

*integrity of the maker . . .
the practical measure of candle quality!*

Canon Law *explicitly* defines the
acceptable minimum in liturgical
candles . . . *implicitly* recom-
mends the finest purity and in-
gredients throughout.

For the busy pastor, the practi-
cal standard of measurement is
the *known integrity* of the maker
. . . the *proved quality* of his
products.

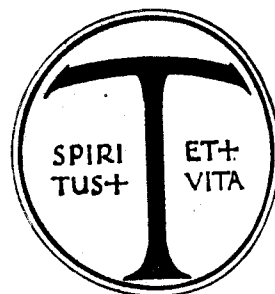
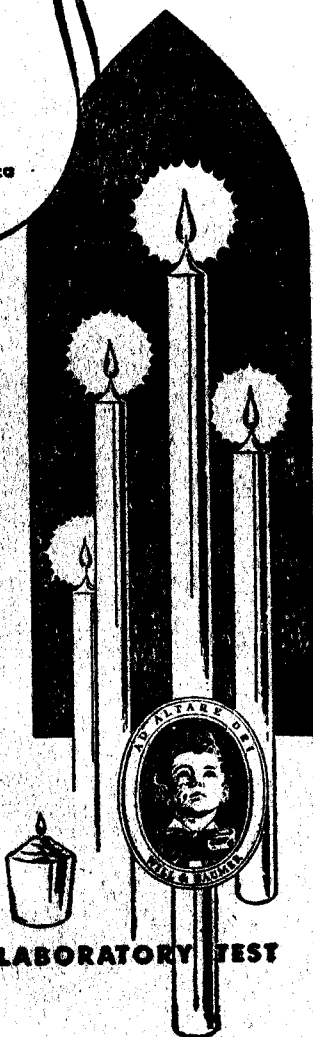
WILL & BAUMER
Candle Company Inc.

Syracuse Boston New York
Chicago Montreal Los Angeles



Purveyors to the Vatican by Appointment

PURITY PROVED BY LABORATORY TEST



the CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

VOL. VI., NO. 9, SEPTEMBER, 1956

the CORD

VOL. VI. NO. 9. SEPTEMBER, 1956

CONTENTS

THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE 257

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

MIRROR OF ST. FRANCIS 267

Fr. Regis F. Marshall, O.F.M.

OUR LADY OF ATONEMENT 270

Fr. Titus Cranny, S. A.

IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY 279

Fr. James Heermicks, O.F.M.



The CORD, a monthly magazine specifically devoted to Franciscan spirituality, is published under the sponsorship of the Franciscan Educational Conference by The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, P. O., New York. Editor: Eligius Buytaert, O. F. M., Assistant Editors: St. Francis, S. M. I. C., Managing Editor: Innocent Dam, O.F.M., Editorial Board: Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., Columban Duffy, O.F.M., Allan Wolter, O.F.M. Annual subscription, \$2.00. Entered as second class matter on November 25, 1950, at St. Bonaventure, P. O., New York, under Act of March 3, 1879. All communications, whether of a business or a literary nature, should be addressed to The CORD, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, P. O., New York. Cum permissu superiorum.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

In analyzing the meaning of those words of John *God is love* (I Jn. 4:16), we have traced not only the creative aspect but also the redemptive characteristics of divine love and have indicated how the redemptive cycle is completed only by our personal transformation into Christ. For Christ still lives on in His Mystical members through faith and love. But it is not enough that we are incorporated by baptism or believe the truths He came to teach. As Paul tells us: *We are to practice the truth in love and so grow in all things in him who is the head, Christ* (Eph. 4: 15). The grace-life must grow until we attain to *perfect manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ* (ibid. 13). Now the virtues necessary to bring about this complete transformation into Christ were outlined by Our Lord in the beatitudes, for the "kingdom" to which they refer is nothing else than what Paul calls the Mystical Body. The basic requirement, the fundamental condition, the rock-bottom virtue we need to have is described by Christ in the first beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Mt. 5:3).

I.

"Poverty of spirit" as Christ uses the term apparently refers only indirectly at most to detachment from worldly goods. Even that ardent lover of poverty, our Holy Father Saint Francis, hesitated to interpret the beatitude in this narrow sense. In his *Admonitions* he writes: "He who is truly poor in spirit, *hates himself* and loves those who strike him on the cheek" (*Adm.* 14). "Hatred of self" is his description of humility, the humility that leads immediately to the second beatitude of meekness, which prompts a man to love those "who strike him on the cheek."

Perhaps a better translation would be "poor-spirited" as contrasted with proud-spirited, or even "spiritually poor," though the term implies rather a recognition of one's own spiritual inadequacy or weakness, regardless of what virtues one may possess. Christ is contrasting the attitude He expects of His followers with that char-

acteristic of the Pharisees who regarded themselves as spiritually rich, self-sufficient and justified by their own good works.

The Pharisees, we know, were a kind of politico-religious sect which had had a very promising beginning as a reaction against the dangerous and worldly-minded Sadducees. The latter were the clique of Jewish aristocrats which comprised the wealthy and cultured class, including many of the Levites and even the highpriest. They hobnobbed with the Greeks, catered to the Romans, and were tolerant towards foreigners. They sought to break down as far as possible the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and to this end introduced Greek customs and manners. But in admiring pagan culture, they came to admire pagan beliefs. Their faith in the divine mission of the Jews weakened. They questioned the Scriptures, rejecting all but the first five books of Moses. Angels and devils were but Jewish fairy tales. God had created the world, it is true, but He was too busy to bother much about what men did in it. There was no divine providence. Man must look out for himself. Neither, according to them, was there any future life, as we know from the famous case they proposed to Christ about the woman who married the seven brothers (Mt. 22:23-24). And because they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, they persuaded men to make the most of it. The Messiah for them was simply a great social leader, a humanitarian who would bring the Hebrews earthly prosperity.

The more religious, eternity-conscious Jews banded into an opposition party. They led an austere life, praying much, fasting twice a week, and donating ten-percent of their income to the temple treasury or other religious works. And in contrast to the internationally minded Sadducees, they stirred up an intense love for national customs and traditions. To protect the revealed law, they added a number of further rules and regulations. But these self-imposed "kosher-laws" or *traditions of the ancients*, as Mark calls them, became so numerous and intricate that they became impossible to observe in practice. It was not long before their scribes or lawyers were devising all kinds of legal loopholes, so that by their casuistry they found ways of getting around the divine law itself. As Christ told them to their face, *you make void the commandment of God by your tradition, which you have handed down*

(Mk. 7:13). A great number of the Pharisees, in Christ's day, had become hypocrites. Their piety was only an external shell of legalism. Still, in their self-conceit, they considered themselves spiritually rich, thanking God they were *not like the rest of men, robbers, dishonest, adulterers* (Lk. 18:11). When John the Baptist preached penance, they turned people away from him. It was enough to be a traditionalist, a "son of Abraham." They needed no baptism of penance, or a Christ who came to save sinners. Small wonder John said to them: "*Brood of vipers! who has shown you how to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits befitting repentance, and do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham*" (Lk. 3:7-8).

Yet we know that nothing shuts the floodgates of divine mercy so quickly and effectively as pride, for *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (1 Pet., 5:5). Or as our Blessed Lady, whose humility was proportionate to her other virtues, put it: God regards the *lowliness of his handmaid*. He has *scattered the proud, put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly* (Lk. 1: 48,51-52). It was not the Pharisee with his good works who *went back to his home justified*, but the publican who *would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying "O God, be merciful to me the sinner!"* (Lk. 18:13)

That is why Christ places humility as the indispensable condition for transformation into Himself. It is only the *poor in spirit* that shall possess *the kingdom of heaven*. Where this first condition is lacking, nothing else we may have really matters.

II.

