

the CORD

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THE GIFT OF FAITH

Fr. Geoffrey G. Bridges, O.F.M.

A flower buds, blooms, gives off a sweet odor because it has within it the life principle of a flower. A dog barks, scratches fleas with his hind paw and wears out his teeth on bones because he has the life principle of a dog. And a squirrel plays tag around a tree trunk and stores up nuts for the winter because of his particular life principle. Each has its own nature; each operates within its nature and cannot go outside of it. Roses do not bark on recognizing their master nor do they store up nuts for the winter.

We humans think and will, talk and laugh, eat and sleep because we have the life principle of human beings within us. We have our natural faculties with which we perform natural acts. Following the analogy of the lower creatures, we would say that human beings must operate within their given nature and cannot go outside of it. Yet we know by faith that human beings have a supernatural destiny which demands of them supernatural acts. Which brings up the question: how is it possible for us to live and act supernaturally? A man simply cannot perform supernatural acts with the natural soul he has. The effect would be greater than the cause. What then is the supernatural life principle in us that makes us supernatural men, capable of supernatural actions?

The supernature, superimposed on our human nature, is actually threefold. We are made capable of imitating the divine life by means of the gifts of Jesus Christ: faith, hope and charity. Just as in natural activity we have a vital principle, the soul, which acts through its faculties, the intellect and will; so Jesus Christ in Baptism has equipped us with what we might at least figuratively call faculties whereby we may act supernaturally. Through these "faculties" we have our new nature and share in the divine life. It follows that the spiritual life, about which you have heard and read so much, is mainly the exercise of faith, hope and charity—since charity is virtually the same as sanctifying grace, and charity is the supernaturalizer of all the virtues

outside of faith and hope. Even the sacraments must be linked up with charity, because they are channels of grace or charity. And so they remain foremost in our spiritual lives "faith, hope and charity, the three; but the greatest of these is charity." (I Cor. 13,13)

Faith, the Foundation

If charity is the greatest, yet faith is the foundation. It is the introduction to the supernatural life. I am sure that in your reading of the Scriptures you have noticed that Jesus asked one thing of all from his followers, from those he forgave, from those he cured with faith. Jesus was preaching in a crowded house. Some men brought a friend to be cured. Not finding it possible to work their way into the house, they literally tore the roof off the house and lowered the friend down before Jesus. And Matthew tells us: "Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'Take courage son; thy sins are forgiven thee.'" (Mt. 9,2) Two blind men sought out Jesus asking for sight. Jesus asked them: "Do you believe that I can do this to you?" They answered him, "Yes, Lord." And immediately came the reply: "Let it be done unto you according to your faith." (Mt. 9,29) A woman, old and poor from doctor bills, believed that if she but touched the hem of the Savior's garment she would be cured. And Jesus turning toward her said, "Take courage, daughter," he said, "thy faith has saved thee." (Mt. 9,22) From the lepers, the blind, the lame, from those afflicted because of their sins, he first demanded faith. Where there is faith there is deliverance, not only from physical ills but also from sin. It was not only charity that saved Magdalen. Jesus told her when he was dismissing her, "The faith has saved thee; go in peace." (Lk. 7,50) This is the law of the supernatural life: "(God) makes just him who has faith in Jesus." (Rom. 3,26) But where there is no faith there is no deliverance. Of his home town of Nazareth we read: "and because of their unbelief, he did not work many miracles there." (Mt. 13,58) But more decisively in his commission of the Apostles Jesus stated: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned." (Mk. 16,16)

Substance of Things To Be Hoped For

Faith, then, is the first demand that Jesus Christ makes upon the prospective Christian in return for his supernatural gifts. It is the first virtue that Christ claims from those who approach Him. And yet even this is a gift from him. We cannot take that first step without being lifted up to the supernatural plane by the infused virtue of faith.

St. Paul defines faith as "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen." (Heb. 11,1) Faith, first of all, gives the power to grasp divine realities. It inclines us to assent to the fact of the Trinity, the real presence on the altar; and for a definite reason: because it is God who has revealed these things to us. This is all the evidence we need. Faith builds a solid, unshakable bridge between our limited understanding and certainty. What St. Paul tells us is that faith initiates us into the mysteries of God, but not entirely. There is still obscurity. We are united with what we believe in. But we perceive through a veil in an obscure way. True vision is the heavenly reward of faith. But he tells us in no uncertain terms that though faith is not vision, though it is obscure, still it is absolutely certain. Faith is the evidence, the proof, of things not seen. The very merit of faith comes from (and this is the way one lady defined faith for her pastor) "taking God at his word."

We can see from this description of the virtue of faith that it is something supernatural, something beyond our merits. Certainly nothing we can do will *earn* this gift for us. It is a gratuitous gift of a generous and loving Saviour. It is the first of the pieces of spiritual equipment that he gives us so that we might be united with him and live for him on earth as enlightened co-lovers. On our part this gift of faith calls for eternal and deep gratitude. But consider this too. Since the gift is supernatural, the increase of it must also be beyond our merits. It is true, that by God's generous plan an increase is given when we perform certain acts; but the increase is nevertheless wholly gratuitous. So, we must say that both faith and its increase are supernatural, free gifts of God; conditioned, however, on certain acts on our part. And how generous is the gift in comparison with what is demanded of us. May God be praised who gives so much and demands so little in return.

Using the Gift

What we must fear is that we neglect this gift of God, that we take it for granted. The best way to show our gratitude for such a gift is to use it the way God intended it to be used. The means of using and increasing our faith are so numerous and important that I would like to speak of them in another conference. For the moment I would speak somewhat in general about the increase of faith.

You received the supernatural gift of faith most probably in infancy, in the sacrament of Baptism. The power and the inclination to believe supernaturally was kindled in your soul like a pilot light. But

it is not intended that it remain such. You are supposed to fan it into a blaze, increase it that it might lead you further into the secrets of God's nature. For your whole purpose in life is to be a co-lover with Christ of God, whom you know now only through faith.

Naturally this gift had to lie dormant while your intellect was developing. But then, perhaps when you were still very young, your parents began to present to you the truths of God. If you believed first because your mother said it was so, then that wasn't the gift working yet; that was human faith. But here came a time when you believed these things "because God said so." And that was supernatural faith, your gift at work. At that time you didn't have to have the reasonableness or the proofs of the Trinity, or the Divine Presence, or the divine maternity explained to you. It was sufficient for you that God said there is a Father and a Son and a Holy Spirit yet one God, that Jesus is truly present in the Host, that Mary was truly the mother of the Son of God. And that was pure faith—the kind of faith that even now despite our reading and study we should try to cultivate. All we need for an act of faith is a revealed truth and the assurance that God revealed it. Then if we are sincere our will will move our intellect to assent. And our intellect has the power to assent to even the most sublime and profound truths without any question, precisely because of the infused gift of faith. The more prompt and sincere and child-like our faith is the more glory we give to God.

The question naturally arises, if such simple and child-like faith is so pleasing to God, what is the use of study? Or to put it in another way, when we say with the catechism that one of our main purposes in life is to know God, is simple faith all that is meant? Certainly not. In the spirit of the Scholastics we should seek each according to our opportunity and ability to understand what we believe and so increase our faith and our conviction.

Actually we have to strike a medium between two extreme attitudes today. We are in an age when on one hand faith is belittled. There are so many scientists and intellectuals who will accept nothing which they cannot verify with their senses. They think we stultify ourselves by believing what we cannot see. Yet we should not let their scorn make us ashamed of the simplicity of our faith. It is our glory. Faith does not degrade us; it perfects our souls and our personalities. We should not be ashamed if at times all that we can say about a truth is: I don't know how it is true; all I know is that God said it is so and therefore I believe. Such an act of faith, even if made by a first-

grade child, far outshines in glory and dignity all the thought and reasoning that goes into a modern theory, say of a mathematical genius like Einstein. For our act proceeds from a supernatural power planted in our soul by Jesus Christ.

