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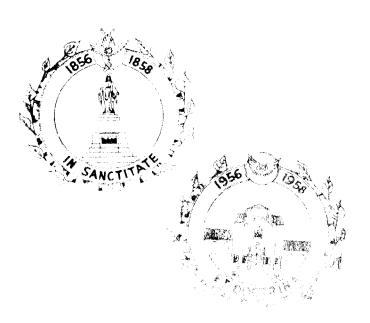
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FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



## the CORD

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

### Conquering Self Through Temperance

Geoffrey G. Bridges, O.F.M.

What a shock Adam and Eve must have felt when they came suddenly face to face with their fallen human nature. Sanctifying grace gone; the praeternatural gifts too. Each faculty seeking satisfaction without regard to the good of the whole man. The will dragged after every type of real or imagined good, without order. Concupiscence straining against conscience; the law of the flesh rebelling against the law of the mind, at times seducing the mind by its strategems. The triple-headed dragon rampaging in their persons: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life. This is the new Adam and the new Eve that they slowly came to know. This is the natural state into which we are born, the state in which men live who have not the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity.

If we would truly know ourselves, then we must recognize the heritage that Adam and Eve have passed on to us. By the mercy of God we have been delivered from their sin, by sanctifying grace in Baptism. Through his abounding goodness we have been delivered from slavery to sin. But the remains of that sin linger in us still. The devil still has his allies within us. Until the day we die, one of the main means for us to prove our love for God will be to keep the triple-headed dragon within us bound and impotent. Fortunately the mercy and goodness of God has extended beyond the first tremendous gift of sanctifying grace. Because of Jesus Christ he has equipped us with the armor and weapons of the infused virtues and the supernaturalized moral virtues in place of Adam's gift of integrity. What before was possible and easy for him is now possible for us; though not at all easy. For the virtues give us the essential power; we must labor to develop facility.

The infused virtue which is directly opposed to concupiscence is hope. The protectors, the instruments, of hope among the moral virtues are temperance and fortitude. By the coordinated action of these virtues it is possible for us to control that restless dragon within.

#### Role of Temperance

Temperance has a definite and very important role in the purifying and rectifying of our will, so that it will be conformed to the similitude of God. Temperance is an acquired moral virtue like prudence. It is a habit which inclines us to moderate our desires for pleasures and honors. And it too can be natural or supernatural depending on the motive and the norm.

There are many people practicing temperance—because they want to reduce, or because they want to make a team or break a record. A man who habitually restrains himself in eating, never eating too much, too fast, or too eccentrically, because he believes that such conduct befits a gentleman, has the natural norm and his motives are natural. The only difficulty is, there is no merit in such action. To make such temperance supernatural and meritorious the motive of love of God and the norm of faith are needed. A man who habitually controls his tongue to please God and because of the advice of St. James (("If anyone does not offend in word, he is a perfect man" 3,2), such a one has the supernatural virtue of temperance in speech.

The ideal we seek is to develop supernatural temperance in all the senses and in all the desires. It is pouring water into a sieve, t we restrain our eating, but allow our eyes free indulgence. Better equations control in all things, than great control in only one. Our progress in developing the virtue of temperance, therefore, must be deliberate and systematic, well thought out according to prudence.

The question is, how far shall we go in supernatural temperance? Let us look at the ideal first. The Gospel norm is this: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me (Lk. 9,2)." Pondering on these words St. John of the Cross exclaimed: "O that someone could tell us how far our Lord desires this self-denial to be carried. It certainly must be like to death and annihilation, temporal, natural, and spiritual, in all things that the will esteems." With less unction but with no lessening of the ideal St. Thomas sets down this as the norm of Christian temperance: "Temperance accepts the necessity of life as its guide in using pleasures, so that it uses them only in so far as necessity requires." And later even more emphatically he states: "Temperance abandons, so far as nature can bear it, what the body demands." Certainly, as these saints indicate, this is a death to self. Christian temperance is Christian mortification, which means a putting to death.

It is evident that this ideal cannot be realized by us immediately. At a given moment in our life the amount of grace and strength that we have, the amount of spiritual progress that we have made, limits us. You and I at the present moment have not the strength and the grace to practice temperance to the extent that St. Francis practiced it toward the end of his life. But if we are truly making spiritual progress, then next year at this time we will be able to do much more than we are doing now; and God will expect more. The important thing to remember is that the norm and the ideal is the same for St. Francis and for us. If we are to be faithful to the gifts that have been given us, if we are to be profitable servants, then to our dying day we must be striving upward to that ideal. And so with spiritual direction—that is an important point—and with an eye to supernatural prudence we should seek each day to grow in the virtue of temperance.

#### Penance and Mortification

The Franciscan Order is an order of penance. The penance and mortification which are a necessary part of a Franciscan's life are a natural training ground for temperance. By the former we make amends for our sins and the sins of the world; by the latter we purify our heart and conquer self. In both St. Francis is our teacher and example. Brother Body received slight comfort and pleasure from him. He fasted most of the year, often mixing water and ashes with what food he ate. His clothing was rough and generously patched, and nothing was added in winter to ward off the biting fingers of the wind. He slept little, mostly sitting up. His eyes were disciplined not to look upon a woman or to gaze at a passing Emperor with glittering entourage. He combatted temptation by standing in an icy fountain, or rolling in thorn bushes, Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could go out and do the same, for the glory of God and the saving of souls? But we cannot. Francis had a special vocation; he was flooded with graces so that he might live the ideal of self-conquest to the limit. Rather, we must do what he let his brethren do. Felder observes that for his brothers and for his Order itself, his own conduct was not to be directive. At a public Chapter therefore he reprimanded those who exceeded the bounds of prudence in their vigils, their fasting and other practices of penance. He forbade this strictly, and commanded them to treat Brother Body mildly and sensibly. In his private instructions he likewise admonished the brothers frequently to season their severity with prudence and forbearance. "On must treat Brother Body with kindness," he said, "lest a storm of rebellion break out on his

part. One must not give him reason to murmur, that he may not the of watching and praying devoutly. . .But if he has received sufficient nourishment and still shows signs of rebellion, then may be know the the lazy beast of burden deserves the spur and the idle ass the prodeservery sacrifice, he said, must be seasoned with the salt of prudence not this prudence, however, which is prompted by the flesh, but white Christ has taught.

One who studies these words of our holy Father will note he sagely he at once restrains imprudent ardor, and at the same tir snatches away any pretext for self-indulgence from the lukewarm. No the extraordinary, but a generous amount of the ordinary is the characteristic of Franciscan penance and mortification.

#### Universal Control

What Chirst and St. Francis look for and expect from us, the fore, are not rigorous penances, which are the special vocation of few, but a universal temperance, a restraint and control on every from with a gradual increase of generosity according to the growth of grain us. We will be pleasing to them if we are temperate in the use our eyes, ears, taste, speech, touch, imagination, and in the quest honors and distinctions.

Our eyes are the windows of our mind and imagination to prote the mind from useless, distracting thoughts and our imaginations from escapes into dream worlds and tempting fantasies, we need to morth our eyes daily in their curious wanderings. Don't ever succumb to the temptation to consider custody of the eyes old-fashioned. It is on of the fundamental disciplines of the religious life.

The ears, like the eyes, are instruments of that pernicious evil curiosity. We must develop control of our hearing, especially on the occasions when we are tempted to strain to hear the latest news gossip.

Taste and eating in general call for constant vigilance. St. Grego places special emphasis on this. "It is impossible," he says, "to gage in the spiritual conflict without previous subjugation of the aptite." St. Augustine lays down a good norm: "Food is necessary the support of life, but like medicine it should be taken only whenecessary." And so, as St. Bonaventure advises, we should always mortified in the "quantity, quality, and manner of eating."