Why is humility so important? Why does God resist the proud but give His grace to the humble? The answer is found in those words of John, *God is love*. For love, as we have said so often, is not so much a seeking to get as a seeking to give. And a condition for God's giving is a need in ourselves. Pride or a sense of self-sufficiency is simply another way of telling God we have no need of Him but are doing very nicely on our own.

Beginners in the spiritual life often make the mistake of believing God loves them only for what they are (which is not very

much) instead of also for what He can make of them (which is a great deal). The more pitiable our condition, the more the sight of our misery moves the divine mercy. God taught Saint Paul this precious truth of the spiritual life when He declared: *Strength is made perfect in weakness* (II Cor. 12:9). And it was in this sense that Blessed Claude La Colombiere, the spiritual director of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, could write to a dying nun troubled by the thought of past sins: "If I were as near to death as you seem to be, it would be precisely the number and gravity of my sins that would serve to quicken my trust. So far from being cast down by the realization of one's failures, to be strong in one's boundless idea of the Creator's goodness—that is a trustfulness that is truly worthy of God. It seems to me that the confidence inspired by innocence and purity of life does not give a very great glory to God, for is the salvation of a holy soul, who has never offended Him, all that His mercy is able to accomplish? Surely the trust that gives the Lord must honor is that of an errant sinner who is so convinced of God's limitless mercy that all his sins seem but a speck in comparison to that mercy" (*Lettres spirituelles*, v.I, Lyons, 1727, pp 39-40.)

Not only is God's power manifested in the weak, but it is also the poor in spirit that He chooses to be the special object of His love. When the saintly Sister Josefa Menendez, sometimes called the second apostle of the Sacred Heart, asked Christ why He had ever picked her from so many others for such sublime revelations of His love, He told her bluntly: "If I had been able to find anywhere a creature more miserable than you, I would assuredly have chosen her, in order to manifest the longings of My Heart through her; but not finding one, I chose you. You know, too, what happens when an insignificant little flower devoid of charm or fragrance springs up on a highroad full of traffic. It quickly gets trampled underfoot by the passers-by, who pay not the slightest attention to it, nor so much as notice its existence. And think, Josefa, what would have become of you if I had left you, frail and miserable as you are, to the cold of winter, the heat of summer, to the sport of wind and rain; assuredly you would have died. But because I wanted you to live, I transplanted you into the garden of My Sacred Heart, tending you with My own hands, that you may grow

up under the beams of the Sun with its vivifying and restoring power, whose strength is tempered in your regard, that no injury may come to you. Ah! Josefa, leave yourself, such as you are, to My care, and let the sight of your nothingness never lessen your trust, but only confirm you in humility." (*Way of Divine Love*, Westminster, Md, 1950, pp. 370-1). It was almost the same reply Christ gave to that other apostle of the Sacred Heart devotion, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque: "If I had been able to find a creature more miserable than you, I should have chosen her," He declared. "Do you not know that I make use of the weak to confound the strong, and that I am wont to show forth my power most strikingly in my little ones and those who are poor in spirit, that they may attribute nothing to themselves?" (*Vie et oeuvres*, Paris, 1915, v.I, p. 137). No wonder then that to be loved by God is both an exhilarating, but also a humbling, experience. For God paradoxically loves us apparently less for what we are than for what we may yet become. It is the lost sheep that provokes the compassion of the Divine Shepherd. Small wonder then that Paul refused to become complacent or take comfort in the great graces or revelations accorded him, but rejoiced rather in his weakness. *Gladly therefore I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me* (II Cor. 12:9).

This recognition of our spiritual poverty is not a sometime virtue, but is one that must accompany us at every stage of spiritual development and growth. As Saint Augustine tells us, humility was a virtue unknown to the pagan philosophers and entered the world with Christ (*Enar. in ps. 31, n 18*), and in communicating His life to the members of His Mystical Body, He renders them humble (*In Joan, evang. XXVI, 16*). Consequently, the more one grows in virtue, the more he *puts on Christ*, the more humble he should become. "There is indeed no higher road than that of love," he admits, "but none but the humble walk therein" (*Enar. in ps. 141, n. 7*). Of all the ways that lead to God, he tells us, "humility is the first, and the second, and the third, and no matter how many more times you ask, What is the next? I shall always answer, 'humility'" (*Ep. 118, n. 22*).

When a religious then feels smug or self-satisfied, he or she walks on dangerous ground. Perhaps God regards such as He did

the bishop of the church at Laodicea: *I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth, because thou sayest, "I am rich and have grown wealthy and have need of nothing," and dost not know that thou art the wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked one"* (Apoc. 3, 16-17).

The genuine saints, on the contrary, realize their own basic inadequacy and their sense of sinfulness grows apace with their sanctity. Saint Bonaventure explains the phenomenon thus. The closer we come to the source of light, the more each flaw and imperfection stands out. A window just washed may seem to be perfectly clean until the sunlight strikes it, then suddenly all the streaks and the lint on the glass become visible.

This divine discontent of the saints with their imperfections keeps them both humble and ever striving for greater perfection. There is indeed a profound truth in those words Goethe ascribes to the deity as the angels carry the soul of Faust to heaven:

*Wer immer strebend sich bemueht
Den koennen wir erloesen.*

(Faust II, act 5)

III.

How then is this precious virtue of humility to be fostered? Sometimes God may give special graces to His saints to keep their feet on the ground, as it were. Saint Paul tells us: *Lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me* (II Cor. 12: 7). But the ordinary means God gives every religious is the study of character weakness as revealed by daily faults and imperfections. The particular and general examen should give one a profound insight into the unflattering side of one's self. Far more important, however, than making a complete inventory of the sins we may have committed or the good resolutions we have failed to carry out, is the discovery of the underlying motivation for our actions. It was in this way that the saints found their fundamental frailties, their deep-seated defects of character, their tremendous capacities for sin.

We know Saint Teresa of Avila's famous description of humility as "walking in the truth" (*Life*, c. 12). But the most important aspect of this acknowledgment of the truth is not so much the

attribution to God of any good we may possess, but the recognition of our own weakness. That is why Saint Bernard defines humility as "a virtue whereby man, through a true knowledge of himself, becomes despicable in his own eyes" (*De gradibus humilitatis*, I, n. 2). We recall how Francis regarded himself. "It seems to me that I am a greater sinner than anyone else in the world," he told Brother Pacificus. And when the latter remonstrated that this was not in accord with the truth and that Francis could hardly say this with a good conscience, the saint explained: "If Christ had shown such great mercy to a criminal, however wicked he might be, he would be much more perfect than I" (*Leg. major*, c.6). And when Brother Masseo asked Francis why all the world ran after him and desired to see him, Francis replied: "The eyes of the most high God, which behold in all places both the evil and the good, could not find among sinners anyone more useless, incompetent or sinful than I. And so He has chosen me, to put to shame what is noble and great and powerful and fair and wise in the world, that all may know that all virtue and goodness are of Him and not of the creature, and that none should glory in His presence, but that he who glories should glory in the Lord, to whom be all honor and all glory forever" (*Actus b. Francisci*, c. 10).