But on the other hand there are those who devote an inordinate amount of attention to current prophecies, alleged apparitions and private revelations. Note that I say "inordinate" attention to "alleged" apparitions and revelations. For once the Church has approved these things they are matter for our supernatural gift of faith. But there are those, we must say, who have more credulity than faith, who chase after novelties and give credence uncritically to every new prophecy concerning the end of the world, to every report of a "weeping Virgin." These distract their minds from the fundamental truths of divine revelation and thus easily turn their religion into a mere emotional response. What they need, and all who would use and develop their faith according to God's plan, is to ponder over in prayer and study the fundamental mysteries and truths of the "good news" of the Gospel. By reading the Scripture and the works of the masters of theology and of the spiritual life we come upon new truths to believe; or at least new aspects of old truths are opened to us. And thus study contributes to growth in the scope of our virtue of faith. Prayerful reading strengthens our convictions and spurs us on to numerous acts of faith.

We might compare the mysteries of God's nature, of the Sacraments, of the Church to a dark corridor. The man who enters carrying but the light of human reason can only dimly perceive what is to be seen there, if he succeeds in seeing anything at all. But the man who enters with the light of faith immediately lights up the corridor and sees stretching before him a panorama of beauty. Faith sets us inside the corridor and lights up the mysteries. Study and prayer and contemplation lead us along the corridor revealing new aspects, new connections, new perfections. We can ever go deeper, and still the corridor stretches our life before us into the infinity of God. We shall never reach the end; we shall never quite comprehend the thread of significance that ties all the mysteries together, not even when after death the light of faith is replaced by the light of glory. But the measure of our knowledge of God and our satisfaction in the sight of him in heaven depends on our quest of him through faith and study and contemplation on this earth.

Divine Life

This, then, is the first of God's supernatural gifts to us: faith, the light that leads us into the depths of the mysteries of God's nature and of his relations to us. But it is more than light. It is life. We know that God's life consists in knowing and loving Himself. Faith gives us a share in God's life in that it gives us the power to know God in a manner similar to the way he knows Himself.

By faith our intellects are reclaimed and rededicated to God; they are reformed in his image. As we have learned already, our intellects were seriously affected by original sin. Adam's intellect before the Fall was an unmarred mirror of the divine intellect. But now, in consequence of his original sin, our intellects are darkened in their natural state; our thinking does not resemble the divine. But God through Jesus Christ in his goodness had mercy on us. He has given us the gift of faith to restore the likeness of God in our intellect. Faith regulates, purifies, transforms our intellects. The initial power and inclination which is infused in Baptism, however, only starts this process. It is the daily exercise of faith, the daily living of faith, that will complete it. That is why growth in this virtue is so important.

Foundation of the Virtues

Faith will enter into all of our conferences on the theological and cardinal virtues. It is the foundation of all the virtues. If we do not believe we would not practice any of the supernatural virtues, not even charity. Without faith we could not practice the cardinal virtue, for faith supplies the supernatural norm. And we will thus make progress in developing the other virtues directly in proportion to the intensity of our faith. This foundation, therefore, must be strong and firm and it must keep growing, if we are to grow in the other virtues.

This, then, is the gift of faith that you have received, "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is the light that reveals to you the mysteries of God. It is the life of God which he shares with you. It is the introduction to the supernatural life; it is the foundation of your spiritual life. It is the first motive of all the virtues; it is the norm of the moral virtues. It is the gift of God which restores the likeness of God in our intellects. It is the necessary condition for us to fulfill our role and purpose in life as co-lovers of God through Jesus and Mary.

On The "Franciscan Approach To Theology"

Fr. Theophane Kalinowski, O.F.M.

Delivered during the opening Mass of the Sixth National Meeting of the Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods at the Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wis., Nov. 29, 1957, by the Very Rev. Theophane Kalinowski, OFM, Minister Provincial, Assumption Province.

This Sixth National Meeting of the Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods, congregated here to discuss the theme "The Franciscan Approach to Theology" begins with the truly Franciscan approach to important matters—with Christ and in Christ, through His infinite Sacrifice of the Mass.

We meet as Francis and Clare, as practiced later by his companies and her associates, to ponder over the infinite treasures of Franciscan Theology, to study the salutary Franciscan approach to the knowledge of God and His creation. And we prayerfully hope that each and every son and daughter of St. Francis participating in these important discussions will, by the grace of God, carry away in his and her heart an enriched store of hallowed, Franciscan Treasures into their respective communities and fields of labor, to be shared with their co-workers and charges.

St. Clare and her companions expressed a devout yearning for the direction of St. Francis and his friars. This large concourse of Sisters of St. Francis gives evidence of the same yearning for the direction and enlightenment of the Friars of St. Francis in their search for the treasures they know to be present in the fount of Franciscanism.

The sons of St. Francis, guided by the spirit of the Poverello, in fulfillment of the obligation they sense to be theirs, are today in your midst, prepared to guide you along the approach to the rich store of Franciscan Theology. They will traverse with you the beaten Franciscan paths to God, and delve into the seraphic treasures that lead to the knowledge of God. I am confident that each one of you will enrich

your hearts and minds in proportion to your participation in the discussions and to the magnitude of your zeal for opening avenues to God more appropriate to your vocation.

You know well the axiom: "Nemo dat quod non habet"—"None can give what he does not possess."

Of course, I dare say that practically all of you are masters in the technique of education. Yet how many of us can boast of a truly Franciscan technique in our teaching apostolate? How many of us teach in the effective and affective mode of St. Francis and the great host of his seraphic sons, not by creating a mere learning in their charges, but by producing an efficacious knowledge of God and His creation, in order that they might more fruitfully fulfill the purpose of their life, and thus more readily find their spiritual way to God—their eternal Goal.

Only too generally does the education of the present day make men proud, selfish, avaricious, greedy for position, power and wealth, distrustful of their neighbor, solely intent on making a success of himself in and for the world. It has created a stupendous "Sputnik" which produced undue pride of a nation and consequent fear in all the others. Yet how humbled should we be if after all the expended time, expense and effort, a mere toy is launched into space, which in comparison to God's Universe is as nothing. The education we impart without any approach to God can effect at most such toys which will fizzle with time.

St. Francis and his followers have evolved an approach to the knowledge of God and His creation that we should not fail to apply in our apostolate.

The Poverello, bereft by choice of all but God, soared by intuitive knowledge into the intimate secrets of Theology. He absorbed every beam of inspired thought and placed it in the service of love. His one text book was the Gospel—the whole Gospel, which revealed to him the whole, living Christ, God-man—the center of creation, the model of mankind.

From the Gospel and from Christ of the Gospel St. Francis attained his lofty theological wisdom—a Christocentric finality.

Our Seraphic Father was determined to continually and constantly recopy within himself as perfectly as possible all the virtues of Christ, and by the special grace of God soon conformed himself to the whole Christ—the loving, merciful, pure, obedient, poor, the crucified Christ, the Eucharistic Christ.

These ideas and realizations of the Gospel matured and enriched the mind, the heart, the spirit, and the life of Francis with a grand Christocentric Theology, and opened for him infinite spiritual vistas, where he realized the height of religious experiences—an intimate union with Christ—with God.

Thus St. Francis gave the Christocentric finality to our theology approach. He created the framework of this Evangelical Theology in his Holy Rule. He demonstrated an exemplary orientation by his devoted life of the Gospel which he animated effectively and affectively by his unselfish love of God and His creation. For the Seraphic Father, unlimited love, developed, perfected, and given finality, became the guiding element in his entire theological program.

Further, inasmuch as St. Francis had such a great devotion and love for the humanity of Christ, since Christ's humanity had its origin in Mary's "Fiat," it was natural that this devotion and love became at the same time MARIAN.