As for the use of the tongue for speech, St. James has fruit f many meditations in the third chapter of his Epistle. The tongue is small member, but it can do a great amount of damage. But, if can control it, we can birdle the whole body. The rules of convent silence which are intended to encourage the spirit of prayer and devotion may well be used also to develop control of the tongue.

The sense of touch emcompasses many things, such as posture, reaction to weather, care for one's health. Tendencies to sloth, too much ease, self-centered preoccupation with our health, must be systematically opposed with acts of temperance, or we will leave a guard down and let concupiscence in to run wild.

Nor should we, in strengthening all the openings through which temptation may enter, overlook that important interior sense, our imagination. This is an important and necessary faculty, but it must be trained. If we don't tie it down, it will carry us hither and yon, leading our heart astray.

Lastly, the habit of curbing our desires for honors and distinctions is actually the virtue of humility, or at least a part of the intricate yet all-important virtue. On this tempering of our desires depends much of our hope for true progress. A heart set on reward and honor soon finds itself short on generosity, the fuel of progress.

You can see now that actually there is not so much one virtue of temperance but a temperance for each of the senses, exterior and interior. Yet each has the same nature and operates according to the same rules, and one can help to develop the other. Concentrate on a strict control of the tongue, and the habit of watchfulness can readily keep us on our guard against inroads of the enemy through the eyes. But a warning must be sounded again. It is possible to concentrate on one to the neglect of the others. The consequence will be that concupiscence will shift its weight to the unguarded sense. Supernatural prudence prompts us therefore to keep increasing this virtue on every front.

#### Purity of Heart

The prospect of such a many-sided battle according to the norm of St. Thomas, "to give up everything that the body can do without," might appear a bit austere, even a little un-Franciscan. But actually the freedom of heart and joy of spirit that is so characteristically Franciscan flows directly out of this universal, ever-growing temperance. You all know the story of perfect joy in the life of St. Francis. Our holy Father and Brother Leo were slogging through the mud, dripping with rain. And what was it that Francis said was the source of perfect joy in this life? "Above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Christ has given to his friends, is that of conquering self." It is by

hope-inspired temperance that this self-conquest is accomplished. Tem erance withholds present satisfaction from our self-centered, self-pe fecting appetites. Hope promises fuller satisfaction, spiritual perfetion. Temperance corrects and redirects our appetites; hope faster them on heavenly things. Hope with temperance purifies our hear from earthly loves and attachments—so that they may be free to lot God.

It is evident again how the virtues are the school of perfection preparing us for a fuller living of our vocation as co-lovers of Go with Christ and Mary.

#### OUR LADY OF THE ASCENSION

Fold your love like hands around the moment. Keep it for conference with your heart, that exit Caught on clocks, by dutiful scribes recorded Less truly than in archives of your soul.

Turn back from His going, be His still-remaning.

Lift the familiar latch on cottage door...

Discover His voice in corners, hear His footsteps

Rund down the porches of your thoughts! No Powers

However hoarse with joy, no Dominations Limp with adoration guess what whispers Of: "Mother, look!" and "Mother, hurry!" Glance off the cottage walls in shafts of glory.

How shall your heart keep swinging longer, Mary? Quickly, quickly, take the sturdy needle Before your soul crowds through your flesh!—the needle And stout black thread will save you! Take the sandal

Peter left for mending. After that, The time is short, with bread to bake for John.

## 'FOR THE NIGHT COMETH'

Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

If "going about our Father's business" is the common vocation of mankind, then the effort expended in this compulsory venture can be rightfully termed our penance. Again, if a perfect waste of time is that lived in mortal sin, then the same moments diligently spend in atonement for all sin are a perfect use of the same. One of the many forms of penance is work. No man is born into this world when work is not born with him. To each is offered the challenge, "work while you have the light of day." Every person is presented with this concomitant opportunity. To none is this denied. For to all is given the light of day. However, this light will eventually grow dim. The descending nocturnal shades will slowly but definitely announce quitting time. This will be in the twilght of our lives, "when day is done and blue shadows fall," that "night when no man can work." Hence the wise old adage, "Carpe diem," could very well be the order of the day still at hand.

Our Franciscan heritage constantly reminds us that we are pilgrims in a strange land. One of the intimates accompanying us on this wearisome but hopeful journey is work. A familiar to all it is at once a blessing but also a mode of punishment. Adding joy to our lives it can likewise stamp our tenure on earth with the label of boredom and monotony. None are exempt from it. Each has been allotted his burden according to the size of his shoulders. We can't escape it! We can abuse it! True wisdom says convert it! Concerning work our holy Father Francis opined, "I labored with my hands and I wish to labor. And I firmly want all the rest of my brothers to labor at work that is honorable." Work is always honorable when performed in the Franciscan spirit, that is, when transformed into acts of penance.

In Paradise it was a pleasure to share this experience with God. Action of some kind was necessary in the Garden of Eden. But then it was action perfected by joy. Through creation man was given the capacity to expand. It was possible to express himself physically. In

working he impressed his personality on objects about him. There is always a joy in positing something of ourselves in others. With clarity of intellect which is in perfect correspondence with the will, Adam tasted of this joy. Some of this joy is still ours to share. In the simple equation ascribed to St. Francis, "it is in giving that we receive." In depositing our personality on things about us, we can reap an abundance of joy even in this life. Did not the Creator, the Divine Worker impress His ineffable Image on the greatest work of all, the human soul? In giving, does He not also receive? And in receiving gifts fash oned with human hands, cannot God, you might say, take a second look upon creation and still see that it is good?

After the Fall the penalty of difficulty and weariness was added to work. The joy of working was tempered by original sin. Work became the price we pay for existence. Labor became the inexorable law of life. The joy that accompanied work in Paradise was alloyed. Work now had to be performed in an atmosphere of obedience and penance. To obey and to do penance is not the easiest of tasks.

In creation God has allowed His Divine Craftmanship to be known. The producet of His Hand are on exhibit in this beautiful world. The Franciscan revels in looking upon this huge display. The sons and daughters of the Poverello know that to God the Father, the work of creation was more than a hobby. It was really a deep-seated act of love. How Franciscan to scrutinize nature and there discover the wisdom of a beneficent God! How Franciscan to find in this showcase the blue ribbon prize, the gold cup winner, none fairer to behold, God's own holy Mother! "By their works you shall know them." If this be true of creatures how much more true is this concerning the knowledge we have of God through the study of His masterpiece, the Queen of Heaven. The greatest philosophers have found in the works of God rungs as of a ladder reaching to His existence. St. Paul, a no mean philosopher himself, emphatically stated that God can be known from the things which He has made.

For saintly Francis the world was a gift shop. The items on display were mementoes, souvenirs from his Heavenly Father. This world was a gigantic postcard with a return address on it. Direction and purpose in life were its hallamrk. On the other hand, for the atheist, if there be such an anomaly, the world is a fenced-in workshop where one toils under the closed shop system. Mencken, who was of this mold, once said, "I go on working for the same reason that a hen goes on laying eggs." All purpose in creation has been withdrawn. If there be

any motivation it is sterile and shallow. Our co-creative activity becomes senseless. The sweat of our brow is purely a physiological reaction. Life is without rhythm. All romance is gone. The thrill of challenge is removed. The love that prompted God the Great Worker has been reduced to a determinism or at the most to a deism. The example of the Holy Mother of God, who made housecleaning so pleasing not only for God but also to God, is now merely a game of playing house. The toils of St. Joseph, the Worker, who had as his apprentice none less than the Son of God, have become nothing but calculated calisthenics. Mencken may have lowered his dignity to that of a hen but his greatest barnyard folly was to eject Divine destiny from life and work. To be of value a thing must have something of the spiritual in it. The real value of work, its potential, consists in permitting us to "lay up treasures in Heaven." In laboring we can be "working out our salvation" here on earth while we have the light of day. And for Franciscans this entails coupling the ministry of Martha with Mary's work of contemplation.

