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The Liturgy Of Matrimony

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Fr. Martin Wolter, O.F.M.

Matrimony is generally listed as the last of the seven sacraments of the Church. It might also be considered in a certain sense as the least important and least necessary of the seven sacraments. For the Catholic Church as we know it would be unthinkable without Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders, for instance, but we can well conceive of the Church as existing, and flourishing without a special sacrament of matrimony. In fact many of the early Christian saints lived in marriages that were not sacramental or were the offspring of such marriages. We have only to think of Sts. Monica and Augustine for examples.

On the other hand matrimony is so important that we find it foreshadowed in a sense in the very beginning of God's revelation and pictured in all its glorious fulfillment at the end. For the Fathers and Doctors of the Church speak of the "sacrament" of Adam's marriage with Eve in the garden of Eden, though they mean only that it contains certain elements of the later Christian sacrament of matrimony. And in the last book of the New Testament, the *Apocalypse*, St. John describes the final destiny of the blessed in heaven in terms of a marriage: "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Apoc. 21, 2).

The fact that marriage thus appears at the very beginning and the end of the Holy Bible, as it were, shaping both man's origin and his final destiny, has a special significance for us as Franciscan religious. For our vocation as a rule springs up from the seed of Christian Matrimony and grows until it flowers forth in what ascetical writers call the "mystical marriage" between Christ and his spouse. Let us then in this conference on the Liturgy of the Sacrament of Matrimony consider how Christian Marriage is first of all a source of our religious vocation, and secondly how it gives us a pattern for our religious life.

Christian Matrimony a Source of Vocations

While St. Monica's non-sacramental marriage with her pagan band, Patrick, may be cited as an example that the Sacrament Matrimony is not absolutely necessary for the development of holi in the Church, it at the same time goes far to prove the value Christian Matrimony. For the pagan Patrick was no great help to Monthat the father's neglect and pagan attitude toward his son's educate and moral training probably contributed greatly to the religious moral depravity of the youthful Augustine. It was only by an addant outpouring of grace on the part of God and heroic effortivitue on the part of Monica and Augustine that they both becausints and that Patrick was converted before he died. The absoluted notable dire results which God in his mercy deigned counteract.

In the life of our own St. Francis, however, we find an examof the effect of Christian matrimony upon the development of a cation to the religious life and sanctity. Francis was born of C tian parents, both of whom possessed the true Faith and in w married life the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony were at w It is true that Thomas of Celano in writing his first biographs St. Francis shortly after the latter's death, gives us a rather unfarable picture of the parents of Francis. He moralizes about the wor and sinful parents of those times who neglect to bring up their caren properly and indicates that the parents of Francis were of same type. But in his second biography written about the year 1 Celano probably admonished and corrected by contemporaries, g us a more favorable report on the parents, especially the mother, whe terms "totius honestatis amica" ("lover of all that is good proper").

Pietro Bernardone, of course, violently opposed his son's embrache religious life. But after all he was a hard-headed business man an ambitious man of the world. And we must remember that Fraction of religious life was so unusual as to arouse disfavor and disteven with the Cardinals at Rome.

No, we cannot claim that the parents of St. Francis were respond for his vocation. In his case especially the divine intervention stands markedly. Yet the parents provided the first foundations. They to it that he was baptized, educated as a Catholic, frequented and the sacraments, and practiced Christian virtue in some deg Francis was a decent, high-minded, generous and loyal Catholic when God's grace called him from worldly ways to the life of a religious and a saint. Unlike Augustine his mind had never been confused with heresy and unbelief, nor had his morals been plunged into the mire of corruption. The matrimonial graces in the home of St. Francis had not been without fruit.

If we look to the family of St. Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus, we shall find an even more perfect example of how Christian marriage lays the groundwork for religious vocations. Here the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony were not frustrated by the perverseness of the human will. Like leaven they transformed the entire home-life and gave to the Church a rich harvest of vocations.

A study of these three vocations, namely of Sts. Augustine, Francis and Therese, will help us to understand more perfectly the importance and value of the Sacrament of Matrimony in relation to religious vocations. The call of God indeed is not bound by anything. Yet here again it is true that ordinarily God's graces flow more abundantly through the channels of the sacraments. Thus the more perfectly this Sacrament of Matrimony is understood and lived, the more easily and copiously will the Church produce vocations to the religious life.

The liturgy of the nuptial mass, the marriage ceremony, and the nuptial blessing bring home to the young couple that the primary purpose of marriage is the begetting of children. It pictures to them children as a blessing of God and asks of the Lord that He would give them fruitfulness of offspring. In our modern world of birth-control this is an important matter. For other things being equal the more numerous the children the more likely will there be vocations to the religious life. St. Catherine of Siena was the twenty third child in her family! Nor is the Church's prayer and the grace of the sacrament aiming at merely physical results. God intends Christian marriage to be the sheltered garden where he will often plant the seeds of religious vocations.

The admonition before the marriage consent, the ring ceremony, the nuptial blessing as well as the words of St. Paul in the nuptial mass all remind the bride and groom of their duties: loyalty until death, harmony and cooperation, mutual respect and love, care for their children. In her liturgy the Church not only teaches these lessons but at the same time she is praying that God would grant them the grace to fulfill these duties each day of their married life. The whole Mystical Body is concerned for the success of this marriage which is

supposed to contribute towards its growth. This is beautifully expressed in the new rite for use in this country. After the ring ceremony the priest extends his hands over the couple and invokes upon them a serie of blessings. After each invocation the entire assembly answers: "Amen."

We religious often forget how much we owe to the Sacrament Matrimony. Without its admonitions and supporting graces would ou parents have brought us into this world, had us baptized and educate as Catholics? Without it we might have become the products of broken home, weak in faith and trust, undernourished in love, lam in personality. If the graces of matrimony had not abounded in our homes where would we have first learned those lessons of obedience devotion to duty, harmonious cooperation and unselfish love which are so important for us as religious? Let us then thank God, the Church and our parents for the blessings of Christian matrimony. One of the most practical ways of showing our appreciation is to do all in ou power to promote the ideals of Christian marriage wherever we canin the classroom, in the sickroom, in the pulpit and in the confessional St. Francis has given us the example. Having seen in his own home the good qualities and the deficiencies of an average Christian marriage he established his Third Order to bring married people to the Christia perfection to which they are called.

Christian Matrimony a Pattern for Religious Life

St. Bonaventure in his Commentary on St. John's Gospel tells us that there are four kinds of nuptials: (1) Bodily, (2) Spiritual, (3) Sacramental, (4) Eternal. The first is that of ordinary marriage, the second is the espousal of a soul to God, the third is that union of Christ and his Church which St. Paul calls the "great sacrament." The fourth is that wedding feast in heaven mentioned by Christ and described also in the Apocalypse. In all these nuptials we find a difference and year likeness, a variety and yet a unity. Like God's plan for creation we find a certain order and dependence. The ordinary marriage is like the humble dust, small but the building block of the universe. The spiritual marriage is stately and inspiring like the cedar of Lebanor The sacramental marriage of Christ and the Church resembles the majestic grandeur of snow-capped Mt. Hermon. The eternal marriage in heaven is pictured by the vast expanse of blue sky stretching away into infinity.