If, like Brother Pacificus, we wonder how a saint of Francis' caliber could consider himself in all sincerity, the greatest of sinners, we find a key to the solution in the fact that humility, like love, has its own blindness. But love's "blindness," as we indicated in our first conference, is in reality a keener and more penetrating vision. If charity sees potential virtues as actual, humility seemingly does the same with vices or sin. It is not that the actual commissions of a saint are great or serious sins, but that the saint sees in what are objectively slight faults or even imperfections those character traits that might well lead to the greatest of sins did not God in His mercy not spare him the temptation. The late Abbot Marmion, who has given us so many magnificent insights into the spiritual life, after listening to the life of Luther read in the refectory, remarked to a companion: "I find every one of his character faults in myself." Perhaps this explains the somewhat subtle difference between the Pharisee (Lk. 18:11) and Philip Neri. The latter, seeing a criminal led to execution, exclaimed: "There but

for the grace of God goes Philip!" Apparently both attributed to God the good they had received. Both gave thanks for not committing the crimes that others had. Yet how different their sentiments! Philip found himself weak; the Pharisee felt himself strong. The Jew prided himself upon the positive perfection he thought he possessed, the sins he had avoided, the vices he had not contracted. The saint, on the other hand, saw the sins of others as something he might well commit if exposed to the same or even lesser temptation. And here lies the real secret of the humility of the saints. While they may condemn the sin, they never make the mistake of putting themselves above the sinner, for they fear they might have done far worse if God's grace had not prevented it. It is no consolation to tell a soldier who spent the duration of the war behind an office desk that he did not desert under fire. Perhaps that is why no true saint is ever really flattered when others praise his virtue. He is too conscious of the latent tendencies dormant in his nature that only too easily could betray him into sin. As Celano remarks, when the crowds sought to canonize Francis while yet on earth, he would remind them grimly: "I may yet have sons and daughters by the flesh. Do not praise me as though I were safe. Indeed no one ought to be praised whose end is still uncertain" (*Legenda secunda*, n. 133). The wise religious then does not close his eyes to what real talents or virtues or accomplishments God may have given him, but he regards them as a coat of paint that covers many a puttied crack, disfiguring mark, or dirty smudge.

IV

Where true poverty of spirit is present it will manifest itself by its spiritual fruits which Christ expressed in the next four beatitudes. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* Francis' humility made him and his faithful followers the meekest of men. As Celano puts it: "They were in truth Friars Minor, submitting themselves to all men, always seeking the lowest place and taking work where they might be likely to receive unjust treatment." (*Leg. prima*, n. 38). And Francis sternly forbade his friars to seek to right their wrongs by an appeal to the Roman Curia (*Testament*), "preferring," as Brother Jordan tells us, "to overcome all difficulties by humility rather than by decrees of the court" (*Chronica Fr.*

Jordani de Jano, n. 13). If we recognize our utter unworthiness of God's favor, we shall meekly accept the injustices others may do us or the trials and burdens we must bear as small price for possession of the promised land. As we know from Psalm 36, from which this beatitude is taken, God's grace will eventually triumph over sin and its effects—even in our own soul. In this present life, however, we shall always taste something of Paul's anguish: *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7:24).

As Leon Bloy said in the closing line of *The Woman Who Was Poor*, "There is only one great sorrow; not to be a saint." The poor in spirit are blessed with that sorrow. *Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Blessed indeed! For, as the very word "comforted" (to be strengthened with) suggests, God Himself will be "with them" as their "strength" and "consolation."

This discontent with what we are, this disgust with our own lukewarmness, our half-hearted efforts towards improvement, this sense of sin which Paul describes so graphically in the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, should awaken in our soul a fierce *hunger and thirst after justice* or spiritual perfection, for only to those blessed with such a hunger has Christ promised satiety.

And finally, what is so very important, if life with our fellow-men is to be humanly possible, we shall be gentle and understanding of the faults and defects of others. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* For only then dare we pray sincerely: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others.*

Far from depressing the soul, then, knowledge of its spiritual poverty should goad it to greater efforts. For no matter what we may seem to have accomplished, like Francis at the close of his life, we shall be prompted to exclaim: "Let us begin to do good, for until now we have done nothing." Religious are sometimes depressed by the recurrence of the same faults week after week despite their best efforts, not realizing that this is God's way of teaching them humility and self-knowledge. It should stimulate them to make up to God for past infidelity by being generous in other ways.

As we have indicated elsewhere, for those who have learned the place of poverty of spirit in the grand plan of transforming

love, "the parable of the Prodigal will be more than a graphic bit of fiction to illustrate divine mercy. It will be the story of their own life. Paradoxically, it is the sense of sin, real or potential, rather than the consciousness of virtue that draws saintly souls to God. Like the misery of the Prodigal Son, their spiritual poverty will turn their thoughts towards their everlasting home. Like Paul, wearied with the struggle with self, they will long to be dissolved and to be with Christ. But the mere unburdening of one's misery before God in this fashion itself produces a wonderful peace. Like the wayward son, religious will find that their Father is not content to wait for them at the door of heaven. He comes down the road, as it were to meet them. In an embrace that is at once a confession of guilt and a kiss of love, they will find the strength and courage to walk arm in arm with God to the threshold of their Father's house" (*Book of Life*, p.70).

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M. ✓

CRY OF FAITH

"That cry of faith
forced the gates of Heaven"

St. Therese of Lisieux

Turn away and laugh
You who turn away and laugh;
I turn away and weep
Rather than behold you
On the day of wrath
Who turn away and laugh
At the cry of faith
That forced the gates of Heaven.
The cry of faith that forced the gates of Heaven!

—Robert Lax

MIRROR OF ST. FRANCIS

That St. Francis of Assisi was the mirror of Christ is his children's glory. That in St. Francis Solano there has been noted a happy reflection of our holy father should cause us to rub our eyes for a better look at this forgotten saint. For whether it was his apostolic zeal, his solicitude and compassion for those ignorant of the Gospel Truth, or his patience practised to perfection in his varied and protracted illnesses, we can't help but be alive to the truth that the Apostle of the Americas did follow with complete fidelity in the sandaled imprints of our beloved father.

As Franciscans our way of life demands that we meditate, and fruitfully so, on the spiritually fertile incidents in the comparatively short life of our holy father. At one time it may be the incomparable love that poured from a heart that never stopped loving once the Passion of Christ was seen in its proper light. Again it might be the joy and the holy expectancy that surrounded the recreated scene of the first Christmas eve. But undoubtedly the meditation on which we all linger, and not without profit, is that which encompasses the last days and the death scene itself of our holy father. In his last and finest hour his final exhortations, his last entreaties, his good-bye blessings either spiritually affect us here or subject us to the accusation of being immune to any influence of our beloved founder. So also to recall the life and especially the sequence of events that occurred during the waning moments in the life of our Spanish brother, and to remain unmoved, one must of necessity have lodged within a sighless breast a heart chiseled from stone. The saying, "as a man lives so he dies," finds justification in the life of St. Francis Solano. Because, like Francis of Assisi, he lived for God, he died in the Lord. Because, as in the case of the Poverello, he lived and died glorifying God, it would not be an ill waste of time and effort to tap this mine of spiritual wealth and so even in our poverty live sumptuously off such an exemplary income.

At the initial pole in the life of Francis of Solano we know that intercession was made to Francis of Assisi imploring him to help make this future Franciscan saint a healthy child. At the opposite pole we are presented with a vivid reflection of the Poverello. The imitation is complete and it remains but for death with its sudden and sobering finality to impose its stamp of approval and to introduce this accomplished saint as a full grown citizen of Heaven. Spanning these two

poles, which like a Franciscan mantle enveloped this gifted soul, is a dedicated life that was Franciscan through and through. From the moment he pronounced his vows he gave signs of becoming a second edition, a reprint, of the original Francis.

Like Francis of Assisi, the Apostle of the Americas was inflamed with the desire to air the Gospels in fields afar. The illiterate call of the heathen was for this Spanish friar the sweet whisperings of the Holy Spirit when transliterated into the language of love. It was so like Francis of old to assemble the Indians before a makeshift crib and there sing of the good God or play his violin by gently drawing his bow in order to draw yet more gently souls closer to Christ. If Francis of Assisi had the power of attraction that filled his Order to overflowing, Francis Solano being of the same mold, also experienced such returns that could only have been the fruit of personal sanctity. In preaching to the Indians on one Holy Thursday, and incidentally they were literally on the warpath, his sermon was so forceful that "not only did he bring about peace but also converted nine thousand to the faith of Christ." Such remarkable results could come only from one who, as the Bull of Canonization qualifies, "was aflame with a love of God and neighbor." Here was the genuine product trade-marked with a gentility and amiability that drew others within the range of his holy demeanor. "He easily obtained from others what the fear and threats of punishments could not accomplish."