By committing us to work, God allows us to imitate Him. Fashioned after the likeness of our Creator the work that we now do assume a proportionate dignity. This is the basis of that wholesome pride which should be attached to work. Here is the foundation of that affection and even the tenderness of the true craftsman for the finished product. Our intellect and will are great powerhouses. They are the reservoirs where the masterplans and blueprints are formulated. Be cause of our destiny, work properly performed has a price tag for eternity. God always pays a just wage. However, it is we who evaluate the worth of a day's work. In the pursuit for eternal life there are no bargain sales. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Work, then, we must while we have the light of day. The law of life demands it. Exemption thereform will come only with the approach of night. St. Paul reminded his hearers that he supported himself. He was aware that there would come a time when our wares will also be on display. This will be the moment when "every man's work shall be made manifest."

The dignity of labor is happily typified in St. Joseph, the Worker. Perhaps the finest tribute ever rendered to this universal patron was given on the day when Christ was mockingly accused of being only a carpenter's son. What an elevation this homely trade received! An omnipotent God working under the direction of one of His creatures! From this moment on work assumes a new dignity. If St. Francis

could look upon the world as a huge sacramental, then the work penitentially performed in this life can be considered as an oblation to God. Every sincere worker is then a sort of high priest. Yes, man had the capacity to cup his calloused hands in the form of a paten and to lift his mental and physical efforts on high in a heartfelt Suscipe

Among the Jews every man was expected to know and to practise some trade. A review of the lives of the Apostles and disciples of Christwill bear this out. Because Peter and Andrew mended their nets well, they became the fishers of men that they were. Because St. Matthew practised not only the letter but also the spirit of the law, he became the great dispenser of God's laws that he was. And finally, because St. Luke brought comfort to the afflicted, he became the doctor of the sick soul that he was. These great co-workers with Christ knew so well the price and reward of labor. They converted the silvery beads of the sweat of their brow into the golden gems of a crown that has since graced the head of many a martyr and saint.

Our attitude towards work should be one of reverence. It is in the spirit of gratitude that we accept a God-given task. Work that is done out of obedience and not according to our moods is very profitable. It is of such an attitude that true joy is born. Our times have lost the exquisite joy of the old craftsman puttering about his shop, putting things in order in a leisurely manner, giving him time to think, dream, and plan. Pragmatism has churned up in its restless and valueless wake so much wasted, undedicated effort. Indeed there is industry, but who is more industrious than the Evil One? Like a roaring lion, motivated by hatred, he is daily expending his satanical energy, preying on the slothful soul. The lack of reverence for work begets the "what is in it for me" disposition. The proper outlook on work can be found in the words found in the Communion of the Mass, "What can I render to God for all that He has rendered unto me?"

A person translates himself in the work that he does. No amount of piety in leisure hours can compensate for slipshod effort on the job. It is good for us to feel the weariness of labor. This can be a healthy reminder of our position after the Fall. It can also serve as a spur, pricking our conscience, making us cognizant of the Passion, one of the greatest works ever accomplished. Quitting time was never so effectually announced as from the Cross when Christ gasped, "It is finished." Never was recognition of a job well done so much in order. "Well done good, and faithful Master!" When we perspire let it recall the bloody sweat. If there are blisters, know that Sacred Hands were pierced with nails.

Should our hones ache, he mindful that others also died beneath the chaffing weight of a cumbersome cross.

There is nothing like watching a holy monk preoccupied with his work. A spirit of dedication surrounds his work which is broken only by the silence which diffuses it. An aura of spiritual transformation encompasses his bench. The magnificent cathedrals of the Middle Ages are examples of such dedicated effort. Seldom have mute monuments spoken so articulately. Work that is prayer is something to behold!

We are not meant to be slaves of labor. We are servants of God only. But there must be seen in a day's work the inherent power of discipline. A calloused hand can be the means for attaining a firmer grip on a weakened will. Like iron that must be softened before it becomes malleable, a mind exhausted and fatigued from earnest endeavor can mold character. The satisfaction acquired from such fruitful effort comes not from the gain but the manner in which it was effected. It will add flavor to life. In seasoning our lives it will also make us honest with ourseles in admitting that "neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase."

The most dangerous of the capital vices is sloth. It stifles the spiritual life. To be unemployed by man and self is dangerously close to being employed by Satan. King David fell not when he was leading armies, winning battles for God. Succumbing to idleness, he lost that joy that attends any warfare in behalf of the Almighty. Idleness is indeed the devil's workshop, a den well outfitted with insidious tools of every shape and size. Solomon too was happy when preoccupied with building the towering temple. Through slothful dissipation he allowed himself to degenerate into a state of effeminacy. Idleness is the mother of vices, discouragement, and spiritual discomfort. Hesiod wrote, "Work is no disgrace; it is idleness which is a disgrace."

Father Philotheus Boehner in one of his penetrating Spiritual Conferences has bequeathed to us some excellent thoughts on the most venemous enemies of religious life, sloth or accidia. Sloth is the barren, unproductive acre, the graveyard of many a good and wholesome intention. St. Bonaventure called it the "cess-pool of all evils, the source of evil suspicions, of blasphemous thoughts, of malicious detraction". Sloth is not as spectacular as the other vices since it does not cause the scandal or merit the censure of the more obvious vices as anger, gluttony or lust. This is why it is more dangerous. It gives one the feeling of security in his torpor. Of all the vices it is the only one which nauseates God. "Because thou art neither lukewarm and neither

cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." Sloth carmake of a religious a lazy and dissolute entity without any deeper motivation than Mencken's hen. Sad and melancholy, the victim of utter boredom, he can become the inert clay on the potters' where of Satan. Conversely the joy that results from dedicated work puts to flight the Morose One. He spits out his deadly poison in vain. Earnest ly going about "those things which please the Heavenly Father," filled with a holy mirth, such a religious is already tasting some of that peace which the world cannot give.

A man broken in body, living his life on a pallet of pain, may be a failure according to the standards of the doctor. An illiterate peasant may be a boor to the educator. And an ordinary laborer may appear to be a slave to the industrialist. However, if the sick man accepts his cross, he buys back his health. If the illiterate uses what mental capacity he possesses to praise and worship God, he is of the wise. Finally, if the laborer sanctifies his work, converts it into penance, he is building cathedrals and raising monuments which have as their Architect, the Master Worker Himself.

Thomas Edison was one day asked to say a word or two to a child. something that the lad might remember as coming from a great inventor. "My boy," said Edison, "don't keep your eye on the clock." Clock watchers seem to live for the proximate moment. In this they resembly the pragmatist. This is a nearsighted vision. Christian labor should be measured with the yardstick of eternity, by the clock which indicates no time. The talents we have, and they are so diverse, must be exploited for the glory of the Order and for the love of God. The patterns and blueprints of sanctity are many. Hands to the plow, it is we who decide its degree. There are no retirement nor pension plans on this score. We must press ever onward, work while we have the light of day, "for the night cometh when no man can work." There is always room for improvement. Into a bushel of nuts one can pour in addition many meaures of oil. According to the Franciscan ideal it must be work that does not "extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion." In the spirit of the Little Flower of Jesus, the least things must be done as if they were the greatest, the ordinary, extraordinarily.