We have already seen how the towering tree of a religious vocation springs from the more humble soil of Christian matrimony. Not is it hard to discover the interdependence of each of these forms of

marriage. But the unifying theme, the similarity of pattern that makes one like unto the other is LOVE. For religious it is important to realize that this love is of a very special kind, a type that can be best understood by us humans in terms of matrimony. And love of a spouse is the life of love that God expects of us.

It is true that both in the old and New Testaments God makes use of the figure of fatherhood and motherhood to express his love and care for his creature, man. As children of God we are to thank him, obey him, love him. But in asking us to be his spouses, the Divine Lover raises us to a higher dignity. Our relations with God assume a more mature and responsible character. He now asks us to be faithful, though he knows we could be unfaithful. He expects us to give service, not slavishly, but freely as a devoted lover. He allows us to share in his own work, but he awaits our cooperation. By divine grace he impregnates us with something of his own life, and then he looks for us to bear fruit.

God himself points to matrimony when seeking to make clear his love for us and the kind of love he expects in return. We can well afford then to look to Christian matrimony, particularly as it is described in the liturgy of the Church, as a guide to understand and perfect our religious life. St. Bonaventure directs us in the same manner when he says that the spiritual marriage is the one proper to religious. This marriage, he adds, is begun when we enter religious life, as ratified by the vow of profession, and is consummated by the perfect fulfilment of our promise.

We begin our spiritual marriage when we enter the religious life. At a wedding the bridge, having put aside ordinary street clothes, arrays herself in her shining white bridal gown. So also the religious is to put aside the things of this world and having made a good retreat and confession puts on the white robe of sanctifying grace. The old custom of the father of the bride giving away his daughter in marriage recalls the important scriptural passage: "A man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt. 19, 5). St. Paul has his own commentary on this when he states: "But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him" (I Cor. 6, 17). If only married people and religious would take this seriously! How many a marriage in the world has been spoiled because husband or wife did not really "leave father and mother" and instead allowed their parents to interfere with the happiness of their marriage. How many a religious has been held back from reaching

sanctity because of inordinate attachment to relatives. Whether married in the flesh or in the spirit, one's first loyalty is to the spouse.

Before performing a wedding ceremony the priest gives the young couple a rather lengthy and solemn admonition or instruction. So likewise does the Church give us religious an entire year of instruction in the meaning of religious life—our Novitiate year. As we listen to some of the phrases of the marriage exhortation we religious ought to realize how much of it applies even more forcibly to ourselves. "You are about to enter into a union which is most sacred and most serious. . .it will bind you together for life an a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with. . .its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life, and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse. . .until death. . .Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life, always make them generously. Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete."

Our spiritual marriage is ratified, says St. Bonaventure, by the vow of profession. The ritual of marriage entitles the essential act of the marriage ceremony—the consent. For it is by a free act of the will by mutual consent, that the bride and groom bind themselves together for life. So likewise do religious take their vows, for a vow is always a free and deliberate promise made to God. Just as in the marriage ceremony the priest asks the bride and groom whether they wish to take each other, so also in the profession ceremony the representative of the Church puts the question: "What do you ask of the Church of God? (or) what is your petition?" If later on our life runs into stormy waters, we can only say to ourselves: "Brother, (or Sister), you asked for it!" For it was after a careful and solemn instruction that we freely took upon ourselves the obligations of religious life.

We should note here that the bridal couple pronounce their vows before the altar of God and with the priest joining their hands with his stole or his fingers. Then he confirms their union with the blessing of the Holy Trinity. Similarly the Church of the receives the vows of a religious. In both cases it reminds us that the vows are a religious and solemn act, performed in the presence of the Lord. Of our own

will we assume these obligations, but we can not of ourselves put them aside. God has witnessed our pronouncing the vows; He will also be watching to see how we observe them.

The blessing and bestowal of the wedding ring is a beautiful symbol both for married people and for religious. The priest prays: "Bless O Lord, this ring. . so that she who wears it, keeping faith with her husband in unbroken loyalty. . .may live with him always in mutual love." The ring is then put on the finger "as a pledge of fidelity." Despite the ceremony and prayer of the Church, despite the grace of matrimony, many Catholics still prove unfaithful to their marriage vows. But how much worse is it when religious are unfaithful to theirs! Sometimes, like an unfaithful wife, they go so far as to divorce themselves openly from their true Spouse. At other times the infidelity is only partial or secretive. Yet how much easier we have it in this respect than do husbands and wives. We do not have to worry about whether our partner may prove unfaithful, we need only take care of our own obligations. The husband or wife may with some reason complain that they received a bad bargain in their human partner. But have we any grounds of complaint against our choice, Christ himself?

Our spiritual marriage is consummated, says St. Bonaventure, in the perfect fulfilment of our promise. In the nuptial blessing which takes place during the Mass that follows the wedding, we see how the Church prays that this marriage of the husband and wife may "be rich in children...(and may) they see their children's children to the third and fourth generation and enjoy the long life they desire." St. Bonaventure tells us that the virgin espoused to Christ is even more rich in children than the wife, for she brings forth her children, which are good works, not just once a year, but every day. And, the Seraphic Doctor adds, these children, the fruit of our union with Christ, will not die. In the form of merits in heaven they will live forever and will go before us to prepare a place for us with our heavenly Spouse.

Thus does the Liturgy of the Sacrament of Matrimony teach us to appreciate what the Church is doing for Christian family life. At the same time it points out to us the sublime dignity of our own spiritual marriage as religious. Let us conclude then with the words of St. Francis in his Letter To All The Faithful: "We are spouses when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is united to Jesus Christ. . . O how holy, fair and lovable to have a spouse in heaven."

The Restless Lover

Fr. Stanislaus Siers, O.F.M.Cap.

Blessed Raymond Lull was a mystic, philosopher, poet, missionary and martyr. But what shall we call him as we speak of him here? I think it would be most precise to speak of Raymond here as 'the lover." I say this because any titles we might attach to him are all contained in the title of 'the lover." It was precisely for, in and through love that he was a mystic, philosopher, poet, missionary and martyr. The object of his love—well, we shall see.

Born sometime between 1232 and 1236 on the Island of Majorca, Raymond grew up as an entertainer at the court. The surroundings of such a life, we can imagine, were hardly conductive to making a saint of Raymond. All created beauty caught Raymond's eye—and heart. And he delivered himself up to all these beauties. His creatural loves, instead of leading him to God, turned him away from this only True Love. Even while he was married and had two children, he was attracted by this and that new feminine find. So far, it seems a wonder that Raymond should be counted among the blessed, does it not?

At first he repeatedly resisted and feverishly fought his conversion. But when it did take hold, it rooted itself so deeply in his soul that he suffered all—yes, even the loss of life itself—for the love of his new and lasting Beloved One, Christ.

It took five appearances of a vision of the bleeding, crucified Christ to snatch the love of this lover, Raymond. Still he was perplexed. Our Lady then appeared to him, strengthening him. Finally he surrendered. Now came the conversion, not of faith, but of love. He found happiness not in loving created things in themselves but in loving their Creator. This blazing flame of love was transformed into a "theophilos"—a lover of God, and of God Alone.

