The characteristic quality of our spirituality can be summed in the cry of Saint Francis: "My God and my all!"

In looking at the Dominican school we find it is more speculative than practical or affective. Following Saint Thomas, it holds that theology is more a speculative science than a practical one; it attributes primacy to the intellect over the will, for which reason it places both mystical contemplation and celestial beatitude formally in the intellect, and it seeks God more through intellectual knowledge than through experimental cognition or love. The distinguishing characteristic of the Order of Preachers is truth, and its aim is "to contemplate and to transmit to others what is contemplated." On his account Dominican spirituality adheres to the physical concept of love, for in this concept unity effects the quality, measure, and ideal of love; the center of the spiritual life is a thinking union with God brought about by the intellect and the will. This union is more perfect the more one advances along the road of the spiritual life and is most perfect when one arrives at its summit in mystical union. God is regarded mainly as the Word Incarnate Who humbled Himself through His love for man and linked and united Himself with man.

Comparing the Franciscan Order with the Dominican, Saint Bonaventure wrote: "Some (the Friars Preachers) concentrate chiefly on speculation—from which they have even received their name—then on unction. Others (the Friars Minor) concentrate mainly on unction and then on speculation."26 For the peculiar note of the Franciscan school is charity, with love toward both God and creatures. This school, upholding Voluntarism, ascribes to the will primacy over the intellect and the other powers of man and considers and treats theology principally as an affective and practical science. The spirituality of the Friars Minor has always been of an affective and practical nature. There are

very few Franciscan spiritual writers who give spirituality an essentially intellectual nature. Of course Seraphic piety cannot completely avoid speculation, but when it does speculate (Saint Bonaventure is an example), it nearly always unites the affections of the heart with the profound science of speculation.

In direct difference to the Dominican school, the Franciscan school equates the infused virtue of charity with sanctifying grace and also proclaims that the act of love is the chief element of infused contemplation and celestial beatitude. Because it is imbued with the ecstatic concept of love, Franciscan piety bring about an affection that places no limits on itself, but rather going out of itself completely it is carried forward by the tremendous driving power of the mind to Infinite Goodness and is totally absorbed in It. Following this ecstatic concept, Franciscan spirituality has a special este em for the Sacred Humanity of Christ, which we know our Lord loved Decause of the example He gave us. For this reason, Franciscans strive to cultivate a great love for Christ and the utmost proficiency in imitating Him; whence comes the spirit of sacrifice, love for the Cross, and a martyrdom of love which overwhelms the soul and inspires charity not merely in an affective manner but also in an effective and active mann er. Saint Francis de Sales gives love the principle role in his way of perfection, yet he does not deny that there is a spiritual combat and that there are sacrifices to be endured, nor does he reduce everything to the extreme simplicity that some writers ascribe to him. Obvious1y they do not pay sufficient attention (and Tanquerey is among them) to the strong bond that unites Francis de Sales to the Seraphic school. It cannot be doubted that he was influenced by the Seraph of Assisi, by the Order's school of theology, and by Franciscan asceticism. It is certain that Salesian piety is highly affective and is remarkably similar to the spirituality of the Friars Minor. This piety, if considered in the Seraphic Doctor and other writers of renown, can be said to burst forth in consuming, burning love.

By way of summary, let us repeat that Seraphic charity is perfect in its object and purpose and brings about a state of friendship with God. It embraces not only the acts of the will but also of the other faculties and powers of man, and makes ample room for the affections and for spiritual joy. Above all, it refuses to subject visible creation to a position of servitude, much less of enmity. Franciscan writers in general tend to disregard speculation and use the intellect only as the

handmaid of charity; they place all the powers of man in one object, which is the hinge, center, and constancy of the soul. And thus they make the entire spiritual life radiantly clear and simple.

In selecting and applying the means of perfection, the Franciscan school follows charity as its guide and leader. The motive of love animates and permeates this spirituality at its beginning, in its progress, and to its end. Notions of fear and hope should not be excluded. They hold a secondary place, yet should be allowed to exert some influence.

Charity arouses and draws the will and the whole man to all virtuous acts. Charity is the root, the queen, and the mother of all virtues. Since its immediate object is the Lord Jesus, it moves us strongly to imitate Christ and to conform ourselves to Him.

Hence charity is the root of all good and merit, the principle and foundation of all sanctity.

Just as charity is the principle and instrument of spiritual progress, so is it its norm and measure. It is the form of the virtues and contains all supernatural virtues or habits which are nothing more than the various effects and emanations of the one virtue of love. Love is the essence of perfection, and to the degree that a man has progressed in it, to that same degree he has progressed in sanctity and acquired merit.