An atmosphere of oblation should pervade all our works. May I quote the ever so beautiful Sursum Corda of Henry Suso. To me it sounds so Franciscan. Without much effort I can conceive it as coming from the lips of our holy Father Francis. What a salutary reminder

that even as we bend our backs in labor we can yet lift up our hearts:

"I place before my inward eyes myself with all that I am, my body, soul and all my powers—and I gather round me all the creatures which God ever created in heaven, on earth, and in all the elements, each one severally with its name, whether birds of the air, beasts of the forest, fishes of the water, leaves and grass of the earth, or the innumerable sands of the sea, and to these I add all the little specks of dust which dance in the sunbeams, with all the little drops of water which ever fell or are falling from dew, snow, or rain, and I wish that each of these had a sweetly-sounding stringed instrument, fashioned from my heart's inmost blood, striking on which they might each send up to our dear and gentle God a new and lofty strain of praise for ever and ever. And then the loving arms of my soul stretch out and extend themselves towards the innumerable multitude of all creatures, and my intention is, just as a free and blithesome leader of a choir stirs up the singers of his company, even so to turn them all to good account by inciting them to sing joyously, and to offer up their hearts

Living in a secular moment in the history of our country it might be too much to presume and to pray that one day over the entrance of every shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, suspended over every work-bench, engraved on every toolevery shop, and if the engraved of th

For Franciscans, cheerful about their work "that is honorable," this day is already at hand!

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Sr. M. Ritella, O.S.F.

It has often been said, and aptly elaborated on by Father Ignative Brady¹ and others, that whenever God inspires His servants to laund a project for the spread of His kingdom, He employs a woman to aid in its accomplishment. Thus, to lend fire and fervor to the new-born faith of the catechumens of early Christianity He used a Perpetua; the end the prolonged exile of the Popes in what was known as the "Baby lonian Captivity of the Church" He singled out a Catherine of Siena; the plant in the hearts of His little ones of our own land the seeds of knowledge and love for Him, He chose a Mother Seton. Without doubt, in the designs of God, St. Clare was destined to be the living exponent of the pure Franciscan ideal, for as Cuthbert² maintain never during the course of her life did she waver nor was she uncertain to it.

If one agrees with the Dominican, Father Henry, that "the womans' role... is to bring her cooperation, with its marvelous power to bear on this matter of the 'doing' of the Word" and that while "man sows the Word externally, the woman knows the art of making it grow internally in a way that is easily recognized by those who have experienced it," the role of St. Clare in the spread of Franciscanism is readily grasped. For it was she, who better than anyone else in the world, and almost better than himself (asserts Englebert'), realized the ideal of the Poverello. Francis had shown Clare the way to the complete imitation of the Gospel Christ; Clare with all her capacity for sacrifice allowed herself to be led along that way and to attain thereon the heights of an heroic spirituality.

1 Ignatius Brady, OFM, "Our Monthly Conference: The Little Plant of St. Francis," The Cord, IIII (January, 1953), 1.

<sup>2</sup>Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., Life of St. Francis of Assisi, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914), p. 175.

<sup>3</sup>A.M. Hener, O.B. (177)

8A.M. Henry, O.P., "The Obedience of Women," Obedience, (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1953), p. 114.

40mer Englebert, Saint Francis of Assisi, (London: Burns Oates, 1950), p. 139

The extent to which Clare patterned St. Francis is poignantly presented by Englebert:

Never was there union more intimate and harmonious than that between St. Clare and St. Francis; never were two souls in more perfect accord in their way of envisaging the things of earth and heaven. One asks oneself sometimes which copied the other, and one is faced by a sort of spiritual consanguinity, so alike were their views and their impulses. The ideal of the Little Poor Man ever maintained itself in that filial heart, which kept unaltered and unblurred the lovliest inspirations, as in a clear mirror. . 8

The "spiritual consanguinity" to which the author refers caused Clare to fashion San Damiano after the Portiuncola; it was there that the flower of Franciscanism—as Jorgensen<sup>6</sup> terms the Poor Clares' life of prayer and labor, of poverty and joy—unfolded itself. It was first by Clare herself, then at San Damiano, and thereafter at the establishments dominated by Clare's spirit, that the Franciscan ideal, as expressed and lived by Francis himself, was put into sound practice. Jorgensen confirmed that point when he wrote:

While men sometimes must be satisfied to represent theory, practice, often outside of all theory, is the vocation of woman. No one ever realizes, more fully a man's ideal than a woman, once she is possessed by it. . . if one wishes to see the Franciscan life in a form free from all enforced additions and unfavorable foreign influences, one must above all others turn to his great female disciple, St. Clare of Assisi.<sup>7</sup>

The fact, then, that St. Clare shared admirably and heroically in giving practical expression to the Franciscan ideal in all its prime purity, is beyond question. It remains rather to show in what particular respects she mirrored St. Francis in her life and in the life she proposed for acceptance by her Sisters.

Clares' imitation of Chirst, as was that of Francis, was complete and thorough. Anyone who has studied the bull of her canonization is convinced of that. In it she is said to have been:

... the foremost among the poor, the leader of the humble, the mistress of the continent, the abbess of the penitent; ... ever vigilant in duty, prompt in the performance of her office, cautious in exhorting, unfailing in teaching; in correcting she was moderate, temperate in ordering, admirably compassionate, discreet in keeping silence, prudent in speech. .. more desirous to obey than to command, more anxious to honor others,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp. 147-148. <sup>6</sup>Johannes Jorgensen, St. Francis of Assisi, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), p. 129. <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

than to be honored herself. . . a vessel of humility, a tower of chastity, a flame of charity, a maker of peace. . .8

From such an enumeration of high praise it is difficult to restrict oneself to any one phase of Clare's imitation of Christ; indeed her life was such a total conformity to that of Christ that it almost defies categories. However, for present purposes it seems better the stress only a few of the ways in which Clare was a "mirror of Francia as he was of Christ, and to discuss those with a view of gaining deeper appreciation of this valiant woman and a more absorbing low and desire for all that is truly Franciscan.

The Most Reverend Augustine Sepinski, O.F.M., in his encyclication on St. Clare states: "To imitate the Crucified and to follow in the steps of her Father Francis was her task. She was deeply anxious least lose her privilege of poverty, and she was devoted to the Blesse Eucharist. . "Gemelli's text resembles the latter: "The Francisca devotion for Jesus Chirst as a child, on the cross, and in the Euchasist, and for Our Blessed Lady, was so intense in the case of St. Claras to produce ectasy and miracles." Portions of the above texts will serve as "leads" for discussion here.

Both Francis and Clare realized that the lessons for imitation found in the Gospel were never meant to form a comfortable doctrine. Still more did they realize that the suffering and dying Christ as found therein, would present a stumbling block for many. It is a Wicks points out when he speaks of those who would follow Francis. "Men will share his songs who will not make his sacrifice; and will chant his roundelays who will not cry for mercy at the foot of the Cross." For both Francis and Clare the knowledg, love, and copying of the poor crucified Christ constituted the epitome of all their spirituality, and with the magnanimity of surrender that was their the Crucified Christ became the magnificent obsession of each. In Francis the love of Christ Jesus Crucified so obsessed his heart and pervaded his soul like the fragrance of a bundle of myrrh, that he

desired, by the intense fire of his love, to merge entirely into Him.<sup>12</sup> Such a love had been enkindled by his two early visions of Christ crucified. St. Bonaventure and Celano both told of the effects of those two visions: the memory of Christ's Passion was so impressed on his heart and he was so penetrated with compassion for the Crucified that he wept at the very thought of the Cross.