Along with Raymond's own conversion of love came a burning desire to convert the infidels. Like St. Francis, Raymond was not satisfied with his own love for God. He was restless until he could make others burn with love for God. Raymond, then, made the Moors the target of his darts of love for God. St. Francis had set the pattern

for him with such a mission of love just about fifty years before Raymond began his work. While the crusaders had been battling the Moors to conquer them physically, St. Francis had been battling them for a spiritual conquest. So too, Raymond was determined to bring the Moors to their knees, not to be a footstool for a human conquerer but to adore the God-Man, Christ.

After hearing a sermon on the Seraphic lover St. Francis, Raymond burned with such love that he immediately set about formulating his plan of attack for the spiritual conquest of the Moors; this he did with ardent hope that he would be able to give his life for his Beloved. His plan was to seek martyrdom, to give the True Faith to the Moors through writing and preaching and, finally, to establish training centers for missionaries.

The realization of his dependence on God in this undertaking is evident from the fact that he made pilgrimages for two years before beginning his missionary work. God's providence accompanied him on these holy pilgrimages for after giving all his riches to his family and the poor, he begged his way.

After returning from his pilgrimages Raymond retired to prayerful solitude for some time. It was at this time that he received his inspiration as to the method he was to adopt in order to bring Christ to the Mohammedans. With this inspiration he began his battle; his weapon, the pen. Surely his life was one of exceptionally great literary achievement for he wrote voluminously in Latin, Catalan and Arabic.

With the intellectual abilities God had given him, Raymond studied for nine years; these studies included everything necessary for his spiritual battle against the Moslems. His ideal was to make the truth so unshakably convincing to the Moslems that, if they wished to be reasonable, they would have to reject Averroes and the Koran.

Raymond realized that a European missioner would be a hopeless failure in apostolic work among the Mohammedans unless he were trained to cope with oriental culture and cults. With the aid of King James II, therefore, he established a missionary training center at Miramar. It was, in fact, only after James had found Raymond's works favorable (having had a Franciscan friar examine them) that James decided to give Raymond the necessary aid for the missionary training center. The Friars Minor took charge of the school. Its existence, however, was ephemeral and its accomplishments fell quite short of success.

This was not the last of the disappointments in store for Raymond.

But we must not forget that Raymond was a lover—a true lover—and disappointments suffered for the sake of the beloved one only serve to intensify true love. His attempts to stir the interest of kings and some popes, in his project, were hopelessly brushed aside.

Nor was this the end of what was, humanly speaking, a life of failures. He experienced a most terrifying trial of despair. So terribly tormented—he yet loved his Beloved. Here he proved that the love he had for his Beloved was an invincibly true love. Amidst this tormenting trial he set sail for Tunis, ready to endure hell if he could please his Loved One. This was one time that Raymond was not left without consolation; after boarding the ship Raymond was filled with a soul-stirring joy. The Beloved had rewarded His lover.

Now at Tunis, his dream of preaching to the Moslems finally became a reality. In disputing with Moslem theologians he began gaining converts to the Faith. Seeing this, the Mohammedans were not long in ridding themselves of Raymond. These Moslems were not the gentless type of people and so Raymond suffered under them somewhat before being deported.

Now news of Celestine V's election to the papacy reached Raymond. He felt confident of finding sympathy in this pope for Celestine was a holy hermit at heart. After only a few months' reign, however, Celestine abdicated and so Raymond's hopes were shattered. Raymond solvicited aid from Celestine's successor, Boniface VIII, but Boniface had too many other problems to cope with. But all this the lover offered to his Beloved One.

One consolation to Raymond was the interest the Friars Minor showed in his enterprise. Perhaps this had some bearing on his joining the Franciscans. Old in body but fresh and still restless in spirit he became a Franciscan tertiary. Providential? Surely, for such a tremendous lover was a true Franciscan, tailored of the same material as the Seraph of Assisi and the Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure.

Raymond now journeyed to Cyprus but the fruits of his missionary labors there held little, if any, consolation for him. After spending some time in Paris, Raymond went to the Moors of Bougia in Barbary. This second attempt to bring the truth to these Mohammedans ended in deportation. Once deported, Raymond could not even count his trip back to Italy a success for he suffered shipwreck before being able to touch the European Boot.

When Raymond finally did land on the continent, he sought out Pope Clement V. He gave no ear to Raymond's plans and likewise no aid with which to carry them out. Raymord was not defeated. Nothing could scratch the precious jewel of his live for the Beloved. Yet he could not rest without trying to arouse a interest in bringing Christ to the Moors. He went to the Council of Vienne (1311) and petitioned the council to revive the crusades, to eret missionary training centers and to amalgamate all the military orders that they might profit from a more united action. All this pleading seemed, at the time, to go unheeded. But the Beloved One, for Whom Raymond was spending himself, while withholding consolations of success in this life, was storing up treasures for him in heaven. Raymond was to see results of his tireless pleadings only from the heavenly highpoint. Chairs of Arabic, Greek, Hebrew and Chaldaic were, in later years, established at the universities of Paris, Oxford, Boloma and Salamanca. The Fifth Lateran Council in 1512 adopted Raymond's system of refuting Averroism. The Congregation of the Propaganda Fide adopted his missionary methods three hundred and fifty years after Raymond's pleadings at the Council of Vienne.

Even when he was eighty years old Raymond was still restless. The restless lover went to the unbelievers of Africa, preaching the truths of his God, his Beloved. And there he showed how profound his love really was, for he preached until he was soned. Left for dead—although this lover's heart still beat with life—he was rescued by some Genoese sailors. But while on board ship Raymond, the gallant lover, went to his Beloved.

Humanly speaking Raymond's life would seem to have been one gigantic failure; this is not so, for the hings that Raymond had tire-lessly pleaded for during his life found heir realization in subsequent centuries. This, in fact, must crown his glory all the more for he labored, seemingly in vain, yet with all his might for his Beloved. He labored in love; and a true lover seeks to reward, save the one he loves.

MONK'S NOEL

Starlight, starbright, it's hard to pray tonight.

That pigeon on the roof, gone white dominican, is chanting high above our minds' capacity.

From shrubs, and more aloof, the brown franciscan wren carols a tale of love for hearts, too heart-ily.

Starlight, starbright, two might be one tonight.

Raymond Roseliep



CONCERNING CHRISTMAS

I am the Word that is, the Thought that flows Incessantly through the fine Mind of God. I am the coexistent Son He knows In unbeginning endlessness. The rod Of universal rule is Mine to hold In triune reign of Spirit, Father, Son. Mine was the vision, and I cast the mold Of earth by willing so it should be done.

The galaxies are Mine. And time and space And all the measurements of man were set By My Own Hand that lifted up the race From primal slime. I am the Law, and yet Tonight I choose a simple guise, and mild.—Tonight I am content to be a Child.

Mary Margaret Milbrath

The Vocation Of A Brother

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.

We often hear people dispute the question: Which state is more perfect, the clerical or religious? St. Francis of Assisi would consider the question foolish and simply says: What I am before God, that I am and nothing more! However, the question is not altogether without merit and may at least serve as a wholesome pastime, but to answer it properly we must distinguish and define our terms. By state is meant a state in life. We have the clerical or priestly state, the religious state, the marriage state, the celibate state, the state of widowhood, etc. It is easy to determine the highest of these states. The priesthood or the clerical state was planned by God from all eternity, was instituted by the great High Priest Jesus Christ Himself, was endowed with singular power and graces, and was given charge of the highest office on earth, namely, to consecrate and watch over the real body of Christ, that is, His holy Church. But the highest state is not necessarily the most perfect state in spiritual merit. When we speak of perfection in the spiritual life we mean the highest degree of holiness, the full growth of sanctifying grace in our souls, and the perfect union with God. Surely the clerical or priestly state should achieve all this because of its sublime station in God's economy and of the singular and extraordinary graces within its reach. But all this is no guarantee for personal holiness.