The Poverello thus cast for us by his completely dedicated Gospel life and his Holy Rule this overwhelming basis of Christocentric and Mariological Theology.

It is true that St. Francis disdained the vanity of education and knowledge, but when this knowledge became a mine of love, as in the case of St. Anthony, he sent his blessing upon it with great acclaim.

His sons too desired to know only to love—to pursue knowledge only to love more perfectly.

The great Franciscan Doctors: the Evangelical Doctor St. Anthony of Padua, the Seraphic Doctor St. Bonaventure, and the Subtle and Marian Doctor Blessed Duns Scotus, systematized their Seraphic Founder's approach to theology by their sublime and devotional concepts and their philosophical and theological doctrines. What St. Francis lived, they put into thoughts and ideas; they analyzed them, clarified them; they assigned to them a scholastic terminology, and formulated them into a system and method.

Then followed an era of interpretation and translation into ACT of this Franciscan theological system by the Seraphic Saints: above all, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. John Capistran, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Sixtus of Cantalice, St. Peter Regalatus, St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Michael Baylon and a host of others. For all of these great Franciscan Apostles and Saints the approach of Theology was the same as for St. Francis—affective rather than speculative. It was Theocentric, Christocentric, and Mariological. Further, it was characterized by love, by a love of God, love of Christ Crucified. The Franciscan theologians delved

into the mysteries of divine life to know more in order to make loved the divine designs in creation and redemption. They gave full consideration to the humanity of Christ, to His Infancy, His life, His Passion, His Eucharistic Sacrifice, His virtues. They desired and strived for a complete conformity to Him, and stressed the riches of grace, the divine ascent by renunciation of mundane ties, the salutary retributive power of penance, and the spiritual wealth in a sacramental life. Love was their key to all spiritual treasures. They extolled Mary's prerogatives, especially her Immaculate Conception, Divine Maternity and Maternity of Mankind and her Universal Mediation of Grace.

Now, what is being done with this Franciscan Theological deposit today? How does Franciscanism fit into the framework of current world affairs and educational progress?

In viewing the closely knit, struggling world today we find confusion, a complexity in life and education, Materialism, Secularism, Godless Communism, personal and international antagonism, selfish pursuit of temporal gain, avarice, strife, license, and independence from God and man.

Truly this age needs a Francis. It needs a Franciscan movement, a positive, Christocentric movement, a return to God through a universal Gospel life, through a crusade of love. This age needs Franciscans with a lively Christocentric spirit, who are imbued with the principles of the Gospel, who live the Gospel life, who can sincerely call out with his Seraphic Father, "My God and My All!"

Yes, we Franciscans are the logical apostles for the task. However, the term "Franciscan" is not a magic word that will right all things in this world of ours. We cannot give to the world what we do not possess. The effect in this world what we owe to mankind as Franciscans, we must be endowed with and fulfill everything that "Franciscan" and "Franciscanism" entails. We must become what our religious state connotes and requires. We must revive the vigor of Franciscan Spirituality, the evangelical spirit of St. Francis. We must rekindle our seraphic love. We must redirect our hearts and minds to the Christocentric finality. We with a universal cooperation, a unity of purpose, courage, sacrifice, love and Christ in us we can and will succeed.

To do justice to the task, to meet the spirit, the mentality, the complexity, the need of the age, it is necessary to reorganize our teaching efforts. We must utilize what our Franciscan vocation and seraphic deposit affords us. We must redirect our approach to Truth in

education, along Franciscan lines, our approach to Theology according to a well developed Franciscan Synthesis.

The Reverend Fathers who are to present their respective treatises during this Sixth National Meeting of the Franciscan Sisterhoods, are members of the Board of Franciscan Theologians who were entrusted with the preparation of a Franciscan Synthesis of Theology, affording Franciscan educators a Seraphic approach to Theology. The papers to be presented to you by the respective theologians pertain to the sections which each has been preparing for the Synthesis throughout the last few years.

The Venerable Sisters assigned to lead the discussions have likewise prepared their topics, and each Sister Delegate present here her ideas and problems to propose. The composite resulting fruit will be most beneficial.

The Holy Ghost will direct upon you rays of light and wisdom. . . Divine grace will channel your thoughts and hearts toward the solutions, directives, and truth, upon which all Franciscans will depend in their apostolate.

May the loving Jesus inspire you during your deliberations with an Evangelical spirit and zeal, His Immaculate Mother shower you with choicest graces, and may St. Francis with all the Saints of the Seraphic Order enflame your hearts with true seraphic love and guide you along their holy path. May the Triune God bless you! "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

PSALM FOR THE STIGMATA

Now in fecund September
 When the summer is known by its fruits,
 When earth bides the cycle of promise,
 And life trusts its futures to roots,
 Now when the sun flows like honey
 Warmed down the azurequick day,
 Let all the world psalm the season
 That brings such a harvest from clay.
 Let all the world turn to Love-fruit
 And listen upon its knees
 While an Umbrian hill is a harvest of love
 And Seraphim sings through the trees.

Sister M. Florian, O.S.F.

OUR LIFE IN GOD

—HOW TO LIVE THE INTERIOR LIFE—

Fr. Bruce Ignatowski, O.F.M. Cap.

In the November 11th, 1957, issue of "The Time Magazine," in the "Religion Section", a unique contest was open to all clergymen and religious educators. A total of \$40,000 was offered in prizes. The 1st prize was \$10,000. It probably would have been useless for a Catholic to have entered the contest because the non-profit and non-denominational organization that sponsored the contest does not believe all that the Catholic Church teaches, particularly of Sanctifying and Habitual Grace. The Grace of God is not only an absolute necessity for being born into the Supernatural Life, but also for growing and dying in that state. But for most of the Protestant sects, these are non-existent, and, for all of them, understood in different light.

The following questions had to be answered to claim a prize in the unusual contest:

1. How can man be made and kept conscious of the presence of God within him?
2. How can man be inspired to accept the Partnership of God and practice the presence of God—promote a way of life that gives practical expression to the God-force within him?
3. How can children be made to believe "God is my ever-present Partner"?

These questions are amazing because they reveal emphatically the strivings of Protestant souls to attain the interior life, a closer intimacy—personal and real—with God. After over four centuries of separation from the Holy Catholic Church, Protestants have "discovered" the very heart and soul of the interior life!

Mere externals of worship are not enough to satisfy man. For man is composed of *both* body and soul. No matter how many contests are conducted, or, how well these questions are answered by the Protestants, they can never have true, steady growth in the Spiritual Life without the Holy Eucharist. "Unless you eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, you shall not have life in you!") Without the priesthood their

"Sacrament" is only symbolical, a memorial. Despite the fact, however, that Catholics have the Eucharist, the Fountain of Abundant Life, they too, are yet spiritually hungry. Here's why.

Holy Communion is, as the very name implies, a communing with God. Most Catholics reserve this communing for their Thanksgiving immediately after the reception of Our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist. But—that is as far as it goes! In other words, Catholics fail "to go all the way." This is a sad mistake. For the crowning, the completion of the Sacrament is its prolongation, its extension throughout the course of the day. It is well-known that Jesus remains with us SACRAMENTALLY for about 15 minutes. But—here's the point—He remains with us ACCORDING TO HIS DIVINITY as long as we remain in the state of Grace! How, just as Christ is not ignored during the time of Thanksgiving, so too, should He not be ignored during the rest of the day! Since the Divine Nature cannot be divided, where the Son of God is present, the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit are present as well.

Mrs. Catherine de Houek Doherty, in a lecture given at Catholic University of America on February 6, 1953, stated, among many things, that what we need most today is—now, get this—what we need most is a CONTEMPLATIVE LAITY! Believe it or not! Her reason for saying so is sound: "For the spiritual foundation is far more important than any action!" Our Lord expressed His view in this wise: "Mary has chosen the better part!"