St. Francis Solano must be regarded as one of those rare individuals who leaves his mark in time merely by trying to be one of a common group. When appointed to an office it was with somewhat of a distaste that he received the news. And this not because he shunned obligation nor duty but rather because of a muted preference to serve God as an ordinary tool. In this regard he again reminds us of our holy father who, though our beloved founder, desired to have superiors over him and to whom he would tender the most faithful obeisance even if he were a novice.

Upon being asked how she bided her time on Sundays, the Little Flower of Jesus replied, "I think about God, of the shortness of life and of eternity." On another occasion she bemoaned the current reality that "the world knows how to combine its pleasures with the service of God. How little it thinks of death." No doubt the Patron of a Happy Death was besieged with many petitions from his big little saint. If St. Joseph were to answer our prayers for the same request our last days must surely approximate those of St. Francis Solano. Per-

haps we would not conduct ourselves externally in the same fashion but nevertheless the spirit would be there.

Three days before his death, in the temper of the Poverello who insisted on being laid on the ground to die, Francis Solano, with eyes lifted toward Heaven, prayed, "Whence is this, my Lord Jesus, that you were crucified and I am consoled with the comfort of your servants, you were naked and I am covered, you were struck with stones and crowned with thorns and I am burdened with gifts and comforted with every benefit"? In this prayer the very roots of humility are exposed in the dying saint.

Two days before his death, suffering on a bed of pain which had already become a sacrificial altar, Francis could still speak to God with a humble heart flowing over with fraternal charity, "O God may You be glorified in my soul; of such is your worthiness about me that when I was deserving of being cast as unclean dung into a deserted wasteland and being left by all, I now see myself surrounded by these angels, the religious, and eased by their ministries. I rejoice, Lord, that you are God. O how sweet you are!" How Franciscan! Where can we find a greater cause of our joy than in the simple truth that God is!

Death slowly and hesitantly drew the curtain on this beautiful life. It was a life of penance, a life of joy, a life of fidelity, a Franciscan life. After apologizing to his "lazy body", after the manner of the Poverello, Francis Solano died, "with his hands composed in the form of a cross. . . reciting pious aspirations." As you live so shall you die.

Although Francis Solano has been called the Patron of Peru, the Apostle of the West Indies, the Miracle Worker of the New World, he himself would rather have been called simply a Franciscan who died as he lived. *Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur!*

Fr. Regis F. Marshall, O.F.M. J.

OUR LADY OF THE ATONEMENT

Our Lady is the masterpiece of God's creative and omnipotent love. She is the fulfillment of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament and the embodiment and expression of the sacred teachings of the New Dispensation. Mary is the Lily of Israel, the Rose of Sharon, the Ark of the Covenant; she is the Morning Star, the Cause of Our Joy, and the Gate of Heaven as we salute her in the Litany of Loreto. The words of the Apostle find their application to the Queen of Heaven in this way: "All that rings true, all that commands reverence, and makes for right; all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is gracious. . ."

Our Seraphic Father had a burning love for Our Lady. Indeed Celano tells us that it was so great that it could not be described. "At her feet he poured out a stream of fervent prayer and offered her transports of love so intense and so perfect that they went beyond all human language. His hours of sleep were few; for the most part he spent the night in prayer, praising God and His glorious Virgin Mother." Surely some of his noble spirit is expressed in the words of the Canticle: "Hail, Holy Lady, most holy Queen! Mary, Mother of God, yet a Virgin forever! Hail, thou His palace! Hail, thou His tabernacle! Hail, thou His home! Hail, thou His vesture! Hail, thou His Mother!"

It was surely no accident that the cradle of the Franciscan Order is the little chapel on the Umbrian plains, Our Lady of the Angels. Nor is it difficult to believe that Our Lady often appeared there to her servant and revealed the secrets of her Immaculate Heart. For Saint Francis loved Mary because she had made the Lord of glory our Brother.

In the course of the centuries this love for Mary burned in the hearts of the Poverello's sons. The very mention of her name recalls a whole treasury of Marian devotion: Saint Bonaventure, Saint Bernardine of Siena, Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, John Duns Scotus, Maximilian Kolbe. And these are only the most famous, for the love of Our Lady is identified with every follower of Saint Francis from the first days of Rivo Torto down to the present age.

One illustrious apostle of Our Lady in our own century is the

famous convert to the faith, Father Paul James Francis, S.A. He has been cited as a lover of the poor, as an apostle of Christian Unity, as a noted follower of Saint Francis, and the like. And so he was. But he was prominent for his love for Our Lady, and especially under the title that he himself originated: Our Lady of the Atonement.

This distinctive title had a most unusual origin insofar as it began outside the Catholic Church. It was started at Graymoor in 1901 (or 1900) when Father Paul and Mother Lurana Mary Francis, S.A. (foundress of the Atonement Sisters, also at Graymoor) were members of the Anglican communion. It is not difficult to believe that it was precisely their love for Our Lady that led them into the unity of the One Fold several years after they began their projects in Mary's honor.

In 1901 Father Paul and Mother Lurana composed an "Office of Our Lady of the Atonement" for use in their communities. It is not used in the present composition approved by the Church, but it indicates, even at that early date, their appreciation of Mary in the spiritual life of men. In October 1901 they inaugurated a little magazine, about the size of a ten-cent pamphlet, bearing the title, *Rose Leaves from Our Lady's Garden*. It was intended to be the publication for their organization, The Rosary League of Our Lady of the Atonement, which began at the same time.

In the initial issue of this little work, Father Paul wrote the first words about Our Lady of the Atonement. He had come to Graymoor to make the foundation of his Society in 1899 and Mother Lurana had come the previous December 15, 1898. This publication, *Rose Leaves*, was their first venture into the journalistic field and it is significant that it was devoted to Our Lady and to the promotion of devotion to the Rosary.

"The Blessed Virgin is known among Catholics by many names and is invoked under many different titles," Father Paul began. "Among these are the following: Our Lady of Loreto, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Victory, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Sorrows, and Our Lady of Mercy. In her wonderful condescension and love the Mother of God has been pleased to reveal herself to the Children of the Atonement under a new name, . . . thus giving remarkable evidence that the honor, love,

and prayers addressed to her as Our Lady of the Atonement she is graciously pleased to accept."

Father Paul spoke of both aspects contained in the concept of Our Lady of the Atonement: her role in the mystery of the Cross and her part in bringing men to and preserving them in the unity of the Church. "We have every reason to believe that the Blessed Virgin specially loves this title—that links her name with that of Jesus in the glorious work of the Atonement wrought upon the Cross. It must bring to her remembrance that blessed Atonement Day when she stood by the Cross of Jesus and heard Him say to her, *Woman, behold thy Son*, and to the disciple whom He loved, *Behold thy Mother*. Then too, Atonement speaks of reconciliation, pardon, peace, of the fulfillment of the prayer first breathed by her Divine Son, so often repeated by herself, that all Christian believers might be One.

"Can we invoke the Blessed Virgin with a title more apt to touch her maternal heart than the one which associates her with Calvary's sacrifice and proclaims her the compassionate Mother of us poor sinners, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus? Hail Mary of the Atonement, my Lord's Mother and mine, pray for me and all who thus invoke thee now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

When Father Paul began *The Lamp* in February 1903, he often used articles dealing with Catholic devotion to the Mother of God, either those he had written or others reprinted from Catholic magazines. Thus his entrance into the Catholic Church on October 30, 1909 was an inevitable step, surely promoted by his love for Our Lady.

In the benign providence of God this Atonement title was permitted to be used in the Catholic Church and in 1919 it was recognized by authorities in Rome. Permission was also granted for a feast of Our Lady of the Atonement, then celebrated on the Saturday of Atonement Week (the week beginning with the seventh Sunday). In 1948 the present Mass and Office of Our Lady of the Atonement were approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome for use among the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement. The feast of Our Lady under this title has been permanently affixed to July 9.