In Clare one meets the clear reflection of this devotion to the Crucified Savior. The extent and practicality of her love for the Suffering Christ is brought out beautifully by Celano, the surest guide for the life of St. Clare:

Deep and full of tenderness was her lament over the Passion of the Lord. His holy wounds were for her at times a source of sorrowful affections, at others a reason to flee sweeter joys. The tears of the suffering Christ inebriated her, and her memory often recalled to her Him whom love had impressed so deeply on her heart. She taught the novices to bewail Christ Crucified, and what she thus taught by word she exemplified in her actions. For often when she was exhorting them in secret to these things, she would give way to tears before she began to speak. During the Day-Hours of Sext and None she was usually filled with greater sorrow, that she might be immolated as a victim with her sacrificed Lord. . . To feed her mind unceasingly on the delights of the Crucified, she would frequently recite with great attention a prayer on the Five Wounds of Our Lord. She learned the Office of the Cross as Francis, the lover of the Cross, had composed it, and prayed it often with like affection. As a secret reminder of the Savior's wounds, she girded her flesh with a little cord with thirteen knots.18

Celano's account of Clare's manifest devotion to the Passion is proof enough that she felt that the perfect response to her call of following Christ had to lead her inevitably to crucifixion. To properly repay the total self-annihilation of His sacrifice, she desired to become a sacrificial victim. Thus, her very life, with its constant mortification and penance, bore witness to the degree to which she attained that desire.

With devotion to the Passion as the formative power of her spiritual life and sincere meditation on the Passion as the characteristic element of her mystical doctrine,<sup>14</sup> it is not surprising that an affectionate respect for the sign of the cross should be found in Clare. De Robeck claims that for her, "the sign of the cross became something life-giving

<sup>8</sup>Nesta De Robeck, "The Bull of Canonization of the Virgin St. Clare," St. Clare of Assisi, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 233-234.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Augustine Sepinski, OFM, "Encyclical Letter on St. Clare," The Cord: III (December, 1953), 348.

<sup>10</sup> Agostino Gemelli, OFM, The Franciscan Message to the World, (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1934), p. 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Sidney F. Wicks, The Friends of St. Francis, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1952), p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>Otto Karrer, ed., St. Francis of Assisi, The Legends and Lauds, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), p. 164.

<sup>18</sup>Ignatius Brady, OFM, and Sister M. Frances, SMIC, Editors, Legend and Writings of St. Clare, (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), pp. 39-40.

14Ibid., p. 150.

that transported her ever more deeply into the mystery of the love of Christ." The Sign of the Cross was for Clare, "the sign of life and lealing; it was the sign of joy and unspeakable delight, for on the Cross was consummated her mystical union with the Great King."

This sign of the cross was indeed a sign of healing for Clare, and his in more than one sense. Using it she won miracles for her Sister and for those who begged her help and blessing. The entire cause of her canonization is interspersed with instances where Clares' making the sign of the cross during her lifetime wrought marvelous cure for mind and body. You wonders can only be ascribed to the rewards of the Suffering Christ to one who was aflame with love for Him

Closely associated with her intense following of Christ who has divested Himself of all on the Cross was Clare's love for the loor Christ. Here again she mirrors Francis who, in the mind Chesterton, "plunged after poverty as men have dug madly for gold." Perantoni recalls the place poverty held in Francis' life:

Poverty was the lady of his desires as far back as when, not yet recognizing her clearly at the outset of his conversion, he drove his teasing comrades far back from him with the words: 'Yes, I am going to take a nobler and more beautiful bride than you have ever seen, one to excell the rest in from and surpass them all in wit.' He took her to his embrace in troth unbreakable, weaving that holy, lovely exchange with her—the SACRUM COMMERCIUM. On the point of death, too, he plighted himself to her when he had himself laid bare on the bare floor, leaving her at last to his children as a most wealthy heritage. 19

It was this evangelical pearl of poverty that Clare also soughter, and when she had found it, clung to it with the tenacity commo to her. Like Francis she was firmly wedded to the poverty of Christs Francis declared to the friars, so did Clare repeat to her daughters, that the community would remain in its primitive fervor at would be pleasing to God in the same measure as it was fortified holy poverty. Clare was very definite as to the ideal poverty she holy over the control of th

as a golden lock with which she could shut out from her heart the dust of earthly things."20

As with all else, Clare carried her esteem for poverty into action. When the question of a name for her Order arose, she asked Innocent III that her Sisters and she might be called after poverty. Celano<sup>21</sup> wrote that to insure the observance of the poverty which Francis had inspired in her, she begged the Pope for the "Privilege of Poverty," certainly a unique request in that day. For the greater part of her life at San Damiano she endured a constant struggle to be allowed to live the life of Gospel poverty. That struggle ended only on her deathbed. Perfect poverty according to the Gospel and the example of Francis was uppermost in all her strivings. How intimately she connected the practice of poverty with the Gospel life is verified by her reply to the Roman Pontiff recorded by Celano:

... But when he (that is, Pope Gregory) sought to persuade her because of the conditions of the times and the dangers of the age to consent to some possessions he himself generously offered, she wholeheartedly resisted and refused to agree. When the Pontiff answered: "If you fear for your yow we release you from it," she replied: 'Holy Father, never do I wish to be released in any way from the following of Christ.'22

It is plain from passages Clare included in her Rule that she was conscious of the exhortations of Francis regarding the ideal of poverty and the Poor Christ. In Chapter VI she mentions:

And that we and those who were to come after us might never fall away from the highest poverty which we had chosen, shortly before his death he (St. Francis) again wrote to us his last will, saying: 'I, little Brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of Our Lord Jesus Christ most high, and of His most holy Mother, and to persevere therein until the end. And I beseech you, my ladies, and counsel you always to live in this most high form of life and poverty. And guard well, lest by the teaching or counsel of anyone you ever in any way depart from it.'28

The testament of St. Clare, too, shows forcibly that a life of poverty according to the Gospel was her goal. In it there are frequent allusions to poverty: "... especially that we should persevere always in holy poverty... Therefore we have bound ourselves again and again to our Lady most holy Poverty... as I have ever been zealous and careful to observe and have others observe the holy poverty... and

<sup>15</sup>De Robeck, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>16</sup>Brady and Sister M. Frances, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>De Robeck, op. cit., pp. 179-230.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Gilbert K. Chesterton, St. Francis of Assisi, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), p. 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Pacific M. Perantoni, OFM, Franciscan Spirituality, (Chicago: Franciscan Heral Press, 1950), p. 16.

Mark Stier, OFMCap., Franciscan Life in Christ, (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1953), p. 60.

<sup>31</sup>Brady and Sister M. Frances, op. cit., p. 28.

**<sup>32</sup>**Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

ove all to observe most holy poverty in a more perfect way. . ."
ch repetitions are indication that where Clare's treasure was, namely
nformity to the life of the poor Christ, there were her heart an
and also. These indications are confirmed by Clares' letters, partic
arly by that addressed to Agnes of Prague, in which Clare extols the
aises of poverty:

O blessed poverty! to those who love and embrace her she bestows eternal riches. O holy poverty! to those who possess and desire her God promises the kingdom of heaven and in truth bestows eternal glory and the blessed life. O poverty beloved of God! whom the Lord Jesus Christ, Who ruled and now rules heaven and earth, Who spoke and things were made (Ps. 32, 9), deigned to embrace so completely.<sup>25</sup>

The message of Clare to Agnes of Bohemia is another reference the exact observance of poverty and a clue to her own esteem for Regarding it, Englebert has written: "These accents (Clare's work poverty) are less new and sublime than those of the Poverello and are certainly has not spoken as St. Francis did of Poverty, but on any that she did not love it less than he and that she strove did to be faithful to it."26

One can readily accept the words of Loccatelli's standard Li

I do not believe, my reader, that any miser has ever toiled all his life to accumulate treasure as our Holy Mother toiled to acquire poverty; nor that he regretted so much at the point of death to be obliged to leave his wealth, as she exulted in being divested bare of everything.<sup>27</sup>

Truly the plaque that hangs on the convent of San Damiano this is the home of the poor"—tells the story of what went on at cloister, "the story of an heroic life, inspired by the love of preme idea: the poverty of the Gospel."28

As St. Clare shared in Francis' ideals and efforts to lead a crued and poor life in the spirit of the Gospel, so she made, as he de Eucharistic Christ the mainstay of her life. For this, too, was sson she learned from her Father Francis. Felder says that "Francistered the devotion to the Eucharist as no saint before him. It was

Wibid., pp. 82-85.
Wibid., p. 89.
Englebert, op. cit., p. 150.
Author of "The Enclosed Nun." editor. St. Clare and Her Or

Author of "The Enclosed Nun," editor, St. Clare and Her Order, (London: Mid Boon, Ltd., 1912), p. 50.

