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the CORD

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

THE GRACE OF GUADALUPE

There is a feast that the Franciscans of America are privileged to celebrate on the tenth of this month, that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, under the title of Patroness of the Whole of America. There is something significant about that line from the Psalms used as the Communion Prayer of this Mass, which is also emblazoned on the Basilica at the shrine: Non fecit taliter omni natione. "He [God] has not done thus for any other nation" (Ps. 147: 20). For it was with these words that Pope Benedict XIV described the gift granted America, the grace of Guadalupe.

You know the beautiful story that began the tenth of December in 1531. It was Saturday. An elderly Indian convert, Juan Diego, was on his way to mass at the Franciscan mission at Tlaltelolco just north of Mexico City. Day was breaking as he took the short cut over the hill of Tepeyac once the shrine of the Aztec goddess Teonantrin. All at once he heard a wondrous warbling of birds, sweeter and more cheerful than he had ever heard from songsters before. Then the singing ceased as suddenly as it began. A voice from the hilltop called him. "Juanito, Juan Dieguito!" Though startled, he was not afraid. A strange joy flooded his soul as he hastened up the hill. And then he saw her, looking for all the world like a sweet vonng Indian maid. Only her robes were sparkling as if she just stepped out of the early morning sun. The rock on which she stood glowed with iridescent colors, Rainbow hues tinted the earth. Even the mesquite and prickly pear became things of strange beauty. And then she spoke. "Juanito, littlest of my little ones, where art thou going?" Except for his Christian name, she spoke in perfect Nahuatal. "I go to mass and to catechetical instructions." Juan explained. "Know, littlest of my little ones," she said charmingly, "that I am Mary, Virgin Mother of the God for whom we all live. Creator of the world, Master of Heaven and Earth, I desire a temple to be built in my honor on this spet so that all may know of my love and compassion, of my desire to help and project. For Lagra Methics dayle & to the west in all the hours on the even of the con-The same of the same of the same

I desire. I shall be grateful, and will fill your own life with blessings."

Bowing out of her presence as he did with his Spanish lords. Juan began the three mile walk to Mexico City. True to his title "Protector of the Indians," Zumarraga received the convert kindly. But we can understand and pardon his unbelief. He dismissed the Indian telling him to return some other time. Discouraged, Juan Diego trudged back to Tepeyac. Mary was waiting on the crest of the hill. Falling at her feet he confessed his failure. "Pick som noble messenger;" he begged, "they will never believe me. I am like an old rope, a broken ladder, a worthless little man, yes, a worthless little man." Patiently Mary explained that she had thousand of competent messengers to choose from ,but she didn't want them. She wanted her "little Diego" to help her with this task. Her look of love warmed his heart. He was no longer tired, discouraged. Next day he would go back to the Bishop as she asked.

When the servants saw Juan Diego in the patio next morning they told him the Bishop was busy. But the Indian would not be put off. Hour after hour he waited, until finally the servants grudgingly consented to show him in. But the long vigil and fasting had left Diego exhausted. He could only stutter and stammer confusedly as he spoke to Zumarraga. His emotional display displeased the Bishop. And Juan, making a supreme effort to compose himself, repeated Mary's message. "The man is sincere but deluded," thought the Prelate. He explained to the Indian that he must have some sign or proof of the apparition. Eagerly Juan offered to ask Mary for whatever sign he wished. Somewhat nonplussed Zumarraga left it up to "the lady."

But when Juan Diego left, the Prelate sent some men to follow him. They lost Juan, however, in the fog that enveloped him as he approached the site of the apparitions. Disgruntled, they returned telling the Bishop the man was a trickster, while Juan, oblivious of the whole affair, went on to meet the Lady. "Come here tomorrow," she said, "and I shall give you the sign the Bishop asks for." But Juan did not come. For when he reached home, he found his uncle Juan Bernardino—his only kin, now that his wife had died childless—was on the point of death. All through the night and the next day he kept vigil. When Tuesday morning came, Bernardino asked

Diego to fetch the friars to give him the last sacraments. Diego went, taking the short cut via Tepeyac. As he approached the spot, in his simplicity he thought to himself: "Mary will want to detain me with the business of the Bishop's sign." He left the path to skirt the east side of the hill. But as he picked his way through the underbrush, to his dismay he saw Mary before him. Embarrassed, he began to explain his errand. "Be not angry with me," he pleaded, "I shall return as soon as I can." But Mary only smiled. "Am I not thy mother? Art thou not close to my heart? Let not this or any other affliction disturb thee. Even now thy uncle is restored to health."

The weight lifted from his heart, and once again Juan Diego was filled with that indescribable joy. And Mary went on: "Go to the top of the hill and pick the flowers you shall find there and bring them back to me." Though it was bleak December and the ground frozen, Juan did not hesitate. But even then, he was not prepared for the sight he saw at the top of Tepeyac. Gorgeous Castilian roses were blooming everywhere. Gathering them in the cloak or tilma tied around his neck, he brought them back to Mary. Carefully she arranged them with her own hands into some kind of design and told him to show them to no one save the Bishop. When he reached the prelate's residence, the servants eyed him with scorn. They tugged at the tilma to see what he was hiding, but he would not show them until they brought him to the Bishop. "This is our Lady's sign," he said, dropping the tilma and letting the beautiful roses spill to the floor. The Bishop fell to his knees and stared-not at the roses, but at the tilma. For on the coarse cloth of Juan Diego's cloak, Mary had left the miraculous imprint of her herself as she first appeared in the December dawn.

Such was the beginning of the devotion to Santa Maria de Guadalupe Siempre Virgen. For, as she told Juan Bernardino when she appeared to cure him, it was under this title that she wished her picture venerated.

Mary appeared on Tepeyac when the New World was in its infancy. Hardly a generation had passed since Columbus first sighted San Salvador. Little more than a decade earlier Cortez captured Mexico City, breaking the back of a pagan and blood-drenched Aztec empire. She came in a moment of crisis. The Protestant revolt threatened the Church in Europe. Lutheranism had grown

strong. Its armies had sacked the Holy City itself. Switzerland had fallen under the Calvinistic blight. England, which was to be the major force in determining the religion of North America, was on the eve of apostacy.

Christianity must strike new roots, deep roots, in the New World. Yet despite heroic efforts to convert the Indian, results were discouraging. It is never easy to love one's conquerors, particularly if they despise or exploit you. And while Spain's official policy, un like that of England, was to civilize and Christianize, not externi inate, the Indians, in practice that policy met with opposition. A small group of corrupt politicians under the notorious Nuno Guzman controlled the Royal Audiencia, or court of justice. Bent on achieving wealth and power, they fostered the belief that the Indians are "dumb brutes, created for our service," neither capable nor deserving of Catholicism. They hampered Cortez; they threatened Zumarraga with death; they prompted Pope Paul III's bull, Sublimis Deus" (1538) condemning their racial heresy and declaring the Indians should "not be deprived of their liberty or property or in any way enslaved," but are to be "converted to the faith of Christ by preaching and by the example of good and holy living."

And God knows, the Spanish soldiery were not always models of that "good and holy living." Polygamy among the Indians was rampant. What good did it do to tell the savage that he must be a man of one wife, when he saw how his conquerors surrounded themselves with many women? No wonder that he often accepted baptism more for appearances' sake than from conviction. It was at this critical juncture that Mary chose to appear.

She came not as a noble lady of Spain, but as an Indian maid to an Indian convert. And her first miracles were for her Indian children. But her greatest miracle for this youngest of her family was the spiritual gift of faith and grace. The decade before her coming counted a million baptisms, but they were mostly children of the mission schools or adults that were dying. Over eight million, however, marked the decade that followed. Indeed, in the entire history of the Church, no conquered nation was ever so quickly or completely converted as New Spain.

How could racial prejudice survive when Mary singled out the Indian as the object of her special love? And so a new nation, a

Christian Mexico, was born from the fusion of Indian and Spanish blood. Truly, as Pope Benedict XIV declared: "Non fecit taliter omni natione. . .He has not done thus for any other nation."