In the December, 1956, issue of the Catholic Quarterly Magazine, "The Spiritual Life," published by the Discalced Carmelites, Father Michael of the Holy Family, O.C.D., writes, "Contemplation is NORMAL in the development of the life of grace and virtues. It does not require any extraordinary or unusual mystical experiences. It is simply a loving infused knowledge of God and divine things." St. John of the Cross, the Mystical Doctor of the Church, says that God would grant contemplation to all, if all souls would be generous and cooperative enough. In other words, the fault of a stagnant spiritual life lies mainly with us.

In brief, contemplation is perfected meditation. It is meditation simplified. It is prayer in its simplest and loveliest form. Mrs. Catherine de Houek Doherty explains it from a lay person's point of view and in their own language: "A young couple in love always think over what was said the night before. They can think of it long after no matter what they are doing. Why? Because they are in love." Mrs. Catherine de Houek Doherty continues, "Lovers on a park bench

say nothing. They just sit and look at each other. They are in love. They need not words." On which account the former Russian Baroness advises: "We do our work, and, at the same time, (love and) listen. God in silence. . . just as a mother does the dishes, and listens to her children, in silence, at the same time."

St. Francis of Assisi urged his followers to, "Make of your body a cell; and you be the hermit that dwells in it!" That is why a favorite Scriptural text among the Franciscan Orders is, "God is Love; and who remains in love; remains in God and God in him!" Father Vittorio Osende, O.P., gives a beautiful commentary on this text, in his spiritual classic, "Fruits of Contemplation": "Charity is God Himself living within our souls. It is personal and infinite Love loving Himself within our hearts. To exercise ourselves in charity, therefore, is to give way to God in our hearts. It is to detach ourselves from everything and to make ourselves an absolute vacuum in order that God may fill us with Himself. . . 'Perfection does not consist in doing great things, but in letting God be made great within us!' (Tauler)." It is by virtue of Baptism that we are made Temples of God. Technically this is called "The Divine Indwelling." The Three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, live in our soul as long as we do not cast Them out by mortal sin. Moreover, they dwell in us in a very special manner—according to the Persons! It could not be more perfect on this earth! Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity expressed this truth in a powerful and clear manner: "Except for the Beatific Vision, we possess God in the very same way as the Blessed in Heaven!" Oh, if this truth were only fully realized!

Sacred Scripture is replete with texts to prove its importance and its source in the very teachings of Jesus Christ. Did not Jesus declare "The Kingdom of God is within you?" But the lengthiest treatment was given at the Last Supper. It can be found in Chapters 13 to 17 inclusive of St. John's Gospel. These chapters could very well be called "The Gospel of the Divine Indwelling." Meditating on these chapters will convince the reader of the need and necessity of leading an interior life, a spiritual life. For there is NO greater authority than Jesus Christ Himself!

We have arrived at the "practical side" of the answers to those questions. These answers are not meant to "raise eyebrows" but rather to move the will into action. They are meant to be made as natural and normal a part of daily routine as eating, sleeping and working. Habits such as these pay dividends beyond calculation. Here they are:

1. Every hour on the hour, at least, recite a short *Spiritual Communion*. For example: "All love, adoration and thanksgiving be

to the Most Blessed Trinity, Who live and act in my soul, now and forever!" The children can say an even shorter one like: "O my God, living in me, I love You!"

2. At every "Glory Be" at the end of each decade of the Holy Rosary, turn an inward glance to the Triune God living and acting in the soul—an inward LOVING glance, without words.
3. *When walking*, in the wind, say, "It is God Who is embracing me in the breeze." When walking in the sun, say, "It is God's love that keeps me warm." When shivering in the cold, say, "Without God's love, life is cold, dreary and monotonous." When walking in the woods, or, when viewing them from a car, say, "It is God's power that is shown in their existence; His infinite knowledge that is seen in their variety; His magnificent Beauty that is revealed in their external splendor." And so forth and so on. Put the imagination to work. Like St. Francis of Assisi, exercise a "Sacramental View of All Creation!" Let everything be a reminder of God.
4. *When working and recreating*, do so as if it were being done—with God, in God and through God. For example, imagine that the air is a thick fog—that nothing can be seen except through that thick fog; that no place can be reached except in that fog and that nothing can be done except through that thick fog. And imagine that that fog is God Himself! Thus a vital fact will be kept uppermost in mind, namely, that our souls are immersed, penetrated and permeated by God. St. Paul put it well: In Him we move and live and have our being! It may very well be that the word, "in," is the key word of the interior life.
5. *See God in One's Neighbor*. Remember that when a person loves his fellow man, it is God, Who lives in him, Who is drawing that person to Himself, through him!
6. Choose the subject of the Divine Indwelling as a frequent topic of the *Particular Examination of Conscience*. It is recommended that this be done at the noon meal, right after saying the Grace Before Meals. It takes but a minute. According to Father Tanquerry, S.S., the daily Particular Examen is even more important than the daily Meditation. Not that he advocates indifference toward meditation. On the contrary, in his own way, he merely wishes to emphasize the utter importance of the Particular Examen.

In the Particular Examen we choose a certain virtue we wish to acquire, or, a certain fault which we wish to eliminate, and examine

ourselves daily on our progress or retrogression, for one month. It will to change the topic every First Friday of the month.

7. Whenever a person attends a Mass in which he will not receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, he should substitute the Holy Communion, a Spiritual Communion, like one given previously, but in this case, a lengthier one. For example:

O Beloved Triune God, living and acting in me! I love You, love You, love You, and I wish to love You more and more!

Let my soul feel Your blessed Presence and have joy of it!

Let nothing take Your happiness—which is mine—away from me!

All honor and glory be to You: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever!

Let me constantly see Your reflection in my neighbour and love them because of You! Bless with a special blessing all those who misunderstand me or, whom I find difficult to get along with.

Embrace Your Mother in me! Mary Immaculate, embrace Your God in me!

Make me more and more a part of heaven! Beloved Triune God! May I through Mary, become one with You as You are One in Three!

Amen.

Without realizing it, that person will be led to a more frequent reception of Holy Communion. They go hand in hand.

8. Compose a brief song, a "Spiritual Jingle"—just a line or two and sing it often. As is known from experience, any song that reaches the "Hit Parade" is sung and heard everywhere, consciously and unconsciously. That is the very purpose of the "spiritual jingle." Namely, to drive it into the very marrow of one's bones, so that one reverts to it without thinking. For example: compose a tune to these words: "My God and My All in me and I in Him; my Beloved all around me too!" Thus one can become, as St. Francis of Assisi was, a "Troubadour of the Crucified King!"

9. Physical exercises are promoted extensively nowadays. We Americans sit and ride too much. Now just as physical exercises are needed to develop the muscles, so likewise "Spiritual Exercises" are needed to have the soul grow in the spiritual life. The following recommendation combines both.

Walk up and down a room every day for about 5 minutes, repeating over and over again, as those steps are taken, some spiritual axiom like, "In Him we move and live and have our being!" This can be employed also when walking to a store, going up and down the stairs, strolling in a park or woods, or entering and leaving a church. Drilling such an axiom into the

very marrow of one's bones will find one reverting to it daily more and more frequently until God is in reality one's ever-present Companion!

10. The final pointer. Read *Spiritual Books* that treat of the Interior Life and the Divine Indwelling. Books by such authors as St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Peter of Alcantara, Father Thomas Vernor Moore, Father Boylan, Father Leen, and Thomas Merton. Or, books on the spirituality of holy souls like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventure, the Little Flower, Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity and St. Lawrence of Brindisi. God helps those who help themselves. Spiritual reading is necessary fuel to feed the fires of our love for God.