A glance at the Old Testament will clarify this point. Melchisedech was a high priest and offered sacrifice to God when Abraham returned from battle. Abraham was not a priest but closer to God than Melchisedech. Moses and Aaron were brothers. The latter was the high priest of the nation, the former was the nation's leader, but not a priest. Aaron sinned against God while Moses remained faithful and rose to the highest degree in God's friendship. So we see throughout the history of the Chosen People that, while the priests and levites remained select classes and tried by themselves to perform the sacred services, God chose numerous prophets and wise and holy men to exemplify the highest type of holiness and to bring His divine message to His people. This lasted until the fullness of time came, when our Divine Savior, the great High Priest and King of kings, appeared to save the world and to found the one holy Catholic and apostolic

Church. The two persons closest to Him were not priests but rank high above all the Saints in holiness, namely Mary and Joseph. Of the eve of His death the High Priest arose in the Cenacle and solemn ly instituted the priesthood of the New Law. He said to them: No you have chosen me, but I have chosen you. Lovingly He called them His friends. No further proof than this is needed to show that the members of the Catholic priesthood are chosen and called by the great High Priest Himself.

However, to make sure of one's vocation to the holy priesthood is one of the most difficult things in a man's life. God could call young man to this high office in a clear and unmistakable manner of voice, but that is not God's way. He furnishes sufficient indication admonitions, and inducements, and provides that physical, moral, and intellectual fitness required for the priesthood, but He leaves the fine decision to the candidate's conscience and free will. Meanwhile the Holy Spirit will guide in this eventful choice the soul that is sincerely humble and willing to do God's holy will.

The vocation to the religious state is very much like the above. The difference is that the priesthood is necessary for the continuance of Christ's work on earth and that consequently the ranks must be filled. This requires a special kind of solicitude on the part of the Holy Spirit Who rules the Church and provides for its spiritual welfare. In a similar manner the Holy Spirit calls men and women to the religious state and provides them with such graces as are needed to obtain a high degree of holiness. Holiness or sanctity is one of the Four Marks of the Church, and in order to sustain and keep alive this mark it is necessary always to have holy men and women in God's Church. The religious brother should take pride in this thought and always remember that he, too, fills a most important post within the organism of the living Church.

The name Friars Minor is St. Francis' own invention. He wanted all the members of his community to be called friars because they were to be brothers in the truest sense of the word, all united with Jesus Christ, the first among the brethern under our heavenly Father. The word minor means lesser, that means lesser than all the rest. By this is indicated humility—a virtue so dear to the heart of the Seraphic Father. If this virtue flourishes in any house, how can there be misunderstanding between cleric and lay, young and old, lettered and unlettered?

To any friar, especially to lay brothers whose duties may not be very exacting, it is of the greatest importance and advantage to pick

out some special occupation as a hobby or an avocation. Such an avocation may not only be of the greatest advantage and profit to the community, but will strengthen and embellish our holy vocation which is the gift of God. Every man that comes to an Order should consider himself a debtor to the Order and make a contribution of all his gifts: physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

The Franciscan Order is unthinkable without a strong lay brother-hood. The Order would cease to be the Order of Friars Minor, if no brothers were admitted. To St. Francis it was essential to have brothers. It was not required that they be priests, and if priests were admitted it was by exception. St. Francis never considered himself worthy to be a priest. If all our priests and brothers were imbued with this singular respect for the priesthood, our priests would never boast of their priestly character before our brothers and our brothers would revere all priests as dispensers of the mysteries of God.

Let us remark right here and now that the proper relationship between priest and brother cannot be established unless it be based on a mutual regard and respect for each other. The ideal example of all Christian perfection is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Years ago there was in one of our convents a saintly brother. When he died there was found in his drawer a slip of paper with the following resolution: I shall see in all my brethren Jesus Christ our Savior. This was the secret of his sanctity and we may well apply it to the relation of priests and brothers. Both see Jesus Christ in the other, but while the brother sees in the priest Jesus Christ in his public life, teaching the people, healing their wounds, and founding the Sacrament of His Love in the Cenacle and on Calvary, the priest sees in the lay brother Jesus Christ in His hidden life, working with His foster father by night. Hence the center of all is Jesus Christ and He is as close to the brother as He is to the priest.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of St. Francis was his hatred of idleness. He could stand no laziness around him. When he saw an idle frar he would call him Fra Musca—Brother Fly. On the other hand, St. Francis speaks with great devotion of the grace of labor. Fearlessly he ranks manual labor with the apostolic work of preaching and teaching. Before God they are all alike. These were the sentiments of that glorious galaxy of lay brothers that have gone before. They were never seen idle. When their work was done they always found something to do that would make others happier, the community more comfortable, and the monastery more orderly and attractive.

In a beautiful little book entitled The Triple Way, St. Bonaves ture shows three ways which lead to union with God in the spiritualife. Following this pattern I shall point out to our brothers a triple way which leads to their happiness both in this life and the next. We may call these three ways the three H's, namely the Head, the Hear and the Hand. In other words, if these three organs or members of our body are properly directed they will lead after the manner of three ways to the great highway, or we should say the royal highway where we find our Savior showing the way to His heavenly Father and to temporal as well as eternal peace and happiness.

Speaking of the head or the intellect or reason, it is not necessar that the brother crowd it with all manner of knowledge and information tion. In fact, St. Francis says, "Let those who do not know letters not strive to learn them." This does not mean that our brothers should spend their days in ignorance. Far from it. There is a vast difference between ignorance and the absence of schooling or higher education All St. Francis means to imply is that the brothers should not concern themselves about school work or technical learning. This being exp cluded, every good brother will seek diligently to gather especially in his leisure time such information as may be useful to him in his work and may increase his knowledge of the higher and better things of life. In fact, he will seek to read useful and informative books not only such as deal with the spiritual life but also with other useful information, such as church history, wholesome biographies, and even such specific works as may improve his own occupations and interests. He will also read good magazines and especially such newspapers as deal with the progress and expansion of our Holy Church and ecclesiastical or religious affairs. In every monastery there should be a special library for brothers which contains books and pamphlets the brother may and will read with satisfaction and profit. By all means the brothers should seek to enrich their mind with the wonderful wealth and beauty of our holy liturgy so that when they are in chapel of attend the holy sacrifice and other services, they will relish and appreciate "the wealth and the glory in our father's house."

The world has made rapid progress in all manners of communication since the days of St. Francis. Even television and radio have entered the privacy of the monastery. While these devices may be used with moderation, we should not forget that television is not conductive to the Beatific Vision which we hope to enjoy in heaven, nor that the radio necessarly radiates holiness in the sacred precincts

of the monastery. Unfortunately both television and radio are apt to disturb and distort what St. Francis urged so much, namely, the spirit of prayer and devotion and the practice of the presence of God every hour of the day and the night.