We tend to think of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a local patroness, as the heavenly protector of Mexico alone. But such was not her wish. Naturally enough, she chose the heart of New Spain as the site of her appearance, for it was here her Son's Cross was first planted. But she appeared to an American native, not to his Spanish conqueror. If the Indians were her first concern, however, her love did not rest there. It reached out to the entire land. "I am a Mother of mercy," she told Juan Diego, "to thee and to all who live in this land who will love me, trust me, and implore my aid." And not only did she unite the Indians and Spaniards as children of her love, but step by step she extended her reign to the whole hemisphere. In 1576, when she came to Mexico City to stop a plague, she was declared official patroness of that city. In 1754, Pope Benedict XIV made her patroness of New Spain, which included the Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California of today, all of which had missions and chapels dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. When Mexico separated from Spain in 1821, it was the Virgin of Tepeyac that kept Mexico Catholic. As Pope Leo XIII put it, "[Faith] will last. . .so long as this devotion is maintained." In 1933, Pope Pius XI officially extended her title to Queen of the Americas. And lest there be any misunderstanding of this score, our present gloriously reigning Pontiff, in 1945, sanctioned her claim as "Queen of all the Americas," granting permission for the feast and mass entitled: "Blessed Mary Virgin of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Whole of America." It is that mass, Franciscans celebrate throughout the length and breadth of the hemisphere.

As she informed Juan Diego, Mary wanted her shrine to be visible proof of her love, her compassion, her desire to help and protect those who live in her land. We need her blessings—for ourselves, for our nation. For ourselves we require her occasional reminder that the God she mothered is the "God for whom we all live." Yet how easy for Americans to forget this fundamental truth, immersed as they are in personal problems, family duties, business worries and social obligations. Not that these are not legitimate cares, even as Juan's concern at his uncle's illness. But like that unlettered

Indian, men do not seem to realize that their real needs are God's concern also. Even we religious seem to fear at times that God and His mother will get in our way, hindering us instead of helping us. And with something of his incredible simplicity, we try to by pass Mary, hurrying on about our business. We leave the beaten path and plunge through briars and brambles scratching and bruising ourselves till Mary stops us short, reminding us like very dull children: "Am I not thy mother? Art thou not close to my heart?" Even before we voice our needs she knows them. "Let not this nor any other affliction disturb thee," she tells us as she told the "littlest of her little ones," thus repeating in her own way Christ's injunction: "Do not be anxious what you shall eat, nor what you shall put on. Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they. Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all these things shall be given you besides." (Mt. 6:25-33)

Not only do we need Mary to keep us on the path that leads to her in heaven. We also need her miracles for our nation. Communism threatens to wipe out our Christian breed. Its disregard of human life is as frightening as the bloody Aztec sacrifices. Though it fears to attack us directly, it seeks to surround us on all sides until our life is choked off. Even within our land we have our problems. If an idol is a substitute for God, Americans like the Aztecs have their own form of idolatry, be it pleasure, comfort, power, wealth or simply oneself. We need Mary to break the reign of these gods as she broke Teonantrin's power on Tepeyac. Though we profess through our Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, we have courts of justice in this land of ours where issues are decided by racial prejudice just as intense as any the Royal Audiencia ever knew. Divorce is but a refinement of polyandry or the polygamy that kept the Indian from embracing Christianity. And how many there are who are Christians more for appearances' sake than any real conviction of heart. We need a merciful mother of divine grace to counteract the scandal of the world, to protect us against ourselves, to fuse a new race of the children of God.

In a certain convent of Spain there used to be a beautiful statue of our Lady. Peasants and villagers came to the convent chapel to pray for favors. And Mary worked so many miracles the place became a miniature Lourdes. Then came the wars. Soldiers entered the convent, drove out the religious, stabled horses in the chapel and destroyed paintings and statues. Then one day peace returned, the soldiers left. The peasants crept back to the convent chapel. The beautiful statue was still there but Mary's hands were missing. Some soldier had broken them off. The convent was repaired, the chapel restored, but the Madonna of the broken hands remained. But although the villagers prayed long and fervently, no more miracles were worked at the shrine. And so this legend sprang up. The miraculous power of the statue would return only if some good individual would kneel before the statue and pray: "Dearest Mother, behold my hands. They are generous, gentle, clean. Take them in place of they own and let your blessings flow upon the world once more."

As she told Juan Diego, Mary has thousands of messengers in heaven who are eager to do her bidding. But she needs you. As Jacinta of Fatima put it: Mary's arms are growing tired holding back the wrath of God. She wants your hands to bring the roses from Tepeyac into your convent, your family, your city and your nation. Hands that are generous, gentle and clean of sin. Give them to her and she will fill your life with blessings as she did Juan Diego's. Though you be but a broken ladder, a useless rope, a worthless little person, she can rework the common clay you are made of as she reworked the macquey of Diego's tilma-only this time with the image of her Firstborn, so that someday you may say with Paul: "It is now no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me. And the life that I live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me! (Gal. 2,20). Only then can the Virgin of Guadalupe rest, for only then will Mary's motherhood be complete.

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.

THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes may properly be called the platform for the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Saviour announced them in a solemn manner when a large crowd had gathered about Him. It was in the early part of His public ministry. In the Holy Land there may still be seen a high mountain where, as the legend goes, the Beatitudes were first announced to the world. They are recorded by Saint Matthew, chapter five, verses one to ten.

As we look at the Beatitudes casually we may get the impression that they fell from the Saviour's lips without any definite order or sequence, although we are bound to admire the richness of their content and the beauty and charm of each line. His simplicity intrigues us and their power overwhelms us. The leading word, "Blessed," which introduces each Beatitude undoubtedly has reference to the land and the state of the Blessed. They have overcome the worries and sorrows of this vale of tears and have ascended in the wake of the Saviour to their heavenly home. Though they may not yet be in possession of eternal happiness as long as they live in the earth, they will surely attain their glorious reward after they have successfully fought a good fight on earth.

There is order in all of God's works, and likewise, there is order in His words, for our God is a God of order. What, then, is the order or logical sequence in the Beatitudes which appear to fall from the Saviour's lips in such a casual and almost unpremeditated way? Let us recall that frequently our Lord compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a large banquet hall where the Blessed are seated in long rows at table and where Jesus Himself is the generous and loving host. The books of Wisdom frequently refer to this heavenly banquet and Jesus Himself speaks of it in no uncertain terms. It is the mystic Wedding Feast to which all are invited, though not all will heed the call. This is the picture in the Saviour's mind when He announces the Beatitudes, but in order to visualize this picture we must look at the reward that is the second part of each Beatitude. Thus, the poor in spirit are promised the Kingdom of Heaven. Here we have the festive entrance to the great Banquet, and the poor in spirit are the first in line to enter. They are followed by the meek who will "possess the earth." This expression stands for ownership, or rather for the full rights of citizenship. In other words, the second reward implies that those who enter are free and independent citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Apocalypse of Saint John tells us, there are no tears or sorrows

in God's Kingdom. Hence the third reward or endowment of the citizens of Heaven is celestial joy which knowns no tears. When the guests are seated, food and drink are passed. Hence the fourth Beatitude promises plenty of heavenly food and drink. The guests now "taste and see how sweet the Lord is."

At this point the Beatitudes seem to raise the position and standards of the guests. From the rank of citizens they are elevated to the rank of princes. Hence the fifth Beatitude speaks of mercy. But mercy is usually exercised by superiors towards their inferiors. Virtue, especially purity of heart, shines forth more brilliantly in persons of higher rank where it may be seen and admired by more. Thus the pure of heart, whether on earth, high or low, will "see God." That is in the sixth Beatitude, or the sixth rank of the Blessed. They are closer to the King who is seated at the head of the table. The peace of the world, though desired in every home and every community, is nevertheless in its larger aspect in the hands of princes. For that reason those who on earth make and exercise peace, whether they are on thrones or in hovels of clay, will be called "the Children of God," because in the Kingdom of Heaven they are seated near the King, as young princes do in royal palaces. The highest reward is attained by those who suffer persecution on earth for Christ and His Church. They are seated on either side of Christ the King, and to them is promised the Kingdom of Heaven in the plenitude of all its joy and glory.