These practical pointers are more than enough to put anyone well on the road to leading a wonderful and sound spiritual life. Is it any wonder that St. Francis of Assisi wrote in his Rule, "And let them have what is above all things to be desired, the Spirit of the Lord and His holy operation"? That this truth is most necessary even for beginners is well-proven from the fact that St. Francis emphasized the Divine Indwelling in his very FIRST (public) sermon in the Public Square of Assisi.

The interior life is fairly well summed-up in these words of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, a Carmelite Nun who died at Dijon, France in 1906:

God is in me and I am in Him. I have only to love Him, to let myself be loved, at all times, in all circumstances. To awake in love, to sleep in love, my heart in His Heart, that I may be purified and delivered from my miseries by contact with Him.

Blessed Lord put it even more briefly. In His discourse at the Last Supper Jesus declared: "You have only to live on in Me, and I will live on in you!"

It must never be forgotten that we live to die. If the life we lead is an interior life, then we will die well, and then, receive the Grand Eternal Glory, where we will see Face to Face, that Adorable Most Lovable God, Three in One, Whom we already possessed and enjoyed in a most intimate manner during our exile on earth.



“AND GOD BLESSED THEM”

*A Brief History of the School Sisters of St. Francis
of Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Sister M. Cecil, O.S.

The ways of God are strange! What could be more pleasing Him than a small community of nuns offering their lives for His honor and glory in the service of others? Why was the ruthless Chancellor Bismarck permitted to promulgate his May Laws of 1870 which aimed to suppress papal jurisdiction and undermine the Church in Germany? Why should innocent nuns be disbanded from their convents and sent into exile? For such is what happened to a small group of Franciscan Sisters who saw in the upheavals of the day the hand of God and trusted Him implicitly.

Their beginnings had been lowly. Reverend Dean Francis X Lender, a curate at Schwarzach in 1859, found himself responsible for five little orphans whose parents had died within a few weeks of each other. From his meager savings he managed to purchase a house and then solicited the aid of a pious young lady of the parish to help him. Two came to his assistance only to be followed shortly by five more orphans. No longer was his two-storey house sufficient for the needs of his family but a Provident Father provided when a nearby orphanage closed, making Father Lender an unusual legacy of fifty orphans, much furniture, furnishings for a chapel and \$3,000. Thus he was able to purchase the former residence of the imperial magistrate and the adjoining garden to house his group of now thirty-four young sisters. When their number reached six, Father Lender suggested that they bind themselves together under a common rule and consecrate themselves by vows. The Rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis became the basis of their Constitutions and the Archbishop of Freiburg approved their statutes on September 29, 1859. Thus they were permitted to adopt their religious habit and to pronounce their holy vows on October 4, 1859. God was pleased with their start and blessed and increased their number.

And then the Kulturkampf and the Bishop's orders to disband and to lay aside their religious garb or go into exile! Seven of the Sisters determined to remain at the orphanage as pious lay women.

The other three considered accepting the invitation of Father Alfons Ratisbonne, the renowned Jewish convert, of going to Jerusalem to help him in converting his race. But as St. Francis prayed that God might show him the way of life to follow, so too, did this band of three. They also sought the advice of the saintly Capuchin Provincial, Father Alfons of Mainz, for whom Sister Alfons was named. Mother Alexia was not a dreamer, but even at the risk of being scoffed as one, her gratitude to God urged her to reveal His answer and the way in which it was given. In a dream she saw their little group of three aboard an ocean liner with many other religious and bound for America. Then she saw three virgins come down from heaven, lead by St. Philomena who held in her hands a flag with red and white stripes and a field of blue flecked with white stars, and who said, “Have courage and trust in God.” Shortly after, Father Alfons's answer arrived: “In God's name go to America.”

Thus on October 12, 1873 when the liner “Cologne” entered New York Harbor from Bremen, seventy religious exiles were aboard including the three. They had not come to America of sheer necessity, but in response to what they felt was the expressed will of God in order to help the American clergy in their parochial schools. Under the leadership of Mother Alexia, whose appearance indicated determination, practicality and fearlessness, followed Sister Alfons whose whole person radiated idealism, purpose and kindness together with Sister Clara who gave the impression of serenity and humble meekness. Like most newcomers to this land of opportunity the journey was not quite over. Through the dingy wharves and streets of old New York the trio found their way to a train bound for Philadelphia where there were friends from home. But none of them felt that this was the place for them so they were soon heading West to the huge industrial city of Chicago which was still recovering from its Great Fire of 1871. Again a dream seemed to prepare Mother. Taking shelter with her relatives there, the trio sought out a Church, Saint Joseph's Church, to thank God for His Providence. Upon sight of the old frame church Mother knew that the priests would be robed in the black habit of the Benedictines and that there would be a tall pale distinguished priest who would be interested in their cause, (Father Meinrad) and that there would be a red-haired one (Father Gerard) who would be their champion. And so it was.

Time passed but it was Mother's implicit trust in Saint Joseph that lifted their spirits up and their fingers busy teaching the girls of the

neighborhood the intricate stitches of Bavarian needlecraft. This it was Father Gerard who had the dream. One night shortly after retiring, his bedroom door opened and a venerable old man entered and stood before him. He was strangely familiar and so natural that to allay the priest's amazement, the visitor began in a kind of chiding tone: "Father Gerard, you must not be distressed about the Sisters. They must go to Wisconsin to the place I have determined for them. I have been there before them and made ready for their coming. All will be well with them." When Father recognized the visitor to be Saint Joseph, he turned over contentedly and fell into untroubled sleep. After his Mass of Thanksgiving the following morning, a Wednesday, he found two letters of invitation for the Sisters at his breakfast place. One was from Bishop Fink of Leavenworth and the other was from Bishop Heiss of LaCrosse. His joy for the Sisters was unbounded and hastening to inform the Sisters of his good news, he was filled with amazement to hear Mother Alexia announce that they were going to LaCrosse, even before he had told her.

Father Gerard offered to accompany them to Milwaukee where he would introduce them to Mother Caroline of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. This noble and commanding religious offered the Sisters a home to come home until they had learned to speak English for she well knew the difficulties of braving a new land with a strange tongue. She encouraged them in their endeavor to found a new community for themselves and likewise realized the need for religious teachers in parochial schools to meet the needs of the growing Church amidst the great influx of Catholic immigrants.

Again God visibly intervened. While the three Franciscans were ending their farewells, for it was almost train time, a Reverend Father Michael of New Cassel called upon Mother Caroline with a petition for three Sisters for his school in the fall. She introduced the three travelers to him and mentioned that they were planning to found a new community devoted to teaching. But as trains had no way of leaving on schedule there was no time further visiting and the trio knelt for the blessings of good Father Gerard and of the Reverend Father Michael who annoyed Mother Alexia terribly with the cloud of smoke issuing from his only luxury—a cigar. Unknown to Mother Alexia, the "Pillar of Light" for them was transferred from one champion to another, for this man was destined to be the Spiritual Director of her Sisters for the next thirty-eight years. With touching simplicity Mother Caroline brought the meeting to an end with the motherly

words, "If after you get to LaCrosse you find you do not care to stay, remember Notre Dame Convent is your home until God gives you another."

LaCrosse wasn't for them. Mother Alexia was too far-sighted to jeopardize her community by vassalage to another, so back to Milwaukee and Notre Dame came the three. Mother Caroline was expecting them. Father Gerard had already convinced Father Michaels that they were the three for his school, and Mother Caroline, noble soul that she was, was as pleased as if the Sisters were her own.

On April 28, 1874 after three months with Mother Caroline, the Sisters received permission of Archbishop Henni to found a new Community in the Milwaukee Archdiocese, and to take charge of Saint Matthew's School at New Cassel. At last they were home in Wisconsin—the Land God had given them. As with Saint Francis and his first followers, their table was provided by the Lord—a plank minus legs, and the floor was their bed, not unlike Rivo Torto. To Father Michaels' distress over the poverty of their surrounding Mother Alexia chided him not to worry with the question "Aren't we Franciscans?" Three traits that would be characteristic of the Order showed themselves in that bare little home. The Sisters were light-hearted; they were valiantly inventive; and they were sublimely trusting in God, even when their first meal consisted of dry bread and water.