The second way leads from the heart. Our heart is like a magnet which constantly points to the north and this north is God. If a brother's heart points to this sacred north, all is well with him. A brother who does not love prayer or meditation or the presence before the Blessed Sacrament or his Our Fathers and Hail Marys, he is a misfit and there is nothing left of him but the habit that he wears, if he wears it at all. Give me the brother who loves to pray and who seeks to make progress in prayer and I know that I have a great treasure, a pearl of great price. We have seen many brothers all the world over who had lived a long life and whose hands were too feeble to work, but they were still able to pray and to spend their last years joyfully in the golden sunshine of the Divine Presence. A good brother knows how to turn his daily work and even his leisure hours into prayer and thus his life becomes a continuous 'Sursum corda' (Lift up your hearts).

The third way leads from the hand which the brother offers for the service of the Order and Holy Church. As the Psalmist says, "For you shall eat the labor of your hands, you shall be blessed and it shall be well with you" (Ps. 127,2). There is a wonderful movement in many of our provinces, namely, that each brother learn a trade or some specific occupation. If a brother has his heart with God and his hand at useful work, he is happy and he makes everybody else happy. He will take pride in his work and will improve his handicrift from day to day. However, he should not be so involved and taken up with his particular occupation in such a way as to forget the common good and those tasks and services in the monastery which are the concern of every one. A good and useful brother is at home in every kind of work and he is happy to help where he may.

Unfortunately, there has grown up in recent years among some of our brothers the tendency of following the ways and methods of our labor unions. They have their daily program all set. They begin at a certain hour and they will stop work punctually at the stroke of the clock. Certainly it is well to have order in our work and all superiors should see to it that the brothers have ample time for their prayers and necessary recreation. On the other hand, the kingdom of God is not tied down to the stroke of the clock or the jingle of our

bells. Punctuality is a beautiful ornament in any monastery, but when it comes to work and helpfulness we should not be skimpy or selfish in the service of God and our brethren. I propose a new union, a new C.I.O. which every brother and, for that matter, every priest may follow with a good conscience. For as Scripture says, "The Holy Spirit does not give his grace in measure." After all, as the same Sacred Scripture says, "The Spirit breathes where he will." The C.I.O. which I propose reads as follows: Cleanliness, Initiative, Orderliness, We should pick the middle term first, namely, initiative. A brother does not bind himself strictly on routine and orders by the superior. He should obey such orders faithfully, but he should try and go beyond. He should have his own initiative and look for labor and work if he is not tied down to any particular task. When you enter a monastery and look about yourself, you will see immediately whether good brothers look after cleanliness and orderliness. A good brother will look and see that the whole house and all its furniture are always clean and neat. He will get nervous if he sees any dust or dirt any where, even in the corner or on the book shelves. He cannot bear to see disorder. Watch him walking along and he will pick up something here and something there, straighten out a piece of furniture, brush away the tracks that some forgetful novice or some other blunder. ing and blustering friar left behind. This is the C.I.O. that every brother should make his own and if he does so, he will not get involved in any of the labor rackets which disturb the peace of our country today.

I do not know if St. Bonaventure had any notion or idea of the triple way which I have proposed to our brothers above, namely, the Head, the Heart, and the Hand. However, somehow he expresses the same thought in his comment on the Book of Ecclesiastes, 7,30: "Only this I have found, that God made man right, and he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions." St. Bonaventure asks the questions. When is man right? And he answers as follows. Man is right when with his whole mind and intellect he seeks the highest Truth—and the highest Truth is God; when with his whole heart and all his emotions he seeks the highest Good—and the highest Good is God; when with all his physical faculties and his strength he seeks to perpetuate the creative work of the Almighty.

St. Francis numbers the brothers among the foremost teachers and educators in the Order as well as in the world. They must teach, he emphasizes, not necessarily by word but by their example. Here St. Francis brings to life the age-old axiom which says: "Verbum sonat."

exemplum donat," which is in English: "Word produces sound, but the example thunder." Our brothers have no idea, how much their example means to their brethren as well as to all who have a chance to know and see them in their daily life. There are many examples on hand where young men have chosen the Order of Friars Minor and have become exemplary priests in our Order not because they read books or were instructed by our Fathers, but they were impressed and convinced by the fine and beautiful example of our brothers set unconsciously before them. This method of education cannot be measured by words nor will it be rewarded by earthly praise, but it will be written in letters of gold in the Book of Life.

AN OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

(Schoenstes Kindlein, Bestes Knaeblein)
Dearest Infant, little Jesus,
Most beloved Child Divine!
See, we all invite Thee truly—
Come, our hearts are wholly Thine.

Do not tarry in the stable, Do not shiver in the cold— We extend our arms in welcome, They will warm Thee, and Thee hold.

Oh, we know Thou arts from Heaven, Though Thou art so small and weak; But we also know that Thou wilt Be our Saviour, patient, meek.

So, our hearts we humbly offer As a cradle, soft and mild; Come O Jesus, dearest Infant, Come and enter, holy Child!

When Thou bearest crown and sceptre, And wilt punish or reward, Then recall this Christmas welcome, And with mercy us regard.

From the German, by Marion A. Habig, O.F.M.

Ascetical Doctrine Of St. Bonaventure

Continued

Fr. Augustine Gemelli, O.F.M.

IV tr la 7 Paul J.Oli

Now let us proceed to a summary examination of the thought of Saint Bonaventure in each of his short mystical treatises. To peruse them would perhaps be tedious for the modern reader; but he would be rewarded with the knowledge of a profound and distinct ascetical doctrine, of which I have mentioned the fundamental traits in the preceeding paragraphs.

In the first treatise (De triplici via, also known as the Incendium amoris) which represents, so to speak, the prototype of the Bonaventurian method, the way to perfection is three-fold, hierarchically disposed in the purgative, the illuminative, and the perfective ways. The first leads to peace through meditation, the second to truth through prayer, the third to union with God through contemplation. The first is an examination of conscience based on the fundamental passions: negligence, concupiscence, malice, and the strenuous combat against these passions. It is a rough path which begins with the sting of remorse and ends in joy. It gains strength in pain but is consumed in love. The second leads the purified soul higher, but begins by considering sin forgiven and the grace received in order to arrive at the vision of the promised good. The third one is the highest; and to the soul already purified and illumined, it shows the vanity of human affection in such a way that only the love of God remains entirely worthwhile and satisfying, in which by necessity the other affections are converted even to the unitive perfection of ecstasy. These ways are consecutive, but they have a cyclical development in the sense that each one repeats more fully and more profoundly the general pain of purification, illumination, and union, which is realized in acts of repentance, gratitude, adoration, and love.

In the Soliloquium de IV mentalibus exercitiis, a dramatic dialogue between the soul and the interior man, the purpose is the same, although it is expressed in different words. The soul is invited to explore the external world as well as the internal, the inferior, and the superior worlds. In the first part of its travels the soul discovers itself,

noble by nature, disfigured by sin, and reformed by grace. In the second part the soul observes the miserable insufficiency of the world, and moved by the desire to exalt itself and become happy, it is encouraged to purify itself of sin, inordinate affections, and sensible pleasures, and to practice virtue and rise to God by adoration. Finally God gives peace to the soul. This peace will be the more greatly desired if the soul reflects on the final judgment, death, hell (the inferior world) and finally on the joy of heaven (the superior world).