As Our Lady of the Atonement Mary wears a mantle of red in honor of the Most Precious Blood of Which she is the Immaculate Source and by Which she was redeemed in a unique way. The mantle

is sometimes lined with white and the inner tunic is always blue. In the throne of her arms Our Lady holds the Christ Child, who holds a cross—the symbol of the Atonement—in His right hand. In some instances Our Lady wears a crown; at other times she has a diadem of twelve stars. At any rate it seems that the most essential details are the red mantle of Our Lady and the Cross in the Child's hand.

To someone who asked "Why the red mantle for Our Lady?" Father Paul explained: "The connection of the red mantle with the Atonement is very obvious. It was during the shedding of the Most Precious Blood of her Divine Son, the very Blood He had derived from her own Immaculate Heart, that the redemption of the world was wrought and an Atonement made for the sins of the world by the Lamb of God. Our Lady of the Atonement stood by the Cross when the Atoning Sacrifice was enacted and it is most fitting that she should wear a red mantle accepting our homage and devotion under the title of the Atonement."

Father Paul was indefatigable in his promotion of devotion to Our Lady of the Atonement. He always celebrated the feast with special joy and solemnity, usually with a Mass at an outdoor Shrine of Our Lady on the Sisters' grounds, and at which he usually gave a sermon. Fortunately there are about thirty of his written or spoken pieces on Our Lady of the Atonement which form the basis of this title and devotion.

Again and again Father Paul stressed the twofold aspect of her Atonement Motherhood: her participation in the sacrifice of the Cross by which she became the Co-Redemptrix of the world, and her influence in winning souls to the unity of the Church.

Father Paul paid particular attention to Mary's role in the mystery of the Atonement. "When she saw her Son rejected," he wrote, "cruelly scourged, mocked, and spit upon, and bearing His heavy cross to Calvary and saw Him nailed to the tree, while she herself stood in anguish, her heavy heart was beating in union with His as the crucified redeemer of the world."

But in the mystery of the World's salvation, Mary was no mere spectator. She did not stand by passively; nor did she grieve only for the suffering and death of her Divine Son. She exercised a unique role; she cooperated with Jesus in the salvation of the world, in a secondary and dependent way, but nonetheless effective towards the

salvation of men. Or as Arnold Bonneval has stated: "Jesus and Mary offered their sacrifice similarly to God; Jesus in the blood of His Body, Mary in the blood of her heart."

Father Paul appreciated this truth too. For "by her cooperation with the divine will and her participation in the chalice of Our Lord's suffering and His agony, she became our glorious Lady of the Atonement." For while Christ was the one mediator restoring all men to friendship with God, Mary acted in an auxiliary role (in a supporting cast, if we might use the term) in the drama of the world's redemption. She "was the mediatrix of the human family when she stood at the Cross as Our Lord was lifted up that He might draw all men to Himself." Elsewhere Father Paul declared that "the slain victim taken down from the Cross is laid in the arms of His Mother all covered with His own Blood, and that Blood stains the garments of the Blessed Virgin. How impossible to dissociate either Our Lord or Our Lady from the Precious Blood."

Mary's first function as spiritual mother of men was to win for them with Christ the grace of regeneration. The climax of the Saviour's work was His Atonement—and through it to bring men to at-one-ment with God. According to God's Will only the suffering and death of Christ could reconcile sinful man to a just and merciful God. And so the climax of Our Lady's life took place on Calvary when she became fully the Mother of the redeemed and shared in the work of reconciling man with God.

By an eternal decree a woman was to share in this plan of salvation and sanctification: the Mother of the Son of God. If sharing, then too she must suffer and die. Thus Mary suffered and almost died as she stood at the Cross of her Son. It is her flesh and blood that is bruised, beaten, scourged, and crucified. Mary suffers not just as a heroic Mother, but as the Mother of God. It is true that Our Lady longed to suffer that the world might be saved, but this does not lessen the intense anguish of her Immaculate Heart.

Mary is the *socia Christi*, the companion, the helpmate of Christ. Her office, in a secondary and auxiliary way, was to suffer for the sins of the world and win the kingdom of heaven for men. Saint Bonaventure wrote eloquently of Mary's suffering at Calvary, of her co-atoning with Christ for the salvation of the world. "There is no pain like her pain except that of her Son, which her pain closely re-

sembles in kind. For she was martyred by a marvelous and incredible co-suffering, a suffering which our speech cannot put into words. For she deflected upon herself all those pains, insults, and wounds, experiencing them in her own person, feeling what Christ felt. In her spirit she stood there, a martyr with Him the martyr, wounded with Him Who was wounded, crucified with Him who was crucified, pierced with the sword as He was pierced." Elsewhere he cited the parallel of Mary and Eve and said that just as Adam and Eve were the "destroyers of the human race," so Jesus and Mary "were its restorers."

Father Paul would assuredly concur with the present-day teaching of Our Lady as Co-Redemptrix of the human race. But he pushed the concept further to the role of Mary as Mother of Unity, who longs for the salvation of all men and who prays and intercedes for their salvation unto the end of the world. For just as the mystery of the Atonement continues to be effective in the lives of men, so Mary's function to assist in the salvation of men is operative until the end of the world.

Father Paul said that Our Lady of the Atonement means Our Lady of the At-one-ment, or Our Lady of Unity. When addressing Mary as Our Lady of the Atonement he said that we should "think of her as "Our Lady of Unity," and "consecrate ourselves afresh at her altar to contribute what lies within our power of prayer, sacrifice, and charitable endeavor to bring our separated brethren into the unity of the One Fold under the One Shepherd."

As founder of the Chair of Unity Octave (January 18-25) he stressed Mary's power in winning back to the fold those separated by schism and heresy. "Through her all-prevailing intercession," he declared, "the Holy Spirit will bring about such a world-wide movement of dissident Christians to the center of Catholic Unity that the return of the wandering sheep to communion with the Apostolic See will far transcend in magnitude and importance the lapse of the Greeks from Unity in the ninth century and the Protestant defection in the sixteenth century combined. We dare to make this prophecy not because we have the vision of the Seer but because we believe that God the Father Almighty will answer the prayer of His Son, Jesus Christ, and that Our Lady of the Atone-

ment will have a leading part to play in this glorious accomplishment."

Again and again in his writings and sermons he appealed to the faithful to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin for the cause of Unity. After explaining the use of the word *Adunatio* (literally "at-one-ment" as the Latin form of the title, Our Lady of the Atonement, which is *Domina nostra Adunationis*) he went on to conclude his sermon in this fashion: "Let us look up to her all radiant on her throne, our beautiful Mother of the Atonement, apparelled in the crimson robe of the Precious Blood, interceding at this moment for the great At-one-ment; and may we never cease to unite our prayers with hers that the scales may fall away from the eyes of our separated brethren and that they may understand that the Great Shepherd whom Our Lord appointed as His Vice-regent on earth is *their* Father and *their* Shepherd."

Such is a brief exposition of Father Paul's teaching on Our Lady of the Atonement. It might be called a single concept of salvation through Mary—with a dual aspect: her part in Calvary's sacrifice and her part in the extension of Calvary through the centuries and through the world by which men are brought to that unity of faith, worship, and government in the One Church of her Son. The idea is surely not new, for the fathers of the Church spoke of both aspects of Mary's love and intercession. Saint Augustine referred to Our Lady as *Mater unitatis*, Mother of Unity, and said that all men are reborn in the Church because of Our Lady's love. Saint Cyril of Alexandria closed his sermon at the Council of Ephesus with the famous words: "Hail Mary, Mother of God. . .by whom every creature is brought to the knowledge of the truth; by whom holy baptism and the oil of gladness reach the faithful, by whom churches are established all over the world, by whom nations are brought to repentance—what more shall I say—by whom the only begotten Son of God enlightened those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. . ."