In the morning after Mass when the town people heard of their arrival, they were overwhelmed with their charity and kindness. By the second evening they were well established in their little convent through the Providence of the loving Father and of good Saint Joseph. But that they might establish themselves completely as a religious body they renewed their holy vows from which they had been dispensed in Germany, in the presence of Father Michaels as representative of Bishop Henni. With the deepest sense of personal dedication they gave their lives back to God and He blessed their endeavors for almost immediately a young girl from the town itself, one from Milwaukee, from Chicago, and even from Pennsylvania sought admission and obtained admission. To young Sister Alfons was entrusted the care of Mistress for she was a fitting mirror of the necessity of a deep personal life and unflinching obedience.

From the start the Sisters' school was blessed by God. By the end of the next year, 1875, when they were established in their new Monastery, their enrollment included over one hundred students—some even from Chicago. Their one lay teacher for English soon joined the Community. Their curriculum now included the regular

elementary subjects, needlework, fine arts and religion. Over all, character formation was the first and uninterrupted concern and true piety, industry, honesty, habits of order and neatness were inculcated every turn. Mother Alexia's master ideal was to bring every child's heart to God.

Among the students who learned in Mother Alexia's St. Joseph Convent School was one who later became the third Mother General of the Order, Mother Stanislaus. On the feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1876, ten postulants were clothed with the holy habit. It was a magnificent start, but Mother realized the need for more Sisters to supply the educational needs of the central Northwest. Likewise she realized that for more rapid growth they must take root near a large city. A letter from Europe in 1877 convinced her that there were young ladies in Germany who longed for the religious life, many of whom had professional backgrounds, so Sister Alfons made the journey. When she returned in 1877 with four new postulants the hand of St. Joseph was again evident. The Atlantic was having its worst storm in thirty-eight years and when the little group reached New York they learned that ninety-six other vessels had gone to a watery grave in the very waves which had taunted them. Again in 1879 Mother Alexia returned to Germany and drew to herself twenty-three more virgins anxious to follow Christ, three of whom were trained teachers. The following year the influx continued. The laborers were increasing. In 1884 the Sisters were teaching in twenty-four parochial schools in Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota. Like St. Francis, Mother sent her daughters out two by two imparting to them the spirit of their Sacred Father. They were to have unqualified reverence for the priest and God and they were to make beautiful the altars of the Lord.

With the growth in their numbers the Motherhouse in New Cassel was no longer large enough. Bishop Grace of St. Paul, Minnesota received the Sisters to his diocese in 1884 so by December, 1885 there were 114 professed Sisters, eighteen novices and ten postulants who moved into the new Motherhouse in Winona. Unfortunately for the kind Bishop had resigned and when his successor, Bishop Ireland came to dedicate their new home the happy community learned the meaning of St. Francis' words "When they shall cast you out and persecute you, that is perfect joy." Bishop Ireland had his ideas of American education. If the Sisters would remain in his diocese no more recruits could be admitted from Germany and the community must be subject to diocesan supervision in all of its missions! To refuse further recruits from Europe? To give up the Wisconsin and Illinois schools?

Mother Alexia determined to go to Milwaukee to confer with Archbishop Heiss who had just succeeded Archbishop Henni. As if to buoy her up St. Joseph was again busy. The express agent hastened after Mother with an envelop containing one hundred dollars, the exact amount she would need in a few days as a down payment on a plot of land known as Greenfield Park on the outskirts of the city, then occupied by a bowling alley and a dance hall. His Grace was reluctant to admit another religious institution but Mother's urgency won him over on the one condition that she herself obtain the purchased price. Relatives of the Sisters procured for her the necessary amount and she closed the transaction the same day, and none too soon. Reconsidering, the Archbishop sent for Mother, but the wise and prudent virgin engaged an architect to draw up the plans before she answered the summons. With plans and the deed in her hands, she appeared before his Grace. How could he refuse such a woman?

By the spring of 1887 the Milwaukee Motherhouse was ready for occupancy and in January, 1888 Archbishop Heiss dedicated it in honor of St. Joseph and proclaimed it the Motherhouse of the School Sisters of St. Francis. But the good "Lord giveth and the good Lord taketh away. . ." True Franciscan joy is realized in tribulation and privation so Mother Alexia was not too unprepared to see the material evidence of God's blessing a charred ruin by the eve of March 31, 1890. "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Truly she could paraphrase St. Francis—"And if, after we have labored hard and reverently to build a convent to the Lord, we see it eaten up by flames before our very eyes, and if we see our most dear Sisters once more returned to hunger, cold and homelessness, and if we receive it all in patience and with joy, thinking of the pain of the Blessed Christ in Bethlehem, oh, then, Brother Leo, little sheep of God, write that it is in this that there is perfect joy." Buildings could be replaced. It was the loss of dear Sister Blanche that caused the greatest sorrow. Back to the cradle of the Community, New Cassel, went the weary hand. Again the providence of God provided when friends and benefactors secured transportation for all. And back to a straw tick or a space on the floor for a bed! How like Rivo Torto!

But God's ways are wise ways. Again a seeming disaster was a blessing in disguise. On removing the debris the foundation of the Motherhouse was found to be most unsafe and would have collapsed under a heavy wind. St. Joseph had been on guard! Like St. Francis and his first companions, little groups went forth to beg. Varied were the

welcomes they received, but God rewarded their humility. On May 5, 1891 their new Convent was blessed and the academy was opened with the same enrollment.

The strain was beginning to show on Mother Alexia. Because of ill health she returned to the Bavarian Highlands. Here in a therapeutic sanitarium, she regained her health and acquired the determination to bring this water cure to sufferers in America. The following year, 1893, and back in America, Mother purchased a site next to the Convent and in 1894 the Sacred Heart Sanitarium was dedicated—the first of its kind in America. One of its first patients was the Archbishop of Bucharest, Roumania, invited Mother to establish a convalescence in his see. Mother complied but purchased a sanitarium in a bad instead when she heard that he had resigned his bishopric and gone to Rome. This new convent, the converted sanitarium, was dedicated March 19, 1896 and called Marienheim. Because of the prevailing laws which prohibited the investiture of postulants, Mother brought her nineteen postulants to America in October, 1896.

The fame of the Erlenbad Sanitarium spread and the Sisters soon known in Europe. Bishop John Koppes of Luxemburg invited the Sisters to establish themselves there. Thus on August 12, 1904 a provincial house was dedicated. Here the small community grew and Mother Alexia resigned her Generalship of the Order to Mother Alfons, and spent her last days with her Sisters in Strassburg.

Under Mother Alfons the Community continued to wax materially, educationally and spiritually. Her main goal was to provide a worthy chapel for her Eucharist King. This Romanesque masterpiece with its beautiful Chapel of Perpetual Adoration was dedicated by many as the most beautiful chapel outside of Europe, and was dedicated March 19, 1917 with the privilege of Perpetual Adoration. Since that first Hour made by Mother Alfons herself never has the King of Kings been lacking in adorers. Night and day someone is praising and adoring and asking the blessings of God upon the Community, their families and relatives, and upon all of the undertakings of their Apostolate. That is the powerhouse of the Order. The benefactors, the centenarians, the infirm, the novices, the postulants! All have a part in making Christ known through word and deed by their prayers. Those actively engaged. This was Mother Alfons' Monument to the future that has left its mark upon her Community. She was a woman of the highest spirituality—bordering upon the mystic. Yet, she possessed the charming simplicity and practicality of the Poor Man of Assisi.

of leadership was called the "golden age" for the Community. Her life was of austere compliance with the spirit as well as the letter of the Rule and she inspired all to greater heights. No one ever felt at ease in her presence. Daily she urged her Sisters to pray for perseverance for she appreciated the value of a religious vocation. Her eyes were centered upon God but she was not blind to the temptations that developed them in their work.