Thus the heavenly banquet is filled with guests who have walked the arduous road on earth and have remained faithful in their struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. These struggles and these temptations and trials are found in the first part of each Beatitude. The sequence is prompted by the power exercised on the human soul by each of these worldly forces. If, in the rewards, our Lord describes the glory of the Prince of Heaven and of the elect that surround Him, it is evident that in the first part of the Beatitudes He describes and enumerates the various ways in which the Prince of the World seeks to block and divert God's people from the narrow road to the gate of God's Kingdom.

Wealth and earthly possessions are the immediate and most fascinating attractions to man. They are the object of the lust of the eyes. Here belong the vices of avarice, greed, and envy. The greed for power is the next evil in the world. It originates in pride and generates oppression, tyranny, bloodshed and warfare. Against these Jesus holds out the weapon of meekness. Afflictions of all kinds disturb a human existence and make life miserable. These afflictions

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may be corporal or spiritual, and they may come from wicked people. The shedding of tears may arise also from remorse for our sins or the sins of the world. Perhaps the most appropriate name for this earth is, "the Vale of Tears", and we need not wonder that Our Saviour foresaw this when He uttered the Beatitudes. The main reason why tears flow so abundantly in this world is the absence of justice and righteousness. Hence, blessed are those who dedicate their lives to bringing about justice in this world, between high and low, between rich and poor, between the nations of the earth. If the leaders were to possess a sense of justice and righteousness, this would be a happier world. To hunger and thirst for justice means to be animated by the zeal of God.

Because there is little justice in high places, there is a lesser degree of mercy. Justice comes first, but mercy is its God-like companion. Look about in the world and you will find that the name and exercise of mercy are being trodden underfoot, and yet God is rightly called, "the God of mercies." All the preceding virtues are easily climaxed by the beautiful virtue of purity of heart. This virtue is assailed constantly by the vice of lust, of sensuality, of intemperance, and those gross defilements that are an abomination to the Lord. Our Saviour loved this virtue and when He places it among the Beatitudes we realize that He speaks from His heart. Again, it is the Prince of Peace, and therefore, instead of the royal scepter He holds the olive branch of peace in His right hand. Peace has always been the greatest boon to mankind, while wars and rumors of wars have destroyed everything that is good, true and beautiful. Truly the peacemakers are the Children of God. The last Beatitude contains a personal request of our Divine Saviour. For, "persecution for justice's sake" is the persecution of Christ and His Church. Here pass before the Saviour's eyes the long lines of martyrs and missionaries who have suffered death for the sake of the Cross and here also belong those multitudes of peoples and nations who in our day are being trodden underfoot by irreligious and impious leaders.

Briefly, we might ask where in the spiritual life do these golden Beatitudes have their place and their function. Saint Bonaventure, the seraphic Doctor, in a book called "Breviloquium," or "Brief Treatise," sets forth in a marvelous manner how all the spiritual forces, graces and virtues are interrelated so as to form a gracious "lignum vitae" or Tree of Life. He also points out that each of the above is destined to counteract one or several of the vices or evil influences in this world. In other words, the seraphic Doctor opens for

us the armory of Satan and the armory of God.

Starting from the root of all evil, pride, he quotes Saint John's brief allusion to "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life." From these he deduces the seven Capital Sins and shows the wide and varied ramifications.

In the armory of God he enumerates the seven Sacraments and shows how each one of them counteracts the effects of the seven vices. He than points out how the seven virtues aid and strengthen the sacramental graces and how each one of them serves as an antidote to the poison issuing from our sinful nature and the vices. Though three of the virtues are implanted in the soul by God, all of them need man's cooperation and constant exercise. In the higher reaches of the spiritual life we find the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. These, too, require man's cooperation, but since they are gifts they act upon the soul in a more facile and delectable manner. In fact, through them the Holy Ghost draws us near to God. Above the Gifts we find the glorious array of the Beatitudes. They are not so much virtues or Gifts, but rather states or conditions to which the soul has been raised through strenuous efforts and whole-hearted cooperation. Our Saviour takes it for granted that those who possess the Beatitudes will not relinquish their enviable position but will remain faithful until they receive "the crown of life." The fruits of the Holy Ghost, which are many and varied in number, are seen like little stars about the lofty branches of the spiritual Tree of Life. It must, of course, be remembered that the sap and the driving power in this Tree is the grace of God which the Holy Spirit denies to no one.

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.

'What you have vowed to God render to Him faithfully and He shall reward you. Look to heaven, dear one, which beckons us on, and take up the Cross and follow Christ Who has gone the way before us: for whatever be the tribulations we have here we shall enter through Him unto His glory."

St. Clare of Assisi

THE EXPECTATION OF CHRIST

"Cur Deus Homo?" Why did God become man? Why did He, the Unbegotten Word of eternity, become the byword of time-enclosed tongues? Why? Saint Anselm answers his own question in these profound words: "God became man, that man might become divine!" "...The Son of God became man", says Saint Thomas, "in order to make us, as it were, gods by His grace."

Whether the Incarnation of the Son of God had been decreed for its own sake or whether primarily for the Redemption of fallen man does not absorb one here. The overwhelming mystery that completely enthralls the soul is that. . .God became man! He, the Lawgiver Whom the whole world cannot possibly contain, is "born of a woman and made under the Law" (Gal. 4:3). This season of the year vividly recalls to our minds once again that quiet night "when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared" (Tit. 3:4), that never-to-be-forgotten night on which God the Father showed "in the ages to come the overflowing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

Mother Church, contemplating this Donum Dei, can only exclaim in the opening words to the feast of the Circumcision: "O admirabile commercium!" Behold, She seems to say in that exclamation, now a Virgin can say to God: "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2:7). Now a shepherd can say with the Seraphim: "Holy, Lord God of Hosts!" Now the creature can say to the Creator: "Abba, Father!" For the "mystery which from ages has been hidden in God, the Creator of all" (Eph. 3:9), the prodigy that stupifies all thought and holds it in suspense, is made flesh and dwells amongst us, as Christ, "the image of the unseen God, Firstborn before every creature" (Col. 1:15), becomes the Son of Man! Incredible though the truth may be, "though He was by nature God, yet He did not think He should cling to His equality with God: rather He stripped Himself by taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men" (Phil. 2:6,7).

The Incarnation should not have taken the Jews by surprise; it was rooted and inextricably embodied in the Scriptures which they so jealously guarded. And yet they treated the Fact with an indifference bordering on contempt. St. John, in his Gospel and epistles, is overcome by the Jews' disavowal of Christ. At times he lingers to the point of tears on his own nation's rejection of the long-awainted Messias. This thought must have been uppermost in his mind when he began his Gospel, for no sooner had he finished the first few lines of his narra-

tive than he records: "He was in the world...and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (Jn. 1: 10,11). The King, St. John seems to cry out, is set at naught by His subjects!

The Synoptics present much the same sad picture. His people have no room for Him beside their flaming hearths, even less in their frigid hearts. "I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to the sons of my mother" (Ps. 68:9)! Had Israel but "known the gift of God" (Jn. 4:10), it would not have given Him a drafty cave for His palace nor a senseless beast for His court. Isaias' forbodings were not entirely ungrounded: "The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel has not known Me and My people have not understood" (Is. 1:3). When Our Lord said through the inspired writer: "I called and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded" (Prov. 1:24), it was a terrible indictment of a world that did not know the time of its visitation (Lk. 19:44). It was a paltry return of love to a Love Whose delight it was "to be among the children of men" (Prov. 8:31)! "You know the graciousness of Our Lord Jesus Christ-how, being rich, for your sakes He became poor, that so through His poverty you might be enriched" (2 Cor. 3:9)!

The Incarnation did not approximate the suddenness of a bolt of lightning for the Jews. It happened after centuries of expectation and revelation. To show this, I think it would profit us to go back, even to the dawn of Creation, and for a brief moment watch the gradual blossoming of that "mystery which from ages has been hidden in God, the Creator of all" (Eph. 3:9), which was realized one star-spangled evening "when all things were in quiet silence and the night was in "the midst of her course" (Wisd. 18:14).