The Mass and Office for the feast of Our Lady of the Atonement, approved in 1948 for use by the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, combines the dual note of Calvary and unity. Thus the lessons for the second nocturn are taken from the famous words of Saint Bernard about Mary's spiritual martyrdom (same as Our Lady

of Sorrows, September 15), while those of the third nocturn are from Saint Augustine's commentary on the seventeenth chapter of Saint John containing Our Lord's prayer for unity, while the lesson of the Mass is taken from the book of Judith. These words were first uttered by the grateful inhabitants of Bethulia after Judith had slain their enemy, Holofernes. But this valiant woman was only the type of another daughter of Israel whom God used for the salvation and sanctification of the entire human race and to whom they pray in their needs. The Gospel for the feast day corresponds with that portion used for the third nocturn from the seventeenth chapter of the Beloved Disciple.

In addition to the liturgical texts of the feast, other prayers are approved for the members of the Society of the Atonement. There is the Threefold Salutation, written about fifty-five years ago by the Graymoor founders and redolent with the spirit of Franciscan simplicity; the Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Atonement composed in 1948; the litany of Our Lady of the Atonement, approved in 1925; and a little prayer used by members of the Unity League established at Graymoor: "Our Lady of the Atonement, intercede for us, that the prayer of your Divine Son may be fulfilled: *That all may be one.*" These prayers have indulgences granted by the Holy See to members of the Society of the Atonement and their associates.

At the present time there are sixteen chapels, churches or religious institutions that bear the name of Our Lady of the Atonement, the most impressive being in Baguio, Philippine Islands, built by funds which Father Paul collected in 1920. But the statue or painting of our Atonement Mother can be found in other parts of the world too—Baghdad, Japan, Canada, Rome, Assisi, as well as in the United States. Devotion to Mary under this lovely title is spreading slowly and gradually, but consistently from year to year. A special novena is held annually from June 30 to July 9 by the Atonement Friars and Sisters and monthly novenas are held, beginning on the first Saturday of each month.

And so it is that one of the youngest members of the Franciscan family has its special feast for the all-holy Mother of God. How remarkable are the ways of God's providence that this feast and devotion began less than sixty years ago, even outside the Catholic

Church. But through His love and His guidance of a few chosen souls, this is now a recognized feast of Our Lady, emphasizing two points of doctrine so much in prominence at the present day, Mary as Co-Redemptrix and Mary's function in the Church. May this name and devotion contribute, even in a small way, to the deeper understanding of Mary's prerogatives and to a greater exaltation of her glorious privileges so that in loving Mary, men may realize the truth of the statement from Saint Pius X: "There is no surer or easier way of uniting men with Christ than Mary."

Fr. Titus Cranney, S.A.

RETURN OF LOVE

God streams His love unto us,
Pierces through us,

And we give back a little.

The rest is hid in jugs
And gives a glow.

The rest is hid in
Shadow of the tomb,
Lies hid behind
The shadow of a rock.

Roll back the rock,
Which is Christ's sepulchre,
And let our Lord
Return unto His Lord.

Roll back the rock,
Unwind the cerements,
And let the Light
Go back into the Light!

—Robert Lax

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY (IV)

Spiritual Joy

Charity, when adorned with the characteristics we have previously mentioned, of its very nature drives away sadness, enlarges the heart, and begets joy and happiness. This joy, however, is not the ludicrous effervescence that proceeds from vanity, nor is it the empty hilarity that characterizes an idle and uncultivated mind. On the contrary, it is a spiritual joy that proceeds from true fervor and manifests itself in the constant disposition to carry out with alacrity whatever good presents itself to be done.

The cause of this spiritual joy is divine love. Francis and his first followers were full of joy because they were delighted by the infinite perfection of God and by His supreme goodness. They rejoiced because they had become sons of God and brothers of Jesus Christ through the divine mercy. They took delight in the many benefits they received from God and felt happily secure in the paternal care that divine Providence bestowed upon them. They exulted with unrestrained pleasure whenever they found their Beloved in His visible creation, and their delight overflowed into sensible affections. There is no doubt that their intense joy arose from God and was ordained toward God, and had nothing in it either of worldly frivolity or pious sentimentality.

Our Seraphic Father was extremely solicitous that spiritual joy should be preserved and fostered in himself and others. "And in this Francis had the highest and most remarkable zeal, although from the beginning of his conversion to the day of his death he afflicted his body; but he did this only because he was continually desirous to possess and keep both exteriorly and interiorly spiritual joy in himself."¹

Saint Francis vehemently fought against sadness among his followers, but he used to recommend to them spiritual joy and insisted upon it in the strongest terms. "Francis once saw a certain fellow-friar whose face was long and sad. He went up to the friar and in no gentle tone said to him: 'It is not becoming that a servant of God should show himself to men as sad and troubled; rather he should be always cheerful.' . . . Francis had such a great love for the man who was full of spiritual joy that as a general admonition he wrote in his first Rule: 'Let the brethren take heed not to appear sad exteriorly and be gloomy

¹*Legenda Antiqua S. Francisci*, ed. F. M. Delorme, O.F.M. (Paris: 1926), n. 97.

hypocrites, but rather let them show themselves as rejoicing in the Lord, merry and gay, and becomingly pleasant.'"² Francis also said that "when spiritual joy completely fills the heart, the serpent pours out his deadly poison in vain. The demons are unable to do anything against a servant of Christ when they see that he is filled with holy joyfulness. But when the soul is sorrowful, desolate, and full of grief, it may easily fall prey to melancholy or pass over into vain joys. . . . When for some reason or other a servant of God is disturbed—as can easily happen—he must arise immediately and betake himself to prayer, and remain in the presence of his Almighty Father until He returns to him the joy of his salvation. For if he should linger in his sadness, that mournful captivity will reach the point where unless it is cleansed by tears, it will bring about permanent rust in the heart."³

Our Seraphic Father, however, was not only concerned that his friars be joyful themselves, but he also insisted that by their example and preaching they diffuse the treasure of their spiritual joy throughout the world. Completely filled with this Seraphic spirit of joy, Saint Bonaventure admonished the friars that they strive with the utmost zeal to rid themselves "of all coldness of dejection and sadness, in which lies hidden the way of confusion that leads to death."⁴ He recommended, on the contrary, spiritual joyfulness "which makes the mind prompt to tend toward the things that are above."⁵

Other spiritual writers of the Order have also held that sadness does tremendous harm to the spiritual life, and that spiritual happiness is the best and the primary means to overcome temptations, to conquer the various difficulties that arise in the spiritual life, to embrace the annoyances and sorrows of life with a generous mind, to serve God with fervor and alacrity, and to love Him to a greater degree.

From this it is quite evident that a certain sense of optimism, joy, and spiritual light-heartedness pervades the whole of Franciscan spirituality, and has established the moral tone and the general outlook of the Order. The true Franciscan, by vocation, is a preacher of joy to the world.

Charity as the Basic Disposition for Infused Contemplation

According to the teaching of Saint Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and the Franciscan masters generally, the entire spiritual life up to the

²Celano II, n. 128; *Regula I*, c. 7, 34.

³Celano II, n. 125.

⁴S. Bonaventura, *Epist. de 25 memorialibus*, n. 15, VIII, 495a.

⁵S. Bonaventura, *De triplici via*, c. 1, n.9, VIII, 6a.

full outpouring of the mystical life depends on the progressive increase of infused charity.

In recent years there has been some discussion as to whether or not the mystical life in the strict sense—which consists essentially in infused contemplation—is necessary for perfection. It is not our intention to go into the matter here; but we may remark in passing that there are obviously certain dispositions required for mystical contemplation, for God usually gives such extraordinary grace only to those who are of the best dispositions.