Upon her death on April 5, 1929, Mother Stanislaus, the Community's first postulant, became Mother General. Under her leadership the progress of the community continued and became outstanding in the field of education with the foundation of Alverno College which was the outgrowth of St. Joseph Convent Teacher Training Normal School. The Sisters had been working with the Indians since 1885 and in the Caroline Islands from 1907 to the World War, but under Mother Stanislaus the first Sisters of the Order set sail for the Far East to Tsingtao, China, to the Republic of Hundurus and even into India, aiming ultimately to develop a native clergy to spread the kingdom of God in their own land. Hers was the spirit of the valient woman of the Gospel—the last link with those first days when the Sisters knew what it was to have "neither staff nor script, nor bread, nor money, neither have two coats."

On January 6, 1942 Mother Corona who ably assisted Mother Stanislaus was canonically elected as Mother General and continues as the able leader and example to the Community. Years back she pioneered in the so-called 'Sister Formation Movement' for she realized that numbers and personnel meant nothing if the spirit of Holy Father Francis and that of the founders be lacking.

Today the American Congregation numbers well over 2,300 professed Sisters of four races laboring in 170 grammar schools, 29 high schools, one liberal arts college, two general hospitals, two sanitariums, and a home for the aged and infirm Sisters. Mother Corona's latest mission venture was to answer the plea of the Franciscan Fathers in Costa Rica for Sisters. Assumption College in Moravia, San Juan is the nucleus of a new Province. On May 31, the Queenship of Mary, in the year 1957 the first postulant was accepted and a second one petitioned for acceptance on December 8. God is smiling on the project already.

The aim of the Congregation is twofold: the personal sanctification of its members, of which humility and charity are the foundation, and the works of charity, that is, the instruction and the education of youth and the care of the sick.

Qualifications:

Healthy girls under the age of thirty, of good character and no intelligence, who are desirous of becoming Sisters are admitted. E grade graduates desiring to enter are admitted as aspirants, school graduates continue their studies at Alverno College. The S are trained for their profession at Alverno College or Sacred Sanitarium.

Important Dates:

April 28, 1874—Approbation of Erection

January 26, 1900—Decree of Praise and Papal Approbation

March 6, 1907—Aggregation with the Franciscans, O.F.M. Cap

January 4, 1911—Degree of final Papal Approbation

November 12, 1929—Decree of Approbation of Amendment

Pope Pius XII is the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation. Congregation is incorporated under the laws of the state of Wisconsin. The corporate title is: The School Sisters of St. Francis of St. Joseph Convent, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It received its formal decree of erection from Bishop Henni and they went to New Cassel (now Casselton), Wisconsin on April 28, 1874. Documentary evidence of the Congregation was lost in the fire and the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Chancery records are incomplete prior to 1900. The first official record of the Congregation is found in *Sadlier's Catholic Directory* of 1876, page 115, which reads:

"St. Joseph's Convent of the Franciscan Sisters, at New Cassel, Fond du Lac County, Wis. These Sisters having been expelled from Baden, Germany, founded their American convent in 1874. Attached to it is a seminary for young ladies and a day school. Mother Superior, 4 professed Sisters, 3 novices, 5 postulants."

The privilege for Perpetual Adoration was inaugurated by Bishop Messmer, March 19, 1917, the day His Excellency consecrated the Chapel.

There are no printed statutes of study but there is a definite policy which is followed. Postulants who are to be trained for teaching or nursing profession are not received before finishing high school. They receive a four-year college course before entering the teaching or nursing field.



OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.

O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow (Lam. 1, 12).

In the renaissance of spirituality that marked the Christian life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, historians note especially a greater devotion to and study of the human life of Christ. In this Saint Bernard was a leader, with his sermons on the Incarnation and the Life and Passion of our Lord. Above all, St. Francis gave the impetus to greater personal love of Christ Crucified, and passed this down as a tender tradition to his children. Thus we find such an approach exemplified in many of the writings of St. Bonaventure, and other pieces often attributed to the Seraphic Doctor.

With this went greater attention also to the human aspects of Our Lady's life, her joys, her sorrows, her sufferings at the foot of the Cross. Hence on both feasts of Our Lady of Sorrows the sermons of St. Bernard are used in the Divine Office, because their author had so penetrated the meaning of Mary's stand at Calvary. St. Bonaventure, in the meditations on the Passion, perhaps over-plays the dramatic side. The Servite Order is founded to propagate special devotion to the Mother of Sorrows. And interestingly enough, the theologians begin to devote special questions to the sorrows of Mary.

Thus we find, in a newly published book of Peter Olivi, OFM, the question: Did Mary sorrow so much in the Passion of Christ that she found no sensible joy therein, or did she perhaps have more joy than sorrow at the foot of the Cross.

With this is sometimes included a consideration of Mary's role as our Co-redemptrix, though this is largely a later development in Mariology. Today, indeed, in Marian theology the question of Mary's participation both in the sufferings of Christ (and therefore in our redemption) and in the distribution of graces is receiving much attention. How and to what extent, it is asked, was Mary Co-Redemptrix? and what is her place and power at Mediatrix of all Graces?

1. *The Reality of Mary's Sorrows*

THERE can be doubt of the reality of Our Lady's sufferings. To the Church has always applied the text: "O all ye that pass by

the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow" (1, 12) . . . And in her was fulfilled to the utmost the prophecy of Simeon, that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart and very

Yet one might object (as Olivi pictures it for us): Mary knew the meaning of the Redemption. She saw the sufferings of her Son as the will of the Father, as the supreme act of love and adoration that could be given by any one on this earth, and as the victory over sin and death; therefore as effecting the redemption of all mankind, he was included by preredemption. Therefore she found such joy and gladness in this that her grief was as it were nothing and almost insensible because of her joy.

It is true, of course, we can answer, that Our Lady knew all this. Indeed, our Blessed Lord more so. Great was His willingness to suffer. Thy will be done, not mine. Great too His joy: Who for the joy of the world before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame. Yet none could deny the reality of His sufferings, or say that His joy and the will of His Father prevented Him from reaching the depths of suffering—physical, mental, moral, in the agony, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the way of the Cross, and the crucifixion. We have but to consult the prophecies of Jeremias and Isaias to know that Our Lord would be abased and became the lowest of men, so to speak, and subject to all sorrow and shame.

So we will say also of Our Lady, that she shared these sufferings to the full, even though her heart was ready to do the will of God and she offered Her Son to suffer in complete willingness and deepest charity. But that very suffering was the sword that pierced her heart clean through, so that what joy she had was overwhelmed and almost lost, most, by the depths of her sorrow.

She did not die—but would have done so, had God allowed. But she died with Christ in her heart, as St. Bernard says, and her sorrows were the more increased because she had thus to remain alive. For this was she born, for this was she chosen as Mother of God, for this she had consented in her Fiat at Nazareth and so became the co-operatrix, the co-worker with her Son. . . for this was the will of God. Thus Pope Benedict XV points out that if the Blessed Virgin were to appear not appear in the public life of Our Lord, save on one or the other occasion, she suddenly appears at His Death—and this could not be except according to the divine plan. "With her suffering and death for her Son, Mary suffered almost to the point of death; she renounced her maternal rights over Him and, for the purpose of appeasing the Div-

inasmuch as it was dependent on her, she offered up her Son as the price of our redemption. . . . It can be truly said of her that with her Son she ransomed mankind." (Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine*, p. 79)

2. "Behold thy Son"

THEN, in the midst of such sorrows she suddenly receives consolation, in the words her Son addressed to her and to Saint John. . . . as in St. John, as Pope Leo XIII brings out (Papal Documents on the Holy Family, p. 102), Christ designated the whole human race, and in the same place those who are joined to Him by faith.