Finally and in conclusion, charity is the fruit and the reward, the end and the crown of the entire activity of the spiritual life. This is the importance of charity in Franciscan spinituality.

Fr. James Heerincks, O.F.M.
Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M. (Transl.) V
(Conclusion)

¹Summa, I-II, q. 3, a. 4 et 5., ²Ibid., a.4., ³Oxon. IV, d. 49, q.4, n.4, XXI, 97b-98. ⁴Ibid. q. ex latere n. 20, XXI, 163a., ⁵Ibid. q. 3, n. 11, XXI, 91a., ⁶Ibid. d. 1, q.5, n.3, VIII, 381b., ⁷Ibid. n. 6, VIII, 385b., ⁸OP. Cit., p. 140., ⁹Bonaventure, Legenda sancti Francisci, c7, n. 1, VIII, 523a., ¹⁰Regula II, c. 6, ¹¹Etudes Franciscaines, XXIX, 1913, 656-58, and Archiv. Franc. Hist., VIII, 1915, 467-81., ¹²Vita prima, n. 84., ¹⁸Vita secunda, n. 210., ¹⁴"Sermons franciscaines du cardinal Eudes de Chateaurroux", ed. P. Gratien, in Etudes Franciscaines, XXIX, 1913, 187., ¹⁵A.A.S., XVIII, 1926, 165., ¹⁶Vita Secunda, n. EE., ¹⁷Bonaventure, loc. cit., ¹⁸Cf. Bonaventure, Apologia pauperum, c. 11, n.15, VIII, 315a., ¹⁹Ibid., c. 9, n. 14-16, VIII, 298b-299b., ²⁰Ibid., n. 17, VIII, 299b-300a., ²¹Ibid., n. 18-20, VIII, 300a-301a., ²²Ibid., n. 21, VIII, 301ab., ²³Dicta, 112., ²⁴Regula V, c. I, 25., ²⁵pp. 116 ff., ²⁶S. Bonaventure, Coll. in Hexaem., Coll, 22, V, 440b.

QUERIES AND REPLIES

QUESTION: Among the prayers after the Holy Communion are there other prayers of Franciscan origin, besides the one mentioned in the last num. of the Cord?

ANSWER: Yes, there are but they are known under other names. For instance, the mystical prayer "O Most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, transfix the affection" (Transfige; an indulgence of 300 days. for priests only), is attributed in our prayerbooks to St. Bonaventure, but in realty it is a pearl of the famous "Stimulus amoris, the work of James Milan, O.F.M., a disciple of the Seraphic Doctor. This work was generally known as a writing of St. Bonaventure until the appearence of the critical edition of his work .- Then, there is another very favorite prayer, the "Soul of Christ, be my sanctification" (The Raccolta etc., n. 131), of which St. Ignatius of Loyela (d. 1556) is commonly considered to be the author. The historical fact is, however, that St. Ignatius used it with great devotion and that he was one of its most important propagators, but Blessed Bernardine of Feltre, O.F.M. (d. 1494), the outstanding defender of the Immaculate Conception in his time, was the author.

QUESTION: Is it true that the members

of the Third Or der Secular can wear the medal instead of the usual scapular and cord?

ANSWER: The Procurators General of the Franciscan Fam ilies several times made a petition to the Holy See concerning this faculty, but they have always been answered in the negative. It seems, however, we do not need special legislation as to this problem, because we have another provision of the Holy See regarding this question. The Congregation of Religious, in its official answer given on March, 25th, 1922, pointed out that the Chap. III, Par. 6 of the actual Rule of the Third Order Secular gives the power to Superiors of the Tertiary groups to dispense their subjects from the Rule when there is a grave and just reason. Therefore the Holy See declared that the Superiors by this power have the faculty to give permission to their subjects to wear the medal instead of the scapular and cord also. But notice that they have the power only in individual cases. Individual may include more than one person but not the whole group as such, provided each one submits his reasons. It is the Superior himself who judges the sufficiency of the reasons. A special blessing of the medal is not required; nor is it necessary to wear it under the neck.

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[&]quot;Be faithful unto death, most dear one, to Him to Whom you have promised yourself, and you shall be crowned by Him with the wreath of eternal life. Short is our labor here below, eternal the reward! Be not disturbed by the availt of the world which passes as a shadow. Let not the false appearences I had deceptive world delude you. Close your ears to the whisperings of hell of the gross its restances in the literature and the deceptive world delude you. All this castle for energy of its, for these castles its specific trees and All this castle for energy of its, for these castles in the standard of the specific trees and All this castle for energy of its, for these castles in the standard of th