Franciscan Clerics, The Family of St. Francis, (San Luis Rey: Studies in Francis an Idealism, 1947), p. 34.

the devotion, not one of the devotions of the Seraphic Saint."<sup>29</sup> That devotedness urged Francis to communicate often. It impelled him to seek out and repair dilapidated churches. It inspired in him a deep reverence for the priesthood, a reverence he showed toward all priests, even those unworthy. It enkindled in Him an intense devotion for anything and everything that bore even the slightest connection with the Eucharist. Of the latter Brother Leo remarks: "... and (Francis) preached to them (the assembled priests) of the salvation of souls, and especially that they should be careful to keep clean the churches and altars, and all things which pertained to the celebration of the divine mysteries."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Francis frequently admonished his own brothers to be shining examples unto all men in their glowing love for the Eucharistic Christ. Those admonitions were outgrowths of his own faith in the Blessed Sacrament. Felder maintains that:

on the linen of the altar, and on the tongue of the communicant, the hands and feet, the eyes and mouth the flowing blood and throbbing heart, the majestic personality and the saving grace of Him who once walked the fields of Galilee and Judea, and to whom he himself had sworn allegiance as a knight of the cross. . .31

In such "beholding" did Clare, too, receive the courage and strength to grow spiritually as Francis' "little plant." The statement of Father Sepinski bears out that point: "Clare's life is truly striking. But there is one virtue in particular which completes and makes all the others one; it is the fresh and unfailing fountain from which she drew all her many graces and gifts: her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament."82

Celano, in his legend on St. Clare, includes manifestations of her devotion for this sacrament of divine love. He says:

How great was the devotion of the Blessed Clare to the Sacrament of the Altar is shown by its results. For during the severe illness which confined her to bed, she had herself raised up and supported by props, and sitting thus she would spin the finest linens. From these she made more than fifty sets of corporals and enclosed them in silken or purple cases, and then had them sent to the different churches of the plains and mountains of Assisi.<sup>83</sup>

Hilarion Felder, OFMCap., The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi, (New York: Ben-

iger Brothers, 1925), p. 11.

Brother Leo, The Mirror of Perfection, Everyman's Library, No. 485, (New Fork: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947), P. 228.

Felder, op. cit., p. 44.

Sepinski, op. cit., p. 352.

Brady and Sister M. Frances, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

Celano<sup>34</sup> also relates the incident of the onrush of the blog thirsty Saracens into the confines of San Damiano and into the Po Clares' cloister. In fear and trembling the Sisters rushed to the Mother for help. Clare, though sick, was fearless, and placed here in the doorway facing the enemy. There, with the ivory-bound six casket containing the Body of the Holy of Holies in front of her, prostrated herself in prayer. The Eucharist, prayer, and Clare master the situation. The invaders were quickly routed.

Nesta De Robeck, in her biography of St. Clare, cites another. Celano's accounts of Clare and the Eucharist:

...when Clare came to Holy Communion she wept hot tears of love, and was filled with the utmost awe and reverence towards the Lord of the Heaven and earth who thus abased Himself. She cried so much that it seemed as though her heart was being poured out. For her the thought of the consecrated Host was as awe-inspiring as that of God the Creators of all things. . .85

Clares' own words, included in the cause of her canonization, veal her deep love and respect for the Eucharist: "O my daught thank the Lord God for me, because all the heavens and earth can suffice to praise God for me since today I have received Him in Blessed Sacrament and have also seen His Vicar." It is further lated by one of the witnesses to her cause:

... when the Sisters thought Saint Clare to be near death the priest brought her the Communion of the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and at that moment the witness saw a wonderful light over the head of the Lady Clare, and the Host appeared to her transformed into a most beautiful little Child. And after the blessed Mother had received It with her habitual great devotion and many tears she said these words: 'All the heavens and earth could not worthily praise our Lord God for what He has granted me this day.'87

One need not press the point to infer that her devotion to Holy Eucharist led Clare to live a eucharistic life, a life that she none of that want of generosity which results in hesitation of treat before the austerity of the following of Christ.<sup>88</sup> With the Eucharist as the sun of her spiritual life she was able to grasp the warmth and spirit and gather the stamina of the Poverello in his imitation of the Gospel Christ.

Through her total dedication to the pursuit of this evangelical perfection—dominated, as it was, by her conformity to the suffering, poor, and Eucharistic Christ,—Clare came to be regarded by Francis and the brethren, "not as a disciple of the fraternity but as one set by God to witnes to them the truth and sanctity of their vocation." Truly she was for the Portiuncola itself, and for the world at large, a most excellent emulator of Blessed Francis and the very flowering of his ideal.

88A. Motte, O.P., "The Obligation to Follow a Vocation," Vocation, (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1952), p. 33.

89Cuthbert, op. cit., p. 162.

#### **ASCENT**

"In order to come to union with the wisdom of God, the soul has to proceed rather by unknowing than by knowing."

—St. John of the Cross.

God:
Unknow the mind
that it know Thee.
Unday the night
that all the shimmering
pathways of my thought may be
but darkness in the light
and light to all the dark.
Drouth this, my fertile land,
But rain the desert yet...
then may I take Thy hand
and, learning Thee,
forget.

\_Sister M. Florian, O.S.F.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>35</sup>De Robeck, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 196

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 212 .

# The Franciscan Vocation In the Modern Work

Fr. Cajetan Esser, O.F.

#### RETROSPECT AND SUMMARY

"The Rule (Francis was wont to say) is the book of life, the hope salvation, the marrow of the Gospel, the way of perfection, the of paradise, the pledge of an eternal covenant" (II Cel. 208).

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolate and house will fall upon house" (Lk. 11, 17).

More than any other, this judgment of Christ describes the ation of mankind today. For centuries, especially since the l of Humanism and the Renaissance, western man has sought to be a kingdom in which man and not God would be the measure of things. In every phase of human life and action, the human, belongs to man, has occupied the central place, while the div whatever is of God, if it has not been completely abandoned, has b made to serve the desires of man. In retrospect, we can only say such a displacement of the proper center of the universe and of m thought has worsened with the passing of time. Incapable of subde the passions of man, it has let them grow unrestrained to produce unhappy fruits of rampant greed and lust for power in which Se Paul rightly saw the root of all evils (I Tim. 6, 3-10). Through gr man seeks to have this world's goods for himself alone, while through the desire for power he would lord it over others that they serve him. The rights of God, to whom all persons and things beld are entirely forgotten, while the glory of God for which creation a whole and man in particular were called into being is made pletely void.