The Promise to Our First Parents

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. For six bewildering days Love overflowed into creation and from nothing there came, by a creative act of the Divine Will, such an inundation of prodigies from on high that on the sabbath of rest God could see that all the things that He made were very good. And the best of all the works of God's hands was man, the breath of Divinity, who walked before all creation as the vestige of God, a little less than the angels. To His own image God created him: male and female He created them, their souls emblazoned with the impression of Divine Life, enriched with graces and gifts that transcend the human mind, deified souls that presented lustrous earthly counterparts of God's own divine perfections. Man in grace was an earthly mirror in which were reflected

the divine features of the God-Head. His destinay was a dazzling one!

But before long a sinister streak casts its shadow over Divinity's resplendent canvas of creation, bearing in its ruinous track the foul pigments of hell. It is the serpent, the most subtle of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God had made (Gen. 3:1). The father of lies had chosen his guise well. He cautiously approaches the woman of Paradise and hisses into her curious ears: "Go ahead, eat of this tree, Far from dying you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil! Eat! Your eyes shall be opened to see that you are Gods!" The poison of a jealous asp is under his lips (Ps. 13:3). And Eve, in a gesture that shook the destiny of creation, takes of the fruit of the tree, eats, and gives to her husband who also eats. Indeed, their eyes were opened that part of Satan's promise was true—but only to perceive that they were naked. It is the first sin, the first hateful, hell-inspired shout of defiance hurled by a petty human creature at his all-powerful, allholy Creator. It is the first black thread of evil that has since covered creation in a requiem pall of death and desolation. The mirror of God is shattered, His reflection distorted. Eve, the mother of the living now becomes the mother of the dead.

And so it happened. What was to be a fountain in Adam and Eve transmitting supernatural life to coming heirs was now a stream polluted with death-dealing waters. God's plan was deflected, but not thwarted! He Who in a wonderful manner created human nature would in a still more wondrous way renew it. There was no hesitation, no doubt. Turning a vengeful countenance to the serpent of hell, Almighty God strikes untold terror in that fiendish mind: "I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, between thy seed and her Seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. 3:15)! It is the enunciation of the decree of the Immaculate Conception, the proto-gospel of the New Order, the first hint of Christ.

The Promise to Abraham

Abraham was a man of profound faith and unquestioning obedience. He was an intimate of God and the great Father of the Jewish race. We all know the story of how his faith was put to a test one day by God when he was told to "take thy only-begotten son, Isaac, whom thou lovest. . .and offer him for a holocaust" (Gen. 22:2). Abraham rose in the middle of the night to begin preparations, Scripture tells us. "He who had received the promises. . .'In Isaac shall they seed be called' offered up his only-begotten son, reasoning that God has power to raise even from the dead" (Heb. 11:18.19).

Because of his ready faith, even in the face of God's apparently contradictory statements, Abraham merited God's blessings: "By my own self have I sworn. . .because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared they only-begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is by the sea-shore. . .And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:16-18). In the light of later prophecies we know that God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Abraham's most illustrious descendant, Our Savior Jesus Christ Who was "born of a woman, born under the Law. . .that we might receive the adoptin of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5). For, as St. Paul says earlier in the same letter, Our Lord became a curse for us, "that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal. 3:13,14).

Christ and the Prophets

Prophet follows prophet in the slowly climaxing prelude to our Redemption, each succeeding spokesman of God adding more clarifying notes, more force than his predecessor to the approaching drama. Each in turn takes his position in the limelight for a short while, speaks his inspired lines to an anxious world, and then retreats into the shadows of Limbo, there to await the fulfillment off all that he fortells. Each in succession, according to his gifts from God, dissipates a portion of the mist that clouds the radiant star of Jacob which is waxing more brilliant with the shortening of time.

Scripture tells us the story of Balac, the king of Moab, who sent messengers to Balaam, a soothsayer, to bribe him to come and curse the people of Israel who were a threat to his domain. Balaam told the messengers that God forbade his going with them. More messengers with more money came and asked him a second time. And Balaam, in his passion for money, told the messengers to stay the night while he inquired what the Lord wanted him to do, even though he had been fully informed already that it was not God's will that he should go. God punished Balaam by letting him go, but not to curse the people of Israel as he would have done. Balaam is obliged by God to bless them and to prophesy good things of them: "How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel. . .I shall see Him but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel. . .Out of Jacob shall He come that shall rule. . ." (Num. 24:5, 17,19).

Micheas, a prophet contemporary with Isaias, makes a very pointed prophecy concerning the Savior, the one which the chief priests and Scribes quoted for Herod at the time of the Magi's inquiry. It was unmistakably clear: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art by no mean least among the princes of Juda; for from thee shall come forth leader who shall rule My people Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. 5:2).

It is striking to note in this connection that He Who would one day proclaim Himself as the "Living Bread that has come down from heaven" (Jn. 6:52) should be born in the little town of Bethlehen which in Hebrew signifies "House of Bread". St. Augustine sees in this House of Bread a "resplendent manger, in which has lain the food of animals, but also the Food of Angels!" Extending the analogy even further, we can say that He would not only be born in a House of Bread but He would remain imprisoned therein until the consummation of the world that we might have Christmas every day of our lives.

God renews again His promise of a Messias to the Jews through the prophet Aggeus in the famous words: "Yet one little while and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: And the Desired of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory. . . (Agge.2:7,8).

Through the mouth of other holy men, such as Daniel and Ezechiel, God gives the Jews more revelations of their coming King. He is to be the Expected One.

The Prophet Isaias

Isaias, called "the great prophet" by the Holy Spirit (Ecclus. 48:25), deserves a category all his own. With astonishing clarity he foretold the coming of Christ in numerous prophecies. "He showed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things before they came" (Ecclus. 48:28), so much so that he seems to be more of an evangelist than a prophet, one who had witnessed rather than foretold the mystery of our Redemption. His words every good Jew knew well.

Time and time again Isaias assures the Chosen People that He is approaching very near: "Be comforted, be comforted, my people... the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" (Is. 40:1,5)! And again: "Say to the fainthearted: Take courage and fear not:...God Himself will come and will save you" (35:4)! "The beauty of Carmel, and Saron, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God" (35:2). Once more he cries out: "...Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold thy Savior cometh..." (62:11)!

Isaias gives the Jews several signs. The Messias would come from David's royal lineage: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root" (11:1). He would be born in an unusual manner: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (7:14).

At His actual Birth Isaias thrills with unbounded joy: "...O Jerusalem, thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (60:1)! And again: "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have patiently waited for Him..." (25:9). "A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Councellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (9:6). Earlier in the same chapter Isaias makes reference to the birth of the radiant Star of Jacob: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen" (9:2). He would say to the shepherds recently returned from Bethlehem's cave: "Get thee upon a high mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem: lift it up, fear not. Say to the cities of Juda: Behold your God" (40:9)!

Almost as if he had been there on that cold night in the cave with the lonely Savior rejected by His people even before His entry into the world, Isaias writes: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel has not known Me, and My people have not understood" (1:3). In many places Isaias dwells at length on the coldness and ingratitude of the Jews which was to be so evident on the night of 3 the Savior's birth. This passage is most striking: "I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. . . But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob, neither hast thou labored about Me, O Israel. . . Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money. . . But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities" (43:15,22,24). The Infant God begs of the obdurate Jews: "Put Me in remembrance"; and looking forward to His tremendous Sacrifice on Calvary, He immediately adds: "And let us plead together" (43:26). But the ungrateful Jews, who always set aside an empty place at their Paschal meal for Elias, had no room for Him, their God, in the inn (Lk. 2:7)!

For thousands of years the Jews had sent up to heaven their soulful "Veni, Domine", expressed in Isaias' touching plea: "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down" (64:1)! They had waited and prayed for centuries for a Redeemer, prayed and waited for centuries more that the "earth be opened and bud forth a Savior" (45:8). And yet, when He, the Long-Awaited One, came. . .! The pitiful contrast of Bethlehem, foreseen seven centuries before by Isaisa ("The ox knows his owner. . ."), speaks volumes!