The mystics of the Seraphic Order place the main emphasis on charity as the proper preparation for infused contemplation. Thus Saint Anthony writes: "The just and holy man is raised from the earth by the rope of divine love and hangs in mid-air by the sweetness of contemplation."⁶ David of Augsburg tells us that "this union of the spirit with God [*excessus mentis*] is not accomplished except in the greatest fervor of love and in charity unfeigned (II Cor. 6:6) and in the purest affection of the heart, in which the whole soul, as it were, begins to melt and its customary hardness is softened and warmed by the fire of the Holy Spirit."⁷ According to Saint Bonaventure, "there is no path" to the heights of ecstasy "except through the most burning love for the Crucified."⁸

The entire work of perfection is thus seen as reduced to the practice of charity. Moreover, for the Franciscan school, mystical contemplation resides more in the act of charity as elicited by the will than in the act of the intellect. The Seraphic Doctor in many of his writings confirms this in regard to ecstasy or perfect contemplation. Scotus also teaches that contemplation consists especially in an act of love and of will. Passive contemplation arises immediately from the gift of wisdom, for this gift is mainly affective, perfecting the virtue of charity and the will; and according to the Subtle Doctor, this gift of wisdom and the theological virtue are one and the same.

Since Franciscan writers teach that infused contemplation consists more in an act of love than in an act of cognition, they directly oppose Saint Thomas and the followers of his school who teach that infused contemplation is formally effected by an act of the intellect.

⁶*Sermones Dominicales et in Solemnitatibus*, l.c. cit., 551.

⁷*Septem gradus orationis*, ed. J. Heerincks, in *Revue d'Ascetique et de Mystique*, XIV, 1933, 166.

⁸*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, prol., n. 3, V, 295b.

III. THE ACT OF CHARITY

Because the scope of our treatise is limited, we shall reduce our discussion of the act of charity to three sections. First we shall speak of the manner in which God and our neighbor should be loved, then of the power of charity as regards supernatural merit, and finally of the act of charity in so far as it makes up the beatitude of heaven.

The Manner of Loving

According to the express command of Christ, which is recorded many times in Holy Scripture, we must love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, and our whole mind. This much is clear; but just how is this command of Christ to be carried out in practice?

Evidently it is not necessary to love God in so far as He is worthy of love and must be loved in Himself. For God, "since He is infinite Good, must be loved in an infinite manner. But God alone loves Himself in this manner,"⁹ for He alone is capable of so doing.

According to the opinion of Saint Bonaventure, the totality of the heart, soul, and mind, of which Christ speaks in His commandment, can be understood in two ways. The love of God possesses "the entire heart: that is, it excludes all extraneous affections and thus completely and perfectly rules the heart. This occurs when all the movements of the heart are referred to God through love; and this totality means complete dominion. In another way the love of God is said to possess the heart when it excludes all contrary affections, that is, when nothing is loved above God, or loved as much as God. Thus he loves God with his whole heart who loves Him because of Himself and above all else."¹⁰ Totality in the first sense "does not oblige to the point of complete fullness; in fact, it cannot be possessed before attaining to the state of glory, where we shall look upon God face to face and be continually carried up into Him." Nevertheless, "this commandment does express, as we must know, in what direction we are to tend through love, and no one may think himself perfect until he has attained to that perfection [of glory]." Totality in the second sense can be possessed in this life through the infusion of grace, and "we are bound to attain to this form of complete fullness."¹¹

⁹S. Bonaventura, *I. Sent.*, d. 17, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, ad 9, I, 295b.

¹⁰S. Bonaventura, *III Sent.*, d. 27, a.2, q.6, III, 614b.

¹¹*Loc. cit.*

According to the opinion of Saint Bonaventure, we are not required to love God above all things in an intensive manner, that is, with a more vehement and ardent affection than we love ourselves. But we must love God above all things in an appreciative manner, that is, we must prefer God and place Him before ourselves and before every created good, even if this good were to be multiplied to infinity. We are bound, however to love God in an intensive manner more than we love our neighbor. "The movement of love toward God is more intense than the movement of love toward our neighbor."¹²

Scotus and his school teach that God can be loved above all things in two ways: extensively and intensively. "Extensively, that is, that a man loves God more than anything else, that he would wish everything else not to be than that God should not be; and intensively, that because of greater affection, he wishes well to God more than to anyone else."¹³ All men are bound to this extensive love; for "nothing other than God, nor all things taken as a whole, can be considered as equal to or like unto God."¹⁴

This intensive love for God above all else is divided by many authors into fervent or tender love and strong or firm love. For example: "a mother is said to love her son with a more tender and ardent love; while a father loves more strongly and steadfastly, for he would expose himself to greater danger for his son."¹⁵ The Subtle Doctor disagrees with this distinction. "Only that is loved the more," he says, "which is loved more steadfastly; for I love that the more to which I wish less evil to happen and for whose saving good I expose myself the more out of love; because to expose oneself is a consequence of love; and here it is a question of that love which is an act of the will, and not of that love which is a passion of the sense appetite. Therefore, though some are said to love more ardently and tenderly who nevertheless do not love more steadfastly, this does not mean that their love proceeds from an overflowing of intellectual love; perhaps it may flow from some passion of sense love."¹⁶ Yet, we must love God above all things, not only extensively but also intensively—that is, strongly and steadfastly—so that we would rather wish evil to ourselves, because of some act, rather than to God.

The precept of charity, thus understood extensively and intensively,

¹²S. Bonaventura, *III Sent.*, d. 27, a.2, q.3, f.3, III, 608a.

¹³Scotus, *Oxon.*, III, d. 27, q. un., n. 16, XV, 371a.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

can be fulfilled in this life, but not to the extent of fulfilling all the conditions which are set forth through those additions: "with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, etc;" because in his life there cannot be such a concentration of one's powers that, with all impediments removed, the will can bring about everything it attempts, just as it would be able to do if its powers were united and not impeded."¹⁷

Although Franciscan writers teach that not all love of God is strictly obligatory, nevertheless they do point out that to love God with one's whole heart, soul, and strength is the ideal and the end toward which we must tend with all our striving. For this reason, they strongly urge us to love God as much as possible, without measure, limit, or restriction.

Our Seraphic Father, in speaking of love for God, quoted Our Lord's command, and explaining it briefly, he exhorted his brethren in glowing terms: "Let us all love God the Lord with all our endeavor, with all our affection, with all our yearning, with all we desire and will."¹⁸ "Let us therefore desire nothing, else, wish for nothing else, take pleasure and delight in nothing else but our Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour, the only true God, Who is the perfect good, everything good, wholly good, the true and sovereign good, He Who *alone* is good (Lk. 18:19). . . "Then, let nothing hinder us, nothing keep us apart, nothing stand in our way"¹⁹ in the matter of loving God.

In like manner, Saint Bonaventure, when explaining the perfection of life to religious women, praised the evangelical precept of charity in the highest terms: "Consider attentively, beloved handmaid of Jesus Christ, what love your beloved Jesus requires of you. Your Beloved certainly wishes that you give your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole mind for His love, and in such a manner that in your whole soul, and in your whole mind, no one else possesses any part with Him. . . To *love God with your whole heart* means that your heart is not inclined to love anything more than God, that you do not delight more in the things of the world than in God—not in honors, not in your parents. If, however, the love of your heart is occupied in some of these things, then you do not love God with all your heart. . . To *love God with your whole soul* is to love Him with your entire will without any contrary affection. Certainly you love with your whole soul when without any contradiction you gladly do not what you will, nor what the world counsels, nor what the flesh suggests, but what you know the Lord God

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Regula I*, c. 23, 60.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

wills. Certainly you love God with all your soul when, if it should be necessary, you willingly expose yourself to death for the love of Jesus Christ. If, however, you are negligent in any of these points, then you do not love with your whole soul. . . To *love God with your whole mind* is to love Him with all your memory without forgetting Him."²⁰