If man is now the center of this brave new world, its end is longer the honor and glory of God but the glorification of man. It is this but the senseless effort to repeat the mistake of our

Note: This is a "Retrospect and Summary" offered by Fr. Cajetan Esser, at the of The Marrow of the Gospel, portions of which have already appeared in Cord. The translation is made by Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.

parents, who sought to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3, 5)? But whenever man supplants God and makes himself the center, egoism soon rears its evil head, to claim all for itself. Not without reason does Holy Scripture pass over other details after the Fall, to narrate immediately the fratricide of Cain (Gen. 4, 1-8), to make it clear that when man is no longer the child of God, he cannot be brother to his fellow-man. As soon, then, as the glory of God gives way to the glorification of man, self-love poisons and destroys the relation of man to man. When man ceases to have fellowship with God, true brotherliness disappears, and "a man's enemies are those of his own household" (Mt. 10, 36).

All this is alarmingly true of the world today, for discord and disunity are, despite the U.N. and all efforts to the contrary, the mark of our God-forgetting and God-less age. Enmity between nations is matched and fanned into lasting hatred by the excessive nationalism that rules within. Yet even this is but an apparent unity, since class-conflict, social divisions, distinctions based on race or creed give outward evidence of a deep-seated division within, as each seeks to gain or maintain his own selfish and self-centered "rights," perhaps by intimidation and violence. Even in families the ties of love are relaxed or torn apart, and the spirit of mutual affection and helpfulness is lost sight of. With deep concern we must go so far as to admit that this disintegration has invaded even the community of the faithful. No longer is their assembly that of the people of God, the family of our Father in heaven, but a loose gathering of individuals, who have come together indeed in the same house of God, not to worship as a Body but each for himself, while they are interested in the Church only insofar as they may obtain from her something for their personal salvation.

Such a development has affected not only society as such, but reaches down into the life of the individual. Its logical consequence has been to turn man entirely upon himself and to blind him to all save his own interests. Toward God he has closed and hardened his heart. Toward men and things he has an eye only for their value to himself. They have lost their dignity and worth as creatures and reflections of God.

How right was Saint Augustine when he described "the love of celf even to the contempt of God" (amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei) as the root of the earthly city, the world without God. This love of self even to the contempt of God has two unmistakable signs by which it betrays itself: greed for this world's goods and an equal greed

for power and honor; and to these all the evils of a purely tempor and earthly "city" can be traced.

The kingdom of this world, in which man attempts to make his self the center, is particularly vulnerable to attacks and invasion by the prince of darkness. Even as he deluded the first man and woman, has not ceased to mislead men to the God-less use of things. The tutored, man no longer seeks to use and to possess things in the ord which God established, but in the order dictated by his own perver will. From this it is but a logical step to the complete overthrow all God-given values and the creation of an entirely new order the of—which is not new, for it is the order of the evil one himself. Thus witness the birth of a complete secularization of all phases human life, which is nothing less than a complete surrender to the enemy, for "he who is not with me is against me" (Mt. 12, 30). Whe man is led by the spirit of self alone, he has fallen into the kingdom of Satan and has lost the kingdom of God; for those "who do su things will not attain the kingdom of God" (cf. Gal. 5, 16-21).

II.

In an unwholesome "perversion" man has become the enemy God through his desire to glorify himself. Much as he has suffere in consequence under the "works of the flesh," the fruits of his own error, he can never "convert" himself to his original state. God hi therefore in his boundless mercy sent his only Son that he mig raise mankind from its misery and restore it to the kingdom of Go unto the glory of his Father. This "conversion" Christ has account plished for all in his saving Passion and Death, that in him we mig be turned once more to God and render him love and obedience "thus the Christ should suffer and should rise again from the det on the third day; and repentance and remission of sins should preached in his name to all the nations" (Lk. 24, 46-47). He the fore began his work with the summons: "The time is fulfilled, and kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (M 1, 15). "To repent," to do penance, to change mind and heart, h since been the inescapable requisite for man to enter the kingdom God.

This conversion of mind and heart, whereby one's whole list is corrected and directed toward God, is possible only to the degree that man comes to share in the redemption of Christ and that redemptive work becomes effective in his life.

If the "love of self even to the contempt of God" has produced

the earthly city, it is the "love of God even to the contempt of self" (amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui ) that creates the City of God. This love for God even to contempt of self is the central mystery of the whole earthly life and work of Christ. As the love of self even to the contempt of God manifests itself primarily and most clearly in the lust for possessions and for power, so is the love of God even to contempt of self visible in Christ most clearly in his poverty and humility: "Christ Jesus. . . though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. Therefore God also has exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2, 6-11).

These words of Saint Paul reveal that the "Kenosis," the emptying, of our Savior is the means of glorifying the Father, the way to the kingdom of God, in which all through and in his Name acknowledge the glory of the Father. Our duty, as men redeemed by Christ and possessed of his grace, is indicated in the previous words of the Apostle: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2, 5). The gospel "Metanoia," to "do penance" in a complete change of outlook, thus means essentially that the citizen of the kingdom of God must put on "the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2, 16) and "become conformed to the image" of Christ (Rom. 8, 29); or, as Saint Peter says: "As obedient children, do not conform to the lusts of former days when you were ignorant; but as the One who called you is holy, be you also holy in all your behavior" (I Pet. 1, 14-15). The more therefore the redeemed man shares in and imitates the emptying, the poverty of Christ, the more does holiness, the love of God, fill his heart, that he may return love for love. "For you know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ - how, being rich, he became poor for your sakes, that by his poverty you might become rich" (II Cor. 8, 9).

The poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the saving victory over the selfish greed of fallen man, consisted not merely in this that he was poor in earthly goods, that he had nowhere to lay his head (Mt. 8, 20) and depended for support on those "who used to provide for him out of their means" (Lk. 8, 3); but in this, that he surrendred himself entirely to the will of the Father and did always the things that

whereby the world might know that he loved the Father (John 3). This loving obedience in complete emptying of self, in constant total devotion to the divine will, is that glorification of the Fat of which he spoke in his priestly prayer: "I have glorified thee, eath: I have accomplished the work that thou hast given me do" (John 17, 4).

The emptying of Christ lies also in this, that he serves us hi sinful self-love man refuses to be either the servant of God of serve men and things as the images and footprints of God. But his elf-forgetfulness as the servant of God, Christ becomes the serv of all: for "the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20, 28). "You call Mater and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If, therefore, I Ind and Master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash feet of one another. For I have given you an example, that as I due to you, so you also should do" (John 13, 13-15). In these we on Savior shows that his humility is an essential part of his work Releamer, and that it must be taken as a model for the kingdom Gol. This he made even clearer on another occasion: "You kin that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great rulers excise authority over them. Not so is it (to be) among you. On contrary, whoever wishes to become great among you shall be y servant: and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave" (Mt. 20, 25-27).

The kingdom of God, built through the love of Christ for Father even to total emptying of self, thus becomes a reality with under the redeeming, liberating grace of Christ man strips him of everything and abandons all desire for wealth and power that may become capable thereby of complete love and unceasing prof the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord. This Christ proposes to who belong to him: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him do himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For he would save his life will lose it: but he who loses his life for sake will save it" (Lk. 9, 23-24); and "Every one of you who do not renounce all that he possesses, cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14, The kingdom of God is thus the fruit of the imitation of Christ complete "Metanoia," by which we empty ourselves of self, that must thus be free for "the love of God even to contempt of self."

Those who belong to the kingdom of God, belong to Christ: "you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3, 23). But "they w

belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5, 24), to be led not by the flesh or the spirit of self, but by the spirit of the Lord. They have inherited the kingdom and the fruits of the Spirit, which are "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith, modesty, continency" (Gal. 5, 22-23). Through such fruits is overcome in the redeemed man whatever had excluded him from the kingdom; for each of these fruits springs from one root: "the love of God even to contempt of self."