Isaias had not missed a detail.

* *

Christ was revealed. He was expected. We have briefly seen that. Had they correctly read the "signs of the times" (Matt. 16:4) the Jews would have run with jubilation to the Desired of National But their expectation of Christ was a leader of devastating might and power over the enemies of Israel, a conception of our Savior depreciating indeed, but in keeping with the nationalistic sentiments of an earthly-minded people. The Jews had strayed far from God's house; and, through constant obstinacy, they had lost much of that close contact with the things of God which formed practically all that was glorious in their long history.

The Jews' infinite loss was our inestimable gain. "Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed up us" (1 Jn: 3:1), that He sent forth the Orient from on High to deliver those that "walked in darkness. . .and dwelt in the region of the shadow of death" (Is. 9:2). "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" Jn.3:16), and the Son so loved us that He became poor for us, that "so through His poverty we might become rich" (2Cor.3:9). Indeed, for us! Propter nos homines et nostram salutem! For us the Word of God became an inarticulate Babe! For us Divine Omnipotence sought the support of a woman's arms! "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His way" (Rom. 11:33)!

Venite, adoremus!

Fr. Mario DiCicco, O.F.M.

St. Francis of Assisi

MEDITATION ON THE LOVE OF GOD

During the Middle Ages there appeared many ascetical treatises dealing with the means of stimulating love of God in the soul. Of such is the "Stimulus Amoris" of James of Milan, who accommodated the doctrines of Saint Bonaventure to his own way of thinking. This treatise concentrates on perfection, the hindrances to reaching it, and its ultimate completion in mystical contemplation. The following excerpt is a translation of Chapter XVII, which we have entitled: "Meditation on the Love of God."

Because the heart of a contemplative does not cease or should not cease to inquire how to burn with an ever greater love for his Creator, I have composed for this purpose, somewhat as an incentive, these poor stammering words.

First of all, O Man, understand that there is nothing that can so inflame you with love for God as considering the gift of His immense benefits. For in this very fact that you consider how liberal He is in bestowing upon you ineffable goods, you shall know that He loves you exceedingly. And what excites more to love than being loved and desired? Mend, no matter how cruel they are, respond to love, for "they love those that love them" (Mtt. 5:46); but such men fail to respond to the love of their Creator, for they are driven on by the devil, that serpent of old. Think, therefore, of whatever benefit you will, and you shall find not a little reason for loving your Creator.

Draw near to Him, then, in this manner. You must think not untruthfully but truthfully, and place yourself before your God just as He is in heaven; and imagine yourself to be His, not your own; and do not doubt that in this way you will ask of Him nothing that per-3 tains to your harm, but only to your salvation. Certainly, all these things that He has done for you are reasons and incentives for love. Why do you not love Him since you are His, since He is ready to give you all things? Do you not love that man dearly who gives you some trifling gift? Why, then, do you not love Him much more Who gives you all things. Who even gives you Himself? Therefore, if you love yourself, why do you not love Him who fashioned you? You have destroyed yourself in the past, and you still go on destroying yourself, and yet you love yourself. Do you not have reason, then, to love Him Who created you, healed you, and continually sustains you? Therefore, say to the Lord: "O Lord, I am Your creature, and You cannot deny Yourself to me."

But before you continue, ponder what you have already said and be inflamed with love. Who can refrain from throwing himself imme-

[&]quot;When you see a poor person, you ought to consider Him in whose name he comes, Christ that is, who took our poverty and infirmity on himself. For such a person's infirmity and poverty is a kind of mirror for us, in which we ought to behold with pitying regard the infirmity and poverty which our Lord Jesus Christ bore in his person for our sake."

diately upon God, not half-heartedly but completely, forgetful of everything else, when he considers that God, the greatest good, the delight of the angels, the reward of the blessed, is his very own? God cannot deny Himself to weak and sinful men whose misery no one can express; what will God do for one who may be a weak man and a sinner, but who is converted to Him and searches after Him? God desires us to seek and to receive Him, for He said: "Ask and you shall receive" (Jn. 16:24). I do not know why we labor further. Why do we daily afflict ourselves over nothing when we can possess the Creator of all things? What will we seek further if we can possess every good so easily? Why do we covet a life full of miseries?

O Lord my God, what have we given to You other than injury, in return for Your having given Yourself so freely to us? For it gives nothing to You we possess You, but You have so loved us because You say Your delights are to be with us (Cf. Prov. 8:13) Why do You love us so much that You give Yourself to us more generously than You give anything else for which we may ask? Indeed, I do not wish to possess anything else when I may have my God. I will adorn my self with jewels (cf. Isa. 61:10) and lead Him into the chamber of my heart and rest there with Him. I know well that He desires nothing more; for He desires to enter, and He has been knocking for a long time. I am deeply grieved that I have so long deprived myself of such a good. Therefore I say to Him: "I know that You love me more than I love myself; I will no longer be concerned about myself but I will dwell only in your delights, and you will take care of me. For I can not attend both to myself and to You. As an exchange, therefore, do You attend to my infirmity that You may raise me up, and I will attend to Your goodness that I may delight in it. I am exceedingly enriched with You while You gain nothing from me, nevertheless, I know that you are generous to me and both sustain me and urge me on. How is this? Indeed, that I may realize that I hate myself, but that You love me.

O Lord, if I should wish to discover in all things the signs of Your love, I would be able to express neither the benefits of natural nor of good fortune, not the benefits of grace nor of glory, even though "I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (I Cor. 13:1). And thus, since on these things I must be silent, I will sigh a little with Your Son, eternal Father. How great was Your love for man, my God, Who loved him so much that You willed man to be God and God to be man! What more could You have done for man than unite Him inseparably to Yourself? And what shall I say of the weaker sex?

You willed Him Who was Your only-begotten Son to be born of a woman and to be called the son of a virgin. O Lord, You have greatly exalted the human race in each sex; for You willed that Your Son, Who is equal to You, be a man and the son of a woman. You have not shown such evidence of love toward the angels, "for nowhere doth he take hold of the angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold" (Heb. 2:16).

It is indeed a wonder how the hearts of the sons of men are not moved to respond to Your love. When we sinned, what did You have to do other than cast us into the depths of hell, and create in a moment, if You so wished, another and more noble creature? But Your love was so great that even after the fall, You vouchsafed to come to us so benignly, and after we had offended You, You exalted us more than before. Why was this exaltation? Should our fault have deserved exaltation? No, indeed; but lest we flee farther away from You in our misery, You willed to unite human nature inseparably to Yourself. Your love seems the more marvelous, my God, in that You love and exalt those who hate You. Therefore, if You Who are the highest, so exceedingly love us who are nothing, why do we wretched ones not love You, since You are our only good?

Therefore, O God, that You might exalt us, You deigned to be born as an infant; and that you might make us—beasts that we are through sin—into creatures of heaven, You deigned to be placed among beasts in a manger. O wonderful outpouring of divine goodness! O detestable blindness of our eyes! Here is ice, not a heart! Why, O my heart, why do you not melt at this heat? Woe is me! I do not know in what further ways God can seek us; yet after all He had done He still does not have our love. What shall I say? Christ, Who is the refuge of the banished, willed to flee into Egypt. O Lord, should You have to flee, You Who are everywhere? Certainly not, because You surround Your enemies by Your power; but You submitted to this suffering so that You might thereby manifest Your love for me, and so that I might learn to seek refuge with You when I am persecuted by my enemies. O my God, I see clearly that You are all mine and that You desire to possess me entirely!