In the treatise on the perfect life (De perfectione vitae ad sorores). Saint Bonaventure follows the same procedure. The first step is the examination of oneself, the last is the happiness of union with God obtained through prayer and virtue. Evidently Saint Bonaventure, with a clear intuition of the unity of the soul which is complete at every moment, conceives progress as a spiral always increasing and main. taining the ego at the point of departure until it vanishes in heaven. The first movements of purification are slower because they are wider. Between the illumination and the union the flight is longer than between the purification and the illumination. Thus in the twenty one steps of the perfective life, in the second and third mental exercises of the soliloquy, he signified in the keen examination of the virtues suggested to the Sisters of Saint Clare, a kind of apparent rest which surprises souls that are striving for improvement and yet seem to be making no progress because the way is longer and more uniform and does not have the rough turns of the first conversion.

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Let us not forget that this conquest is not obtained without grace, and that the condition for an increase of grace is prayer. "Prayer", says Saint Bonaventure in the first chapter of the Itinerarium, "is the mother and origin of sursumactio." The expression sursumactio, untranslatable and as pregnant with meaning as the rest of the sentence, could be used as the epigraph of the first chapter of a philosophy of action. To pray is the only thing that we can do always and wherever we live. Every prayer (following the implicit principle mentioned above in the religious psychology of Saint Bonaventure) summarizes the triple way: knowledge of one's self, recognition of the divine goodness, and union with God. It is contrition, admiration, and exultation. It begins in annihilation and ends in sublimation. But one can reach this only by centering one's attention, by fully concentrating on the means to this end, thus banishing idle dreams and causing all

trifling human interests to be silent. The Bonaventurian prayer the perfect one: humility, gratitude, detachment, and petition nothing but God. Can we, indeed, think of asking God for anything except for God Himself? Saint Bonaventure affirms with a confidence of experience that the ultimate purpose of prayer is union with and that it must not be interrupted until this union is obtained. It necessary to knock at the door, to weep, and to persevere until Lord makes us feel His sweetness and until the soul rests upon His like the spouse on the heart of her beloved. Ecstasy is not a privile it is a gift offered to all. To reach it is a matter of the will. Whoever finds this statement bold and beyond experience should ask himes if he prays with the purity of attention prescribed by Saint Bonave ture and if his prayer passes through all the three stages necessary for reaching union. In the better cases—that is, in the cases where pravi is not a selfish petition or a passionate imagination—it stays in first stage and wanders about in the labyrinths of self-knowledge: seldom reaches gratitude and never attains to the "innermost silend of the mind." Notwithstanding, the nuptial banquet is offered to

To a superficial reader that minute analysis of the stages of perfection, that hierarchy of the states of the soul, may be as difficult as a pedantic abstractionism. In reality we are the ones given to straction, because we live outside of the deep religious fervor of Saint Bonaventure. By living religiously we realize that the degrees and the hierarchy correspond with a concrete psychological analysis of spiritual progress. No one can escape the beauty of his dynamic way of concein ing prayer as a positive effort, sanctity as an exultation, ecstasy as conquest; a concept that reflects the theory of the will superior to the intellect, which is stated throughout the philosophy of Saint Bone aventure, and the logic of love proclaimed in the Hexaemeron, through which this mystic of genius gives us the most philosophical spirituality and the most spiritual philosophy that Christian centuries have been proud of since the time of Saint Augustine. Beautiful indeed is this ideal ascent accomplished by divine grace and the human will, true sursumactio of which Saint Bonaventure rapidly sketches a profile when he says that the magnanimous soul is disposed to do good vigilanter confidenter, eleganter, three adverbs that make of our mortal life work of art. The last adverb indeed reveals the true personality of Saint Bonaventure.

VI

If the De Reductione says that the science of Saint Bonaventure

theology, if the Itinerarium maintains that his wisdom and joy are love of God, and the Hexaemeron likewise says that our logic is Christ, the mystical treatises teach that his action was prayer, passionate prayer, like the Song of Songs. Of these ten treatises, the ones we have already examined develop the mystical pedagogy of Saint Bonaventure. He who speaks in them is the master. The other five: Lignum Vitae, De quinque festivitatibus pueri Jesu, Tractatus de praeparatione ad Missam, Officium de passione Domini, Vitis mystica, examine the life and Passion of Christ, and it is the man who speaks in them; it is the poet burning with love for God that transforms the man and the poet into the saint.

These tracts deserve attentive reading because they introduce us into the intimacy of Saint Bonaventure's spirit, that intimacy of which the saints particularly are jealous because of their great humility.

One can read with two kinds of attention: that of a critic or that of a pupil. To the critic and the psychologist the treatises reveal with what poetic imagination and with what exquisite sensibility Saint Bonaventure conceived of God and how he lived with Him.

Saint Bonaventure, without arriving at the Scotistic concept, already poised all reality on the Incarnation of the Word. He shows an imaginative vivacity in picturing the life of the Master in shining and realistic vision, as in the paragraphs of the Lignum vitae that seem like small Flemish sketches written to be illustrated in painting or to be set to music for the edification of the people. But the sketches are not cold. The writer "brings the tender feet to his lips," and kisses the Infant Jesus. He steeps himself in the sufferings of the Redeemer, weeps over His Passion, insists on the thought, so convincing to us, that the Son of God wished to suffer beyond measure not only to save us—for which less would have been enough—but to comfort our pains with His pains, because "he who suffers is the one and only true consoler".

Saint Bonaventure, a "man of desires," had made a thorough study of the Infancy—thanks to the Franciscan tradition, which poetry it expressed supernaturally in the cult of the Infant Jesus. During one of his short rest periods, perhaps at La Verna or in Mugello, he determined to meditate in a new manner on the mystery of the Incarnation. From the need of being identified with the loved one, which is typical of any love; from that obscure desire for paternity which struggles deep within a man; from that assiduous familiarity with the Sacred Scriptures and from the symbolism dear to his time and to his

imagination, there sprang forth a daring idea which he thought new, although the germ is found in the Fathers and also in the Good The idea is contained in Christ's answer to the woman who declar His mother blessed: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God keep it," and when pointing to His disciples as His family He "Whosoever does the will of my Father in Heaven, he is my brot and sister and mother." The idea in the mind of Saint Bonavents was this: how can the devout soul reproduce in itself the mystery the Incarnation, and how, by virtue of the Most High, can it concerand give birth to the Son of God, give Him a name, search for H adore Him with the three Magi, and present Him in the temple acco ing to the Law of Moses? With the boldness of a pure spirit to who even the most carnal words express nothing but spirit, Saint Box venture does not fear to compare the signs of the conception of Chri in the devout soul to the pains of pregnancy. Thus, the birth of Chri is accomplished by the realization of good purposes, in brief, by action which, like childbirth, is effort, liberation, pain, and joy all in or He had already observed in De reductione artium ad theologiam the action is incarnation. Now he clearly affirms that good and supernatural action is the Incarnation of Christ in the soul.