#### III.

The age of Saint Francis saw the awakening of individualism and subjectivism and the gradual loosening of the wholesome bonds and restrictions which for the good of the kingdom of God older Christianity had laid on the individual. In the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries we find the first sprouts of the movement which through Humanism and the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and Rationalism, was to result in the chaotic breakdown of our day because in increasing degree it became more and more individualistic and liberalistic: that is, more and more God-less. At the beginning of this development the Lord God set a sign in his servant Francis, which would continue to have great significance throughout all succeeding stages of history. The charisma or grace of Saint Francis was given by God to the Church in an age and for a development which stood once again under the mark of original sin because men sought by one means or another to be like to God. To that age Francis set the example of a life of gospel penance, to keep that world from the danger of total apostacy.

Yet Francis alone was not called by God to live the gospel life in a Church threatened by individualism and liberalism. It was the mission also of the community of brothers whom the Lord himself gathered about Francis and established in the Church as the Order of Friars Minor. Their manner of life is therefore "to observe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," as the first chapter of the Rule declares; and 'firm in the Catholic faith to observe the poverty and humility and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they have firmly promised," as the concluding chapter repeats once more. Through this gospel life of penance in the Church they are to renew the kingdom of God and strengthen it within and without.

"Come and help me in building the monastery of San Damiano; for here will dwell Ladies whose good name and holy life will glorify our heavenly Father throughout his holy Church," was the invitation

Francis gave his blow-Assisians. This prophecy is fulfilled not only in the feminine hach of the Franciscan movement, but also in the Friars Minor thenelves, who likewise by their "good name and holy life will glorify the heavenly Father throughout his holy Church." Like Francis, they be to lead a life of penance according to the form of the Holy Gospel and so glorify God in an age that tends more and more to glorify by. Purely and simply Francis stated their duty: "And when we be or hear that men speak or do evil, or blaspheme God, then let us and do good and praise the Lord, who is blessed forever. Amen." Placis is here faithful to the exhortation of the Apostle: "Be not overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12, 21).

The Friars Mor are to glorify God particularly in this, that "in this world. . . they serve the Lord in poverty and lowliness" (Rule, ch. 6). Poverty and humility, as Francis discovered them in the life, passion and death of Christ, are to be the special forms of our "emptying" (expropriatio, exinanitio). Through povery and humility we are to renounce all we own, to live "sine proprio," to be completely empty of self, that God by give himself to us and let his love flourish in us without let or indrance. To this end, "in the holy love which is God," Francis legs "all the friars, both the ministers and the others, to remove hindrances and put aside all cares and worries, that with all their night, as best they can, they may serve, love, adore and honor the Lord God with a clean (that is, empty of self) heart and pure (free from all attachment) mind; for this he seeks above. all else." Ere divine love can enter us and work in us, it demands of us such an "expropriation" in poverty and humility. In this expropriation, this stripping of all that is "proper" to us, we find the meaning of many wividual precepts of our holy Rule.

Since man is a being made up of body and soul joined together in strict unity, his expropriatio," his renunciation and emptying and liberation of all attachement to self and things, must be both interior and exterior.

Outwardly, this sacrifice of all earthly possessions and even of the will and right to own anything is accomplished in the renunciation required by the second chapter of the Rule. Such goods the candidates are to give to the poor, as "the Lord may inspire them." Not only is this the fulfillment of a gospel injunction (Lk. 18, 22), but by it God is glorified, for man thus gives back to God what is really his, and thereafter uses only what God in his fatherly kindness puts at man's disposal through the love and alms of his

THE FRANCISCAN VOCATION IN THE MODERN WORLD fellowmen. The same thought underlies the precepts on clothing, which not only are formulated after the Gospel (Mt. 10, 9-10), but are founded on utter dependence on God: even changes in the habit or additions of sack-cloth and other material must be according to the will and blessing of God. The use of food and drink should also be free from all self-will (ch. 3). Such freedom is the privilege of that man in the kingdom of God who has abandoned himself entirely to the Lord. This Francis makes clear in the earlier Rule, when he uses the words of Christ to emphasize the role of poverty in clothing, food and drink: "Those who wear fine clothes and live in luxury and wear soft garments are in the houses of kings"; and "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overburdened with self-indulgence and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare. For come it will upon all who dwell on the face of all the earth."

Because in this world the friars are to serve the Lord in poverty and humility, they are forbidden to ride on horseback (ch. 3), since in Francis' day this was a sign of wealth and rank and usually became a display of pomp. The same reason explains the strong and unbending prohibition of money (ch. 4). The friars are to have no earthly security for their life, that at all times they may be ready and free to do what God wills for them. Because it is so difficult for those "who trust in riches (to) enter the kingdom of God" (Mk. 10, 24), the Friars Minor must cast this hindrance aside, that with Francis they can always go to the Lord with the liberty of the children of God.

A like freedom for God is assured in the fifth chapter, which speaks of the manner of working. The Friars Minor are to see in work a grace of God, and are to perform it as "the servants of God." Free from all self-interest that can so easily debase our work and make it servile, it should be so penetrated and enlivened by the spirit of prayer and complete devotedness that it becomes a true service of God. In his work, as in all else, the Friar Minor must not seek himself or anything for himself, but strive thereby to express his devotion to the will of the Father. His food, like that of Christ himself, must be "to do the will of him who sent me, to accomplish his work" (John 4, 34). After the example of Christ, the friars must with full confidence go for alms to the Table of the Lord (ch. 6), to receive from him what they have need of for life: to receive, not as their right, but as the free gift of God, when he wills and as much as he wills. This thought will find place even in respect to preaching: though we have the papel privilege of preaching, we must not use it save when God allows us through his representatives on earth.

Gol is the only explanation, the only goal, of all such renunciation and expropriation. They are not sought as ends in themselves, but as means, that God may be once more our center, our king and Lord, our leader and guide. Francis places himself and his fries completely and unreservedly under the dominion of God, four Father in heaven. . . Lord and King of heaven and earth, . . . that having thus left the world, we have nought else to do but to be solicitous to follow his will and to please him," and in the freedom hegotten of poverty, to receive his love in ever-increasing degree. But where Gods' love is free to work and finds no hindrance or obstacle of human self-will, there is the kingdom of God: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5, 3).

The external renunciation of all that is ours, of any "proprium," pust be accompanied by an inner emptying of everything that springs from the perverted self-love of man. In this inner "expropriation" poverty takes the form of humility, since the latter is ultimately nothing less than the perfection of such poverty. How we are to reach this nerfection is shown us in the Rule.

Thus, in the second chapter Francis emphatically counsels and hegs us not to look down on or pass judgment on any man. That the right of God, who judges all men; were we to do it, we would ngurp the right of God; and if we considered ourselves superior to athers, and better than they, we would almost be placing ourselves an equal with God. This is followed by the parallel warning to woid all quarreling, bickering and strife (ch.3), since such pettiness destroys the reverence we must have for God in the person of our fellow-men. Hence our words should always be respectful, no matter with whom we are speaking. The friars are thus to be men of peace, by their very example as well as by their form of greeting; because blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the childen of cod" (M. 5, 9). All this supposes and requires interior humility, the absence of all insistence on right and privileges. How often does not Francis ethort us that "we must never desire to be over others, but must seek rather to be the servants and subjects of every human creature for Gods' sake"! This readiness to serve must be shown esnecially to the sick friars (ch. 6); for this is a test of true humility and self-forgetfulness, to serve those who are helpless to make us any return.

(To be Continued)

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