O heart of stone! O heart that is not a heart! Why should you not be inflamed with love? "Stone melted with heat is turned into brass" (Job 28:2), and you remain unchanged in spite of such heat of love. Therefore you are stone, not flesh. And is it no a matter for wonder that the flesh of a heart can be harder and more insensible than stone? But has not the Lord said that He "will take away the stony

heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh (Ezec 11:19)? But rather from the fact that a stone is more quickly change than a heart of flesh, it must be that He gives a stony heart in exchange for a heart of flesh. I say it to our shame. O heart most vile, mo vain, most unfaithful! Why do you hate yourself so? Why do you the wound and consume yourself? Why do you not love Him Who love you so strongly? O most cruel heart! Why do you love death more the life? Why do you not receive the One seeking you? O stones are creatures without senses, weep for the madness of my heart! In trut O Lord, if you were to hate me, still would I have to love You became You are my God and alone "my refuge, my protector" (Ps. 17:2. and ruler. But how much the more should I love You, since You love me so exceedingly and pursue me even when I flee from Your bene fits? You love me so greatly that You seem to hate Yourself for m sake. Did You not will, Judge of all, to be judged in my stead, and to undergo for me a most ignominious and terrible sentence of death O my God! What more must You do? Rather, tell me what more could You do? In truth, if an ordinary person should have done the for me I would love him forever; why then do I not love You, my God Indeed, the outpouring of Your blood which is completely full charity ought to inebriate me; Your embrace alone should inflam me; how much the more, then, Your terrible passion so full of share and anguish? Truly, You have desired all of me, You Who have given Yourself entirely to me.

And who demanded this death of Yours, my Lord? What concern need you have had for us, most detestable of creatures? Truly nothing other than Your exceeding goodness and infinite love demand ed this. For if You willed to redeem us only, You could have done so in another manner; but You vouchsafed to accomplish our redemp tion in such a way that You might inflame us with even more of Your love. O love and desire of the heart! O delight and sweetness of the mind! O love and flame of the soul! O light and brightness of the eyes! O melody to the ears!...Why am I not totally drawn by love of You? Why is there anything in me other than love? How can meditate on any other thing? What is sweeter than Your love?... Why am I not trapped by it and held captive? Your love surrounds me on all sides, and I do not know what love is. Alas, why do I remain so unreasonably obdurate? Why does vanity attract me more than truth? Why does the wickedness of a creature entice me more than the kindness of my Saviour? Why do I prefer the stench of dung to the boundless love of my Redeemer?

How exceedingly have You loved man, my God! Not only have You willed to suffer on the cross for him, but You have also visited him in the depths and have led him back with You on high. Could You not have summoned men, O Lord, through some one of Your angels? Did You need to lead him back through Yourself? And do You wish to associate with man? Why do you deign to dwell with man in every place? What does man himself possess other than vileness? Why do You love him so intensely? Even after You arose from the tomb, You willed to appear to man for forty days (Acts 1:3), and having been glorified You wished to eat with him, and giving his peace You gave Yourself to him for handling (Cf. Lk. 24: 36ff). But it was not sufficient, Lord, that You were crucified for man and that You led him out of the depths. It seems that You loved man so much that You were not able to abstain from him. Were you unmindful that we would be ungrateful even for the ineffable benefit of Your passion?... How marvelous is Your love, since You could not be separated from men. When You were about to ascend to the right hand of the Father, did You not give that marvelous power to man that he might have You on the altar whenever he wished? Before You underwent death You gave this power to him so that he would not fear to lose You. But why did You do this when You were going to send the Holy Spirit to us? Why do You wish to dwell always with man? Why did You wish to incorporate us completely in Your body and have us drink Your blood? Was it not that we might have one mind and one heart with You, through Your inebriating love? What does it mean to drink Your blood, the life of our soul (cf. Lev. 17:11, 14), other than to unite our soul inseparably with Yours? Certainly this is what You will, this is what You desire, my God-rather my Lord and my Redeemer-this is what You have labored so long to accomplish; indeed, for this You labored from Your infancy, You Who poured out Your blood full of love for us, You have given all this

MEDITATION ON LOVE OF GOD

to us. Amen.

Fr. Edward M. Wilson, T.O.F.

DISCUSSION

Duns Scotus the Doctor of the Immaculate Conception

Question: Is it really true that Bl. John Duns Scotus, surnamed the Subtle and Marian Doctor, after having defended the priviles of the Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary in his early lectures at Oxford, later seemed to be so doubtful about it, in his lectures at the University of Paris, that we may say: the writing expressing his mature mind only assert the speculative possibility of the Immaculate Conception, not that it has happened.

The objection is not new; it has been repeatedly moved again Duns Scotus and his School up to our days, but it is unheard of before the first quarter of the 17th century, in which time the chronology of Duns Scotus Commentaries in the Sentences of Peter Lombard was upset by a terrific mistake of the critical editors of his "Opera omnia", mistake that only recently has been redressed by Father Charles Balich and the editors of the monumental Vatica edition of Duns Scotus' works (I.Duns Scotus, Opera omnia, Prolegomena, Civ. Vaticana, 1950, p.1 ff.). A brief account of Prof. Balich discovery, which has revolutioned the methods of textual critic since his freshman time at Louvain (cf. Anonymous, Les commentaires de J. D. Scot, Louvain 1927), is perhaps the best answer to the 300 years-old objection.

The early lectures in the "Sentences" held by Duns Scotus at Oxford between 1297 and 1301 (probably also at Cambridge), and which he himself quotes as "Lectura prima,,' and that therefore would constitute the original "Opus Oxoniense", were never printed and are only known to us by a couple of mss., very incomplete, and some questions dispersed in other writings which render the reconstitution of the primitive text practically impossible for the moment. From the other side, ms. tradition gives us evidence that what Hugh MacCaughwell (Cavellus) published at Antwerp, in 1620, with the title of "Opus Oxoniense," and that Luke Wadding, with the aid the Irish Fathers of St. Isidore's College of Rome, re-edited with the same title at Lyons, in 1639, is not the inaugural commentary of the young bachelor Duns Scotus at Oxford, but his last and capital theological work, a real "Summa theologica", which Scotus simply called "Ordinatio" while he was correcting it, completing it, and putting it in order at Cologne in 1307-1308, when death compelled him to leave his masterpiece unfinished and sometimes illegible, as his disciples testify.

Other mistakes of the 17th. century editions of Duns Scotus

works, such as interpollations of cancelled texts and of footnotes from other hands, omission of Duns Scotus critical notes and additions, confusion of students notes (reportationes) with Scotus revised texts, etc. have advised us to prefer as a rule the earlier printed editions, such as the incunabula of Maurice O'Fihely (de Portu, archbishop of Tuam, d. at Galway A.D. 1513).

It is also beyond doubt that Duns Scotus commented the 3d. book of the "Sentences," at Paris, more than once, and even if he had not time to discuss the questions concerned with the Immaculate Conception before his expulsion from the University as a popist, by Philipp the Fair in June 1303, he surely disputed those questions at Paris after his return in 1304, and before he received his Master degree in sacred Theology in 1305.

A half-a-dozen different "Reportata Parisiensia" for the question of the Immaculate Conception (Sent. III, d.3 q.1), of which not a single one bears the critical note of "Lectura examinata" what would give us a fair guarantee that it was revised by Duns Scotus, forbids us to accept any definitive conclusion about the mind of Duns Scotus in this particular question. Nevertheless, if for the time being we wish to make up our mind about the teaching of Duns Scotus at Paris, we must base it on expressions such as: "Christ preserved Mary from all original sin"; "Mary was preserved from all fault, both actual and original"; "The Holy Trinity, foreseeing from all eternity the passion of Jesus, preserved Mary from all actual and original sin", etc. etc., which we read for instance in the full commentary of Paris, called "Lectura completa" (Cf. Balich C., I. Duns Scotus et historia Immaculatae Conceptionis, Romae 1955, p.36).

If however some milder expressions of Duns Scotus in the "Reportata Parisiensia" may lead us to think that Duns Scotus hesitated in presenting his opinion about the Immaculate Conception, in his commentaries of the Sentences at Paris,—what may be explained by the fact that the Professors were obliged by oath to present at least the arguments in favor of the common teaching, in case of doctrinal controversy,—all doubts are dissipated when we read attentively the texts in which he expresses his own mind in his mature commentary, the Ordinatio, which the editors of the 17th. century deplorably called "Opus Oxoniense", and therefore considered written before the often incorrect "Reportata Parisiensia", thus giving birth to an inaccurate Scotism, rendered sometimes unbecomingly faulty by attributing to Duns Scotus several spurious works published together in their monumental editions.