The man of the Itinerarium, yearning for union with the Divin ity, is enraptured with the evangelical similitude of the vine and branches, and he develops this figure thoroughly in his prose canticle the Vitis mystica. This is a prophetic document of devotion to the Sacred Heart, if we consider that it precedes the writings of Saint Gen trude by some years, and is a forerunner by more than four centuris of the revelations of Saint Margaret Mary. The poetic genius of Saint Bonaventure, steeped in sacred texts and in the poetry of chivals characteristic of his time, discovers that the wound caused by the lance was a useless and cruel blow to a Heart already wounded by low Of what avail is the iron of the lance? Love is enough to kill a man and one dies but once. He means that the wound in the side must have another meaning besides that of killing a man already dead. His pur pose is to discover the depths of the Heart of Christ, to show, through the visible truth, the invisible wound of love. And through the desired to identify himself with his Beloved, he makes the Heart of the Master his own.

With the hypersensitive intuition of men who have taken the vow of chastity, Saint Bonaventure quotes the short verse: Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, and asks: why soror and sponsa rather

than the simple expression uxor? The three words imply three affections. Uxor means an affection tempered by custom, while both sponsa and soror indicate a sublime love produced by a passionate intensity and a serene chastity which preserves passion from its own immanent frailty. All this can be found in the third chapter of the Vitis mystica. These few points give us an insight into the man. Who knows what personal tragedies such a temperament together with such a keen mind would have produced if Brother Bonaventure, gifted, as Gilson writes, with both d'esprit de finesse et d'esprit de geometrie had not found in Christ Jesus the logical mean between the two warring extremes: passion and reason? It does not matter then, if for him, as for the Master, this mean is called the cross.

Thus the Vitis mystica, together with the rest of the treatises and shorter works, in which the Saint's love of God is manifested, serve as an autobiographical confession of the words of the Hexaemeron: Christ is the middle term of this syllogism called life. Christ is our logic.

These mystical treatises unfold themselves under the microscope of those who study them. The disciple who seeks therein his own edification with humility of heart will find that they say that sanctity is stupendous, that the ways of the Lord are marvellous, that Saint Bonaventure is a wise and loveable guide, especially because his wisdom has the ardor and simplicity of Saint Francis.

Modern scholars take Saint Bonaventure literally when he asserts that he never experienced ecstasies. But if one can teach nothing excepting what he lives, we have to claim that the master who wrote the Itinerarium, the De triplici via, and the Soliloquium had to have the apex of his soul resting continually in ecstasies, in that silence of love that he so powerfully manifested. Now we are able to understand from what starry heights he drew his courageous action, his calmness in controversies, his serenity in judgment; we can understand the supernatural lyricism which pervades the writings and which practically surrounds the personality of this summus amator aeternitatis, absorbed in God and nevertheless mindful of creatures as one who knows that he cannot attain to God except through this ascent, difficult though it may be. For this reason he was quick to leave contemplation for physical activity, intimate silence for human babbling, his One Friend for the wearysome friends of earth, the divine sleep for the tempests of the world.

Neither legends nor miracles strew the path of this mystic; the fore he never became popular. Yet legends and miracles would he befitted him, for he was a seer who saw the soul of things and God souls. Only many years after his death did the story circulate one day during Mass, while the Saint was considering himself worthy to receive Holy Communion, one part of the divided consecrated Host flew to his lips, and that his last Communion been like that of Saint Juliana Falconieri—a miraculous penetrat of the consecrated Particles into his heart, because he was not a to receive Holy Viaticum in his last agony. These legends are a phumous homage to that passionate lover of Christ who heralded toult of the Sacred Heart. If he did not write the Office for the fe of Corpus Christi, it was to leave the honor to his brother in letters a sanctity, Saint Thomas; still, he would have deserved to write it, great a poet was he.

Saint Bonaventure is a poet, a poet in his conception of God and of nature, in his extraordinarily modern theory of aesthetics, in t vehemence of his desire, in his vibrant sensibility that asks for lo and does not conceive of happiness outside the embrace of the Aba lute. Franciscanism, then study, and especially grace, mold the Sain on the foundation of passion and genius; but the foundation remain for while sanctity has its halo in heaven, it has its feet on earth, an that foundation glitters under the restrained Latin and breaks fort into flames of lyricism, so distasteful to philosophers. And yet nothing is more fascinating for the modern reader than to see this passion held in check by calm, sometimes close, reasoning; by that yearning fo happiness, that confidence in human perfectability which reveals us a brother in the thirteenth century Doctor. But sanctity divinel transfigures the man, the poet, the thinker, and on his conception life, serene by natural disposition as well as through the influence the Franciscan character and spirit, he projects his faith so as to obtain even from this world, "through grace and industry," the joy the cannot be put in words, the joy of transcending the human.

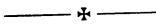
This is the great teaching Saint Bonaventure has bequeathed to man. Others gave it before he did, but no one better conceived it for unlike Saint Bernard and the Victorines, in fact unlike the mystic who preceded him as well as the great number who followed him, he leads man to God not by despising creatures but by valuing them, not by denying life but by transcending it in all its forms. These forms are penetrated with light as with a substantial element and have

Christ as their center. He has said to man: "You can enjoy the happiness of the immortals, provided you convert all the affective and intellective values into the one thing necessary."

Calm in a stormy century, possessing a great knowledge of the world in the quiet of study and the cloister, simple in knowledge, an artist in sanctity, Saint Bonaventure has been recognized as a forerunner of the Renaiseance. He is that, particularly for having conceived religious life as a constant conversion, by his feeling for the concrete, and his adherence to reality—all of which permeate his mysticism. But the Renaissance, as glimpsed by Saint Bonaventure with the divine unawareness of inspired souls, is yet to come, for the one we know so deviated from the Christian spirit that it signified a return to paganism. Even the so-called Christian Renaissance was not inspired by the great Doctor, not even when it is represented by Franciscans of genius, even of holiness, nor by those students of his doctrine nor by those who resurrected his concept in the reform of the Observants, such as Saint Bernardine, Saint John Capistran, Saint James of the Marches. They were fighter preachers; he was a philosopher and a poet. They turned to the masses and developed themes within their grasp and suited to their needs; he spoke heart to heart and demanded thought and effort, for sanctity is an aristocracy. They tended toward a vast social action; he set out to make Franciscan wisdom known through the medium of the University and of the Order, and aimed at the perfection and happiness of the individual. They worked for breadth; he for depth. Yet no one more than he dared invite all men-On most noble Franciscan democracy—to the supernatural joy of ecstasy.

In the global unity of his thought, Saint Bonaventure heralds something better than the Renaissance: the advent of the kingdom of God on earth by purification of creatures through love, by the practice of an ever-ascending life sustained by continual prayer and by the gradual realization from act to act of the mysterious divine embrace.

Fr. Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M., Transl.



THE RIVERS RISE

God: our King is robed with royalty. The Lord: our Power is mantled wth majesty Being alone living in Trinity. founding his throne in shoreless eternity. Awful, inaudible, the rivers rise. Oh Lord. Their crests hiss and roar: Long as the crashing surf, Strong as the heaving surge. So irresistible. are you. Oh Lord. Adored. your revealed word. Holiness. your home. Awesome vour endless Age.

Fr. Hermes, O.F.M.Cap

Sayings of Giles of Assisi

Concerning Love

Love is greater than all other virtues.