What was this, save a sign (I believe we can say) that she was co-operating in the Passion that we then became the children of her sorrow? May we not put it thus: at Nazareth, she conceived not only Christ physically and humanly, but with Him the beginnings of the Mystical Body (Cf. St. Pius X, Papal Documents, p. 139). That Mystical Body she brought forth, so to speak, in the pangs and pains of Calvary, and so is truly our Spiritual Mother—as real a Mother to us in the supernatural order as our human mother is in the natural order.

Hence St. Albert the Great can say: Mary was the only one to whom was given the privilege of sharing in the Passion. And as was she the co-operatrix of the Redemption through her co-suffering, so also she became the Mother of all through the new creation. Therefore, as the whole world contracted a debt toward God as the result of Christ's Passion, so it contracted an obligation to Mary for her compassion (in Neubert, p. 77). Or again, that while at Bethlehem she brought forth her First-born without pain, in the Passion of her Son as the new Eve she brought forth in sorrow the whole human race. (Ibid.)

3. Mary as Our Co-Redemptrix

Mary is thus the Mother of us all because she is the Co-Redemptrix. But how did she accomplish this? As Saint Pius X explains it to us (Papal Doc., p. 140): she prepared the matter for the sacrifice by being the Mother of God. . . she offered that sacrifice in a remote way at the presentation in the Temple. . . . But on Calvary she does it in a more direct way. She stands there at the Cross, in deepest contemplation of her Suffering Son. . . and rejoices in His offering and His victory, and by sharing to the full His Passion, so that had it been given to her she would have gladly borne all His sufferings too and died with

There was, on Calvary, a complete union (the Saint goes on to say) of complete community, of will and suffering. In sufferings, yes—but we should not let our imagination run riot on this. In will above all. For, as St. Pius says, no one knew the secrets of the Heart of Jesus—He did His Mother—and His deepest secret was that He sought the glory of His Father in all things. She did so likewise.

Hence Pius XII: “Free from all sin, original and personal, she was always most intimately united to her Son, Mary offered Him on the Cross—gotha to the Eternal Father, adding to that oblation, as a new Eve, the holocaust of her rights and love as a mother, for all the sinful children of Adam.” (Enc. on M.B.)

The Father accepts her sufferings with those of Christ, and makes her sufferings a part of our Redemption. This, of course, must be understood properly. Her work was ever totally dependent on that of Christ and infinitely less than His. She herself was the first object of redemption—though hers was a pre-redemption, a prevention. . . She is indeed the Co-Redemptrix, but always dependently on Christ and secondarily to His redeeming act. Her action is totally joined to His. His sacrifice and merit is *de condigno*, hers is *de congruo*; that is, His way in justice, hers, out of fittingness. Her action is noting apart from His, she has no distinct sphere of influence, for all is in union with a subordination to that of Christ.

4. *Mary Our Teacher*

YET her suffering is of much value to us. . . First of all, in suffering, because she with her Son sought only and above all the glory of the will of God. If His action was the greatest act of love and adoration that ever ascended from earth to heaven, hers was next to His. . . she not show us that we too in all things, especially in sufferings and pain, must seek the glory of Our Father?

Again, by her close union with the Passion of Christ, and in union with His whole work on earth, our Mother teaches us that we must unite every action and our whole self to Christ. Our life must be a mirror, so to speak, that reflected in everything, joy, sorrow, every thought, word and deed, the life and death of Her Divine Son.

Above all, as Franciscans, let us see that we must share, as Jesus did, with the “emptying” of her Son. . . For this total pouring out of self, in the Incarnation, in the Passion, and now in the Eucharist, is the real poverty of Christ; and it is the real meaning of Franciscan poverty: death to self that we may live unto God.

Finally—let us consider ourselves as taking a special course in the study of the Cross. We will ask our Lady to be our teacher and tutor—show us by word and example, to demonstrate to us, the lessons we need, especially of self-oblation with Her and Her Son. Then in the examination she will see that we get the note we deserve.



BEHOLD THE CROSS

Behold the Cross! The Tree of life!
Upon whose boughs the Saviour hangs.
The only fruit that ripens here
Is God's Own Love and Holy Care.

Behold the Cross! That points the way
To heaven's joy and thorns of pain:
To reach the God Who died for me
I too must hang upon the Tree.

Behold the Cross! The Sacred Cross!
Upon whose beams here hangs the Truth—
For Truth demands the sacrifice
Of falsehood, sin, and every vice.

Behold the Cross! The Humble Cross!
Upon whose wood here hangs the Christ
Who humbled Self, the God, to death
To crush the pride in human breath.

Behold the Cross! The glorious Cross!
Upon whose boughs here hangs our God—
For Satan's darkness now is gone;
The Light of Christ now carries on.

Fr. Anacleto Yonick, O.F.M.

Franciscan Briefs

Mother Elizabeth of Laski

A short account of Mother Elizabeth's life can give but a hint of her great work for the blind of Poland. She is responsible for the greatest advances in teaching, training and care of the blind in its history. It is largely through her efforts that the blind of Poland have been raised from poverty and ignorance to lives of usefulness and self-respect.

Mother Elizabeth was born on October 22, 1876, of a family well known for its services to Poland. An accident when she was 18 resulted, in a few years, in blindness. She accepted her fate as a trust from God, and dedicated herself to the service of His blind. Never robust physically, she did not allow ill health to interfere with her duties.

She established the first residential center for the blind; Polish braille, revisions and abbreviations (adopted by the Ministry of Education as official); first braille books and first braille library in Poland; production of braille slates; first information center on education of the blind; first braille printing press—a gift from the U.S.A.; enlisted hundreds of volunteer workers, who copied books in braille, or provided home care for great numbers of blind and their families all over Poland.

In 1920 Mother Elizabeth entered the Franciscan Order; later founded the Sisters of Servants of the Cross, Franciscans devoted to the blind. Cardinal Ratti (Pope Pius XI) helped her to formulate the Rule of her Order, and constantly encouraged her in her work.

She gave her entire fortune to the work; many followed her example, giving

their means and their lives, either by entering the Order or remaining as lay Brothers or Sisters.

When the Center in Warsaw was no longer adequate and the need for care of blind children was crucial, everything was gradually moved to Laski, a tract of land 12 miles from Warsaw. From a small wooden building where a few Nuns and old people and children were housed, the Institute for the Blind grew until there were 10 houses and 9 farm buildings. The school to a nursery school, 7 grade elementary school, vocational school, printing shop, book bindery, braille library.

In the 2nd World War Laski was practically destroyed. Mother Elizabeth and her Nuns moved to Warsaw. When the house was destroyed by bombs, she was buried in the debris, her arm broken, eye crushed, hearing gone.

After the war, largely through Mother Elizabeth's inspiration and tireless energy, Laski was rebuilt. Many of the children who now entered were war blinded, some orphaned and crippled also. Later a group of mentally retarded blind children were received, and a blind deaf girl.

No account of Mother Elizabeth's life would be complete without mention of the special qualities which make her work so great—love of God expressed in her loving care of His blind; high intellectual and spiritual standards to further prepare them to face life bravely.

The last years have been filled with sickness and suffering, but Mother Elizabeth's indomitable spirit and Faith carried on unabated in fervor and devotion to the work she began as a young girl.

I KNOW CHRIST

The Personality and Spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi

by

Gratien de Paris, O.F.M. Cap.

translated by

Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M.

perhaps charms me most about the book is that its attempt at this—*one of the first of its kind, it seems to me—in no way mars the clear and ever fresh presentation of details. . . . If your book has a fault, it is its richness.* (Paul Sabatier to the author).

Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N. Y. \$1.00

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