DISCUSSION

The original texts of Duns Scotus questions on the Immaculated Conception have been published twice by Father Balich, and the rigorous critical method used assures us the authenticity of the text of the Ordinatio, which have been welcomed by all critics of the Middle Ages (cf. Balich C., Theologiae Marianee elementa, Sibenia 1933 and I. Duns Scotus doctor Immaculatae Conceptionis, Roma 1954). The mature mind of Duns Scotus, which most likely is substantially the same in his earlier commentaries, in this particular question of the Immaculate Conception, which he considers object of free controversy at his time, is clearly stated in two different di tinctions of the 3d. book of the Ordinatio, which bears his last touch

In the first question of the 3d. distinction of that book, after a thorough discussion of the arguments for the different opinions which are possible, and considering that the privilege of the Immacus late Conception is "not repugnant" to the authority of the Church and to Holy Scripture, Duns Scotus holds it as "probable" according to his Mariological principle of becomingness: "If there is no disa greement with the Church and Sacred Writ, the more excellent must be attributed to Mary" (cf. Balich C., Ioan. Duns Scotus, Romas, 1954, p.13). Toward the end of the same question, Duns Scotus states. clearly that he has reached theological certainty about the great prival ilege of Mary. Answering to the common objection of the maculists, that an Immaculate Mary would not have been redeemed by Christ. Duns Scotus who had already given full development to the argument, of Eadmer of Canterbury of the becomingness of a perfect Redeemer. again refers to it and boldly manifests his own mind, adding that "Mary needed more the Redeemer than anybody else, and should have contracted original sin, by means of the common propagation of mankind, had she not been preserved from it by the grace of the Mediator" (cf. ibidem, p.16). Finally, in the same 3d. book of the Ordinatio, distinction 18, question 1, Duns Scotus again states his theological certainty about Mary's most beautiful privilege: "In heaven is also the most blessed Mother of God, who was never an enemy (of God), neither actually, through actual sin, nor originally, through original sin; she would however have been, had she not been preserved" (cf. ibidem, p. 21).

History of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception tells us that less than one year after the death of Duns Scotus, the Professors of the University of Paris were well acquainted with the opinion and the arguments of Duns Scotus, which later on was called the "Franciscan opinion". In 1316, John of Naples, regent of the famous Dominican College of St. Jacques at Paris, in a Quodlibet discussion held at the University, states expressly that Duns Scotus not only had taught at Paris the possibility of the privilege, but had even asserted that it was fitting and that in fact it had happened in reality (in facto esse). (cf. Balich C., I. Duns Scotus, Romae 1955, pages 60-61-68-69). When the controversy around the aequivocal texts of Wadding arose in the 17th. century, Peter of Alva y Astorga, analyzing the writings of a thousand theologians (cf. P. de Alva y Astorga, Sol veritatis etc., Matriti 1660; p. 885-888), arrived to the same conclusion expressed in our days by Mgr. Vacandard: the theological arguments of Duns Scotus were surely decisive in his mind, but although they were known to the greatest theologians of his time, and of the following centuries, yet they did not convince everybody at one time. However in the history of the belief of the Immaculate Conception, solemnly defined on Dec. 8th. 1854, Duns Scotus has been and shall remain for ever the subtle and glorious asserter of the popular privilege of the blessed Mother of God (cf. Vacandard E., Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse, s. III, Paris 1912, p.283).

Fr. Joseph Montalverne, O.F.M.

". . . place thy mind before the mirror of eternity, place thy soul in the brightness of glory, place thy heart in the figure of the divine substance and transform thy whole self through contemplation in the image of the Godhead, that thou too mayest feel what His friends feel in tasting the hidden sweetness which God Himself has kept from the beginning for those who love Him." St. Clare of Assisi

"Pray and watch at all times! Carry out the work you have so well begun, and fulfill in true humility the service of God you have undertaken in holy poverty."

St. Clare of Assisi

QUESTION: I am very much interested in the Liturgical Movement. To what degree have the Franciscans contributed to the liturgy of the Holy Mass?

ANSWER: The Missal of the universal Church contains several prayers which, although not composed by the Franciscans, were incorporated into the liturgy by them. It was the Missal of the Minister General, Haymo of Faversham (1240-1244), which was used not only by the Franciscans themselves but little by little, by the Roman Curia and the churches of Rome, and later extended itself to several countries of Europe. When St. Pius V reformed the liturgy of the Mass, he retained certain of the prayers in the Missal of Haymo which cannot be found in the older liturgy which antedates Haymo's reform. These prayers are: the Antiphon "Introibo", the Responsory "Deus, tu conversus" the "Aufer a nobis", the "Oramus te", the "Munda cor meum", the Offertory prayers "Suscipe, sancte Pater", the "Deus qui humanae", "Offerimus tibi", "In spiritu humilitatis", "Veni Sanctificator", "Suscipe Sancta Trinitas", the "Orate Fratres", "Suscipiat"; the prayers at Communion: "Domine, Jesu Christe, qui dixisti", "Domine, Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi", "Perceptio Corporis tui", "Panem caelestem", "Domine, non sum dignus": the "Corpus Domini nostri", "Ouid retribuam", "Sanguis Domini nostri"; the prayers after Communion: "Quod ore sumpsimus", "Corpus tuum, Domine"; and the prayers at the end of Mass: "Placeat".

The Final Blessing was likewise introduced by the Franciscans, but was given immediately after the "Missa est", and under a different formula.— It is to be noticed that, with few exceptions, the prayers mentioned show a private character in so far as they are composed in the First Person singular, and not in the plural, as is commonly the case

in liturgical prayers. The fact that Pope Pius V retained them in his reformed Missal proves that they constitute a significant contribution to the progress of the liturgy of the Mass.

QUESTION: "In our daily horarium, womit Matins from the Office. 1) Do get the Sabbatine privilege if we omis part of Office, or must some Paters b substituted, If so, how many? 2) Th summer Father told us in class that Pries and Sisters who say the Office do mened to fulfill the stipulation of abstaining twice a week."

ANSWER: 1) As to the first question the general rule is that Priests and Religious who are obliged to recite daily the Divine Office or Little Office are excused from the additional obligation of citing the Little Office in order to the Sabbatine privilege. At the General Chapter of the Carmelites, held in Rome in 1947, it was decided that the daily recitation of the "Our Father", "Hall Mary" and "Glory" each seven times would satisfy the requirement of the Little Office or the fasts and abstinence in those cases where a commutation is requested. According to this declaration one "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory" would be enough for each Camonical Hour. But at the same time, the Fathers who were gathered together at the same Chapter did not fail to point out that every devout client of Our Lady should not content himself with so little, but should be reminded of the greatness of the Promise made by her, and that it is her desire that the Rosary be said daily.-2) As to the second question, the Father was quite right, for the abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays is required only as a substitution of the Little Office in the case of illiteracy or other incapacities (blindness illness, accident) and inconveniences (For further informations see: Frank G. KRAUSE, O. Carm.: "The Sabbatine Privilege", art. in "Take this Scapular", Chicago, The Carmelite Third Order Press, 1947, 53-64 pp.; J. M. HAF-FERT: "Mary in her Scapular Promise", Sea Isle City, N. J., The Scapular Press, 1942, 74-83 pp.; E. MAGEN-NIS, O. Carm.: "The Scapular Devotion. Origin, Legislation and indulgences attached to the Scapular", St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Comp., 1923, 60-88 pp.; E. MAGENNIS, O. Carm .: "The Sabbatine Privilege of the Scapular 1923 A.D.-1922 A.D.", New York, C. F. Connollv. 1923). QUESTION: In the United States of America and several other countries there is the costume to recite the Divine Praises "Blessed be God, etc." after the Benediction and the Prayers for the Church at

the end of the low Masses. I was told

that it is of Franciscan origin but others

objected that they never found it under

the name of a Franciscan author. What

is the truth about it?