Blessed is he who is not sated with the things he ought always to desire. Brother Giles said to a certain friar, his spiritual friend: "Do you believe that I love you?" The friar answered: "I believe it." Brother Giles replied: "Do not believe that I love you; because it is the Creater alone who truly loves the creature, and the love of the creature is nothing compared with the love of the Creator."

And a certain other friar said: "Brother Giles, what is it that the prophet says: Every friend will walk deceitfully (Jerem. 9:4)?" To whom Brother Giles replied: "I am deceitful to you because I do not make your good my own; for the more fully I were to make your good mine, the less deceitful would I be to you. And the more a man rejoices over the good of his neighbor, so much the more does he consequently share in it. If you wish to share in the good of all, then, rejoice in the good of all. Hence, make the good of others your own if you are pleased with it; and make the evil of others your care if you are displeased with it. This is the way of salvation, that you rejoice over the good of your neighbor and grieve over his evil; and that you think well of others and evil of yourself, and that you honor others and despise yourself.

He who is unwilling to honor others shall not be honored; he who is unwilling to know shall not be known; and he who is unwilling to bear fatigue shall not rest.

The labor fruitful above all other labors is to strive for piety and kindliness.

Whatever is done without true love is not pleasing to God or to

A man is made poor by his own works and rich by divine works; therefore a man ought to love divine works and despise his own.

What is greater than to know how to praise the benefits of God and to know how to reprove oneself for one's misdeeds? I wish I could have studied in this school from the beginning of the world, if I had lived, and to study in it until the end of the world, if I were going to live—in the school, that is, of pondering and praising the benefits of

God in pondering and reprehending my own wrongdoings. And if should be deficient in reproving my own misdeeds, I would not want to be deficient in pondering the benefits of God.

You see that mimes and jugglers lavish praises on those who give them one little piece of clothing; what then ought we to do for the Low our God?

You ought to be most faithful in the love of him who desires free you from all evil and who desires to give you every good.

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NATIVITY

Love, open Your Hand That it may close Around my finger and my heart. He smiles-At me And all this place becomes The silent, sole perfection of a small bright bell That rings the world to silence. I have not spoken. I have sought since spring Some sound of welcome For my Son: A word with all myself pressed out of it; The word of the shepherds at the door, The word of this town that sleeps within His light. The word of this grace-filled, silent Gift who is my Spouse. I must speak now in small words And place all my love in them. My Love-our word Is: "Lord!"

Book Review

FROM FASHIONS TO THE FA-THERS. Hilda Graef. Westminster, My.; The Newman Press, 1957. Pp. 329. \$4.00

Hilda Graef's autobiography, more or less camouflaged by the title From Fashions to the Fathers, is more than "just another convert story." It is rather the story of the era and of the school of national-political ideology that reached a brutal culmination in World War II. In telling the story of her life, Miss Graef also tells the story of middle-class Germany from the Kaiser to the Frueher, the conditions, ideals, and systems that made Niziism possible, together with her own spiritual transition from Protestantism in childhood to agnosticism in youth and finally to Catholicism in maturity.

A typical bourgeois Berliner, Hilda Graef was born shortly before World War I. She grew to young girlhood through the turbulent era of post-war Germany when revolutionary mobs, inflation, and near starvation were quite normal. Keenly intelligent, living among the intelligentsia, she received her education during the hectic twenties, and began her teaching career just when the Nazis came into power. Because of her mixed Aryan-Jewish blood, she soon found it necessary to leave Germany. She tried to establish herself in Holland, but found the country thoroughly inhospitable. She then went to England and promptly fell in love with the English people and their culture. Out of affection for her benefactors, she embraced Anglicanism and prepared herself for a teaching career in the church. From Anglicanism the step to Catholicism logically followed. After a brief interlude with the Carmelites Miss Graef finally established herself as a writer in the difficult field of mysticism.

Now a British citizen, she is quite well known in this country for her studies of Theresa Neumann and Edith Stein. Miss Graef's book makes fascinating

reading especially for those who are more or less familiar with the German background she describes. Her criticisms of German education are especially interesting, for while we in America have been so frequently lectured on the superiority of European education, it is precisely the educated classes that Miss Graef blames for Hitler's rise. The amorality we have come to associate with the cultural Germany of the last two regimes stems, according to her, from the overemphasis on classical studies and German literatureespecially Goethe and Nietzsche-and the liberal German Protestantism that sanctioned multiple codes of ethics. It seems inevitable that the impressionable adolescents subjected to the type of educators and education detailed by Miss Graef would almost necessarily have embraced Naziism with unthinking zeal and delight. "Only a few years after leaving school," she writes, "the majority of German university students turned out to be the most ardent supporters of Hitler. A one-sidedly intellectual school education such as I was criticising as soon as I had completed it was, perhaps, not altogether innocent of this. When we received the vote, a year or two after we left school, the great majority of us were certainly quite incapable of understanding any political issues that might confront us." If Miss Greaf's account of her education is factual, it is easy to understand how readily Naziism could be adjusted to the German mentality of the era. For those who wonder how the intelligent German people could possibly have been led into two devastating wars within a period of twenty years, Miss Graef supplies the answer: the German educational system.

As for religion, Mis Graef again blames her educators for her loss of faith. As a critical and already doubting adolescent, she was still fed the milk-and-water Christianity of early childhood. She progressed in her knowledge of every subject excepting religion; that remained stationary. Her remarks in this matter bear quoting: "When, many years later, I read in Catholic papers about the 'leakage' problems among teen-agers, I remembered my own revolt from all religion at that time of my life. I am not sure whether I should have revolted so violently against a true presentation of Christianity. I quite possibly might have. It seems a natural thing that the soul, too, should rebel at a time when the body passes through a period of crisis, and if such be the case, the worst educational policy would be to enforce external conformity. On the other hand, a presentation of Christianity as it really is, as supra-rational not all irrational, as a religion satisfying all human needs, more especially also the youthful instinct of hero-worship, might well have attracted rather than repelled me. The trouble in my case. . .was that after I had lost my child's faith, Christianity had never been presented to me as a "grown-up" religion. Everything else grew and developed. . . only Christianity was just a sentimental story with some incredible miracles attached. That many of the greatest human minds had not only believed but found their complete contentment in it, remained entirely unknown to me." It was not until Miss Graef had left Germany and had begun working in Anglican theology that she first met a "reasonable" Christianity. The highly rational speculations of the Fathers of the Church became the way back to her child's faith, and to the fulness of Christian life, that she finally discovered in Catholicism.

Shortly after her conversion, Miss Graef, true to the general pattern, felt drawn to the religious life. Her brief sojourn in a Carmelite convent makes one of the more amusing chapters in the book, but one cannot help wondering how a religious house such as Miss Graef describes could long survive. Even allowing for her avowed lack of vocation and for the inevitable lack of sympathy for some of the practices of the cloistered life (and it must be admitted that religious sometimes do confuse the childlike and the childish) the attitudes that prevailed in her monastery leave the reader thinking his own sad thoughts.

Much healthier, in a sense, though far less amusing, is Miss Graef's account of her experience with Theresia Neumann. Although many Catholics in this country were properly shocked at Miss Graef's opinion of Theresia, the story of her meeting with the celebrated stigmatic leaves the reader reassured as to the justification of her position.

On the whole, Hilda Graef's autobiography is well worth a thoughtful reading Educators will find it especially provocative.

G.A.S.

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