Saint Francis established his Order as a fraternity. His religious brethren were not called monks, as in the older Orders, but friars; and the name friar was common to all, superiors and subjects, priests, clerics, and laics. But not only was the Order conceived as a fraternity; it was also and especially a family whose members were to love one another with a familiar, fraternal, and even maternal love—but especially with a spiritual love more tender and strong than the most ardent natural affection. Francis did not want even a mother's love for her only child to surpass the spiritual love he desired to see among his friars. "Wherever the brethren are and may find themselves," he wrote, "let them conduct themselves toward each other as members of the same family. And let the one confidently make known his needs to the other, for if a mother nourishes and loves the child of her flesh, how much more attentively ought one to love and nourish his brother according to the spirit."²¹

We know how faithfully the first followers of our Seraphic Father observed this precept. As Thomas of Celano writes: "It can be truly said it was upon the foundation of constant charity that the noble structure [of the Order] arose, in which living stones, gathered from all parts of the world, were built into a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. Oh, with what a tremendous ardor of charity those new disciples burned! How greatly love flourished in their devout society! For whenever they came together in any place, or met one another on a journey, which was quite ordinary, there sprang up a spiritual love scattering over all love the seeds of true affection. What more can I say? Their embraces were chaste, their feelings gentle, their kisses holy, their conversation sweet, their laughter modest, their look cheerful, their eye single, their spirit submissive, their tongue peaceful, their answer soft, their purpose identical, their obedience prompt, their hands untiring. . . They came together with longing, they dwelt together with delight, but the parting of companions was grievous for both, a bitter divorce, a cruel separation."²² With due allowance for the rhetorical exuberance of medieval writers, Celano's description of the primitive charity in our

²⁰*De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, c. 7, n. 2-4, VIII, 124b-125b.

²¹*Regula II*, c. 6, 69.

²²*Celano I*, n. 38s.

Order is quite close to the truth as we know it from other sources.

In recommending love of neighbor to his friars, which was no less incumbent upon them than fraternal love, Saint Francis was not content with the kind of charity that merely fulfills the commandment. Rather, he demanded an almost heroic charity, the kind that is ready to undergo every kind of labor and pain for others and is eager to expend itself in any and every work of beneficence. Francis regarded all men as his brothers and sisters, as children of his heavenly Father, making up the immense human family. Because of his intense love of God Francis loved all creatures intensely. Consequently he insisted that his friars love all men not as objects upon which to practice charity, but truly and affectionately and spontaneously as brothers and sisters, as children, like themselves, of our loving Father in heaven. Thus fraternal charity establishes the norms of conduct for Franciscans.

Charity, the Root of Merit

According to the common teaching of theologians, to gain merit in its strict sense of *de condigno*, it is necessary that the good action be done morally, not only with the help of actual grace but also in the state of grace or charity. The Seraphic Doctor writes thus: "Merit is inherent in every virtue in accordance with its proper ordination or disposition toward its end. But charity is a virtue which immediately ordains toward an end and is the means by which the other virtues must be ordained."²³ And in another place he writes: "All the virtues can be defined by charity, for love or charity gives them their power for obtaining merit. If charity be taken away, we cannot say, properly speaking, that there is virtue in the soul."²⁴

However, Duns Scotus teaches with good reason that gratuitous love of friendship, by which God is loved because He is infinitely perfect in Himself and not because of the benefit that the one loving Him will receive, is necessary *de condigno*. "The root of all merit, taking merit in the proper sense, consists in the affection of justice (*affectio justiae*) of the will, not in the affection of advantage (*affectio commodi*), or in the affection of justice that it may ordain or dispose the affection of advantage."²⁵

There is some question among theologians, however, as to whether or not for merit *de condigno* it suffices that the action be done in the

²³III Sent., d. 27, a.2, q. 1, f. 4, III, 602b.

²⁴Ibid., a. 1, q. 1, ad 2, III, 592b.

²⁵Oxon. III, d. 18, q. un., n. 5, XIV, 664a.

state of grace, that is, in charity, with the help of actual grace. According to the Franciscan school it is not sufficient, for besides this it is necessary that the morally good action be positively referred to God with some intention. But what kind of intention is required?

Certainly it is not necessary that a specific intention of directing all works to God be made for each individual act, for in this life it would be practically impossible. Does it suffice, then, to make an habitual good intention? This means an intention which has been made in the past and has not been retracted, but which effectually or virtually is no longer continued and hence does not influence the act when it is performed here in the present time. Many theologians think that this type of intention is sufficient, provided that the intention of charity be renewed as often as the command of charity compels. This seems to have been the opinion of Saint Thomas. But the Franciscan theologians do not think that such an habitual intention suffices.

According to Saint Bonaventure: "For an action to be meritorious it is not necessary that the person always refer it specifically to God. An habitual reference will do. But I call it an habitual reference or direction to God not because it possesses charity, through which it is habitually referred, but because at the beginning of some act or other which is followed by many others of the same kind, it has the intention of being directed to God."²⁶ The Seraphic Doctor admits that for religious this is sufficient. "For at the outset of the religious life they vowed out of love or charity to take up the burden of religion. And whatever they do after this vow, provided it is in accordance with the observance of their religious life, is meritorious for salvation because of their first intention, unless perhaps it should be removed because of the overshadowing of some contrary intention."²⁷ From this it is evident that for merit *de condigno* an intention which he calls habitual is necessary. But in some respects this intention approaches the kind which is now called virtual.

Duns Scotus, however, teaches that an habitual intention, taken in the modern sense, is not sufficient for merit, but that a virtual intention is probably sufficient. He has his to say: "It is certain that the first act (actually referred or directed to God) is meritorious, and it is probable that the second (virtually referred to God) is sufficient."²⁸ Commentators tell us with some assurance that this is the opinion of the Subtle Doctor, as they deduce it from other passages in his writings. There are

²⁶II Sent., d. 41, a. 1, q. 3, ad 6, III, 946a.

²⁷Ibid., 946b.

²⁸Oxon. II, d. 41, q. un., n. 3, XIII, 435b.

many friars who have followed this teaching of Scotus, holding that for merit *de condigno* an actual or virtual intention of directing a morally good action to God as its final end is required.

However, spiritual writers of the Order generally rise above mere controversy over the conditions for merit and advise that good works be directed to God as often as possible with an actual intention. For this intention, as a general rule, is more powerful and efficacious than the other, and increases the merit of the action.

But not all good actual intentions are of the same value and dignity. Virtue is greater and more merit is gained in accordance with the motive out of which it is done—all things being equal. But the most perfect of the virtues and the queen of them all is charity, "for it alone leads man to perfection."²⁹ Hence the greatest care must be taken that all our acts, even the smallest, be motivated by charity. And since acts are more perfect according to the degree of love or fervor with which they are performed, we should strive to do everything with as intense a fervor of love as possible. In conclusion, the Seraphic Doctor admonishes us that a consuming fire of love for God ought always to burn on the altar of our heart, and should be continually nourished and fanned.³⁰

²⁹S. Bonaventura, *De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, c. 7, n. 1, VIII, 124a.

³⁰S. Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, c. 7, n. 7, VIII, 149a.

(To be continued)

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

IMPORTANT FOR YOU

THE ROSARY ALBUM

On three L.P. (33 1/3) records, the fifteen decades are presented with fine musical background. The recitation of each decade with congregational responses is preceded by the reading of a Gospel passage covering the incidents of the mystery. Devout, carefully timed. Unqualified for family Rosary, the sick, the solitary, or those who find it hard to concentrate. Complete \$10.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS SONG FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

An appealing record helps children understand as well as know the Commandments. Complete \$10.

"I'M A SOLDIER IN CHRIST'S ARMY"

A record for young children in this presentation of the meaning of Commandments. Complete \$10.

St. Anthony Guild Press

Paterson, N. J.

St. Bonaventura

Incarnation Means in Deum

With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.

This is the second volume of our series **WORKS OF ST. BONAVENTURE** in English translation with Latin text.

Pp. 128

\$2.00

FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE

St. Bonaventure University

St. Bonaventure, N. Y.