483, the Divine Praises in question are attributed to Fr. Felici, S.J., and according to this magazine they would have been composed in 1797. Francis Beringer ("Die Ablaesse, ihre Wesen und Gebrauch", 25th edition, Paderborn 1921-1922, with the additions of A. Steinen, I, n. 535, p. 255) spred this opinion widely. But this is due to a mistake because in fact we can find the mentioned Praises among the works of St. Leonard of Portmaurice (d. 1751) with the exception of four invocations. The additional Praises were inserted by the Holy See. The first addition was the invocation of the Immaculate Conception by Pius IX in 1857; then followed that of the Sacred Heart introduced by Leo XIII in 1897; in 1921 Benedict XV inserted the Praise of St. Joseph, and finally in 1950 Pius XII added the newly declared dogma of Assumption.

ANSWER: In the "Ephemerides Litur-

gicae" of the year 1890, on the page

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH. Msgr. Gerard Philips, S.T.D. et M. Translated by John R. Gilbert and James W. Moudry. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956. Pp. 175. \$3.25.

The author, Monsignor Gerard Philips, as Professor of Dogmatic and Mystic Theology at the University of Louvain, is eminently qualified to discuss the role of the laity in the modern Church. As one of the outstanding spiritual leaders of Catholic Action in Belgium, he is equally well qualified to point out the danger spots and to analyze the weaknesses in the present-day Catholic Action programs. His point of view, naturally, is that of the theologian rather than that of the sociologist, and his aim in this book is to present the theological basis for the day apostolate and to establish the theological principles upon which the lay apostolate must function. He discusses principally the Church as the visible and supernatural society of the faithful founded by Jesus Christ to continue His work of salvation among men. The role of the laity in his society is clearly brought out in the author's penetrating study of temporal values, of the often misinterpreted doctrine of the priesthood of the faithful, and of the relationship of the laity to the magisterium.

Monsignor Philips is no champion of "medievalism." With all due respect for the great achievement of the Middle Ages, he sees no reason for attempting to revive either its spirit or its methods or even its religious mentality. To fulfill her role in secular society, the Church must advance with the advancing times. New concepts are needed for the presentation of ancient truths, and sound interpretations are needed for newly-discovered truths. It is up to the clergy, primarily, to adjust their thinking to the modern world in which the laity must

live and think and act. In other words, they must be taught to love the world that they may sanctify it. Citing Cardinal Suhard, the author writes: " 'The Christian is not called upon to destroy or vilify the world, but to assume it, to sanctify it, to offer it in homage to God. In such a process lies the true incarnation; it is the invasion of mankind by the power of God in order that mankind may be uplifted and introduced into the realm of divine life." "The voice of the times," continues the author, this time quoting Cardinal Faulhaber, "is the woice of God. Vox temporis, vox Dei. The saints are always rooted in their age. They accept it that they might be able to correct it. They say 'Yes!' to the world, the work of God, that they might say 'No!' to the world of sing They are passionately in love with their age, but with the love of God, With strong passion they hate the vices of their age, but with the love of God. With a strong passion they hate the vices of their times; but they do not curse their age; they rather wish to redeem it and they are strong enough not to become exasperated, or to capitulate before the delays which are opposed to their zeal."

Viewing the matter with experienced eves, Monsignor Philips regards the clergy as more or less responsible for the lack of apostolic fervor in the laity. A kind of strangulating overprotectionism, he feels, is the root of the trouble. "A wholesome pedagogy," he writes, "condemns parents who refuse to realize that their children have come of age and can now decide for themselves. Yet this independence is the very purpose of education. The Church knows this even if all her priests do not seem to realize that lay people are not perpetually childrenand she develops among her faithful prudence and Christian strength so that

the exercise of their just liberty may lead them to salvation and not to ruin."

Monsignor Philips has written a book for priests rather than for laymen. Most of the points stressed are directed to pastors and others who work with Catholic Action groups. But laymen, too, will be interested in what Monsignor Philips has to say regarding their own position in the Church, what the Church expects of them, and what other laymen have accomplished in their own way for the glory of God and the welfare of their times.

M.F.L.

WOMAN IN THE MODERN WORLD.

Eva Firkel, Translated by Hilda Graef. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956. Pp. ix/211. \$3.50

Since the publication in the early thirties of Gentrud von Le Fort's masterly study of woman, Die Ewige Frau, several distinguished authors have felt urged to contribute a few ideas of their own to the subject. Among the more recent discussions of "the eternal feminine" is Eva Firkel's book, originally published in German as Schichsalsfragen der Frau, and translated by Hilda Graef.

Dr. Firkel has written what amounts to a handbook for women. Practically every phase end aspect of feminine life from conception to old age is treated, and treated with the kind of practical wisdom, breadth, and intelligence that is so often lacking in such studies. This is not too surprising when one considers that Dr. Firkel is at home not only in the field of medicine (she is an M.D.) but also in natural science, psychology, metaphysics, and theology, and that she is a practising psychotherapist.

Much of the book deals with the physiological make-up of woman, her psychological characteristics, and her spiritual potentialities. The tone throughout is matter-of-fact and down-to-earth, the

realities dealt with are basic and fundamental. Practical is perhaps the best one-word description of the book; it is quite devoid of poetry. Married women with growing daughters will probably draw most profit from the book, although women in any state of life, even—and perhaps especially—religious women, will surely find in it much food for serious consideration and self-examination.

To give a vague idea of the book's range, here is a summary of the contents: Part I: Woman's Nature, includes chapter on 1) General Human Characteristics, 2) The Christian Point of View, 3) The Physical Character of Woman, 4) Healthy Psychosomatic Characteristics. 5) Pathological Attitudes of Mind and Soul; Part II: The Development of Women, includes 1) The Young Girl, 2) Between Girl and Woman, 3) The Married Woman, 4) The Unmarried Woman, 5) The Ageing Woman; Part III: Perfected Woman, includes 1) The Final Achievement, 2) Formed Old Age. The final section contains "Vital Questions of Woman - Fateful Questions of the World."

Hilda Graef's translation is more than adequate, but occasionally marred by strange usages, such as "quieten," "nerviness", etc.

The Jacket design by Clarence Geise is striking and attractive. G.S.

A SPIRITUAL READING LIST FOR SISTERS. Compiled y Sister M. Rose Agnes, O.S.F. Joliet: Saint Francis College, 1956. Pp. 39. 25c.

Here is a useful little reading list compiled by a busy Sister for the benefit of other busy Sisters. The material is helpfully arranged into sections that make selection of books according to subject and season a relatively simple matter. The compiler tells us that her list was "designed in particular for the multitude of Marys dedicated to the service of Christ in

His Church as Marthas, ministering to the spiritual and corporal needs of His members—to help them find easily those spiritual fountains and that spiritual food for the refreshment and nourishment of their souls, in the strength of which they will persevere in fruitful labor for Him Who loved both Martha and Mary."

If the list is not exhaustive, it is intelligently selective and sufficiently complete and up to date to serve its purpose very well. Sisters everywhere should feel sincerely grateful to Sister M. Rose Agnes for her efforts in compiling this list.

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(Francis) "honored all men. That is, he not only loved but respected them all. What gave him his extraordinary personal power was this: that from the pope to the beggar, from the sultan of Syria in his pavillion to the ragged robbers crawling out of the wood, there was never a man who looked into those brown burning eyes without being certain that Francis Bernardone was really interested in him, in his own inner individual life from the cradle to the grave; that he himself was being valued and taken seriously".

Chesterton

\$ \$\frac{1}{4}\$

"The sure foundation of God stands firm, bearing this seal (2 Thimothy 2). Francis stood in the war of temptation like a very strong foundation. Did he real as a renewed foundation, stabilize the structure of the Church, as the Lord formers understood in a vision? He is the first foundation of our Evangelical areas where thundline day out the foundation, patience squared it up, here a is remarkly remented it together, prayer and contemplation

St. Bernardin of Siena

If You Talk to Priceds ... Read Desepapers ... Listen to Radio or Ti

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