

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

Feast of St. Francis De Sales

Dear Confrere:

The theme for the 1959 FEC Meeting will be COMMUNICATIONS (the apostolate of the press, radio and TV). The meeting is scheduled for the week of Aug. 10 at the new Franciscan seminary at Dayton, Ohio.

In order to get the best writers and the proper topics we are going to the experts for advice. Please check the topics below. Can you phrase the titles better? Can you suggest other topics? Can you draw up an ideal scheme of topics (not more than 12)? If you can, please graciously consent to write a paper or be an active discussant?

Here is the provocative list of topics that needs editing, perfecting, deleting, arranging, completing and general face-lifting.

FRANCISCANS AND THE APOSTOLATE OF COMMUNICATIONS

1. The History of Communications
2. Friars and the Apostolate of the Press
3. Freedom of Speech and the Press
4. Research Centers for Franciscan Writing
5. Canon Law and the Franciscan Writer
6. The Friars and Creative Writing
7. Journalism Courses in the Seminary

8. Seminar for Franciscan Editors (Symposium)
9. The Friars and the Press Business
10. Improving Franciscan Magazines
11. Principles and Problems of (Prov. Bulletins, etc.)
12. Use of Advertising and Relations
13. Friars in Radio and TV (present and past)
14. How to Write for Radio and TV
15. Radio and TV Technique for Priests
16. Movies ?????
17. Visual Aids ?????
18. Bibliography of Franciscan (Books)
19. Training Franciscan Writers
20. Pamphlets, Newspapers, other

Through your assistance we can present a valuable program to the world. Please let me have your ideas and suggestions as soon as you can, or not later than Feb. 28, and information to the above address. A thousand thanks for your courteous cooperation.

Fraternally,

Fr. Sebastian, O.F.M.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Blessed Virgin

Fr. Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.

PART I. MARY'S PREDESTINATION, A KEY TO A SYNTHESIS OF MARIOLOGY

In keeping with the central theme of these discussions with their emphasis on a Franciscan orientation to theology, we will adapt the theory of John Duns Scotus on the Predestination of the Blessed Virgin. To be sure, this theory has developed since the time of Scotus. What we present is actually a refinement of the Subtle Doctor's thought in view of the enormous amount of writing and research that has been done since the early fourteenth century. This theory is then in keeping with the spirit and mind of Scotus, if not precisely with the letter.

Before beginning our treatment of this theory, we must make some general observations about Predestination. As we all know, in God there is no succession of before or after, no change, no reversal of decision, no dependence on human will in deciding what He will do. Consequently, when the Blessed Trinity out of infinite goodness decided to create the universe, there was only one divine decree. But because of the weakness and limited capacity of our minds to understand the ineffable mystery of divine activity, we must resort to chronological and to spacial analogies in order to comprehend the content of the Blessed Trinity's decree and the details contained therein, together with their mutual dependence upon one another. In other words, our minds seek to know the order of intentions in the one divine decree. These intentions express the causal relationship that exists between the various creatures issuing from the hand of God. Since the intention of God's decree are casually connected, a prior intention cannot anticipate or contradict a, so to speak, future intention. If that were true, we would have to admit change in God—and that is absurd. The important point is that the order of intentions in God's decree must correspond with the order of final causality. That is to say, the various beings willed by God appear in His thought in decreasing hierarchical order, so that the highest being is the first intention of the decree while the lowest creature is the last intention, even chronologically, the lowest creatures—the stars, plants, earth,

plants, etc.—came before the highest creature, the human nature of Christ our Lord.

With the understanding of those ideas clearly in mind, we ask what is the order of intentions in the one divine decree relating to creation? There are many theories that propose to answer this question, but there is only one theory that we feel is true, and consequently that is the theory we will use as the point of departure for our synthesis of Marian theology.

Before presenting our adaptation of Scotus's theory on the destination—which is the Subtle Doctor's way of explaining the order of intentions in God's decree of creation—we should, however, pause to consider, at least in passing, the chief opposing theory, namely the theory of St. Thomas and of the thomists. According to the thomistic theory, the sin of Adam is prior in intention though not in primacy, to the incarnation and glorification of Christ our Lord. In other words, if Adam had not sinned, Christ would not have been born. Thus the cause of the Incarnation is Adam's sin. If there is some justification for the thomistic theory is obvious from the *Exultet* in the Liturgy of the Easter Vigil when the deacon sings: *felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!* But we cannot use these liturgical words in a strictly theological argument; they are essentially poetical expressions that contain the writer's ideas and sentiments toward the actual, chronological order of history and not necessarily his ideas about the order of intentions in God's eternal decree.

Scotus revolted against the very idea that the incarnation and glorification of the Son of the Most High God should be dependent on the sin of Adam. Consequently, Scotus put Christ as the first intention in the hierarchial order of intentions in the Blessed Trinity's eternal decree of creation. Christ then as the first-born of all creatures is the King of Creation, and all creatures were made for Him and for His glorification. The fact that Adam sinned did not disrupt the eternal plan, as we will see later, for Christ would be man's redeemer and achieve His glorification by meriting in the sweat and blood of His cross the graces needed by men and by angels to enjoy the vision of God.

Scotus's unique theory captures the authentic spirit of St. Francis and our holy Father—the spirit that looks upon Christ our Lord as the highest manifestation of the love of God for us, who are worthy and unworthy of his love. In the Scotistic synthesis, as Fr. Ellis mentioned, the Blessed Trinity created out of infinite goodness

Scotus teaches that God wills to give for the sake of giving, not for the sake of receiving anything in return. Hence, in communicating Himself God is ruled by His Essence which is formally love. Love is the motivating force in the Godhead. It is the final reason and deepest meaning of all divine activity. Therefore, in living in accordance with the divine Essence, God loves in the highest degree. These Scotistic ideas with their perhaps speculative and dry overtones reflect the simple, direct, forceful words of St. Francis who said: "Thou, O God, art charity, love . . . inflaming to love, because Thou, Lord, are love", and again, "Thou are good; all good; highest good."

There are seven points that must be considered in the Predestination of Mary. We will discuss each point briefly.

1. The predestination of Christ willed for His own sake. Scotus teaches that the first intention in God's eternal decree is the Incarnation. Why? Since God is supreme Good, it was fitting that He communicate Himself in a supreme degree to some being, according to the old Scholastic axiom: "Bonum est diffusivum sui," "Good has the tendency to give itself to others." And the Vatican Council teaches that God created the universe, because of His Goodness. Proof that Christ our Lord is first in the hierarchic order of intentions in God's decree, is found in St. Paul's words to the Colossians (1, 15); "(Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."

2. The predestination of Mary as full of grace. In virtue of its hypostatic union with the Word, the humanity of Christ would share in the very happiness of God. Christ's human nature too could experience the divine joy of giving itself and of making others happy. But Christ's human nature cannot give anything to God. Therefore, if God willed that Christ should give of Himself to another, God had to grant existence to at least one other person. That person was Mary who was to receive of Christ's fullness of grace. Hence, since Mary was second in the intentions of God's decree, she would be, after Christ, the creature most full of grace. This is the first of the great Marian doctrines. In the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, which contains the definition of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Pius IX writes: "On (Mary) (God) showed so much love, with preference to all other creatures, that in her case was He pleased with a most loving complacency. He, therefore, enriched her with an abundance of all heavenly gifts drawn from the treasury of the divinity, far more than all the angelic spirits and all the saints, in such a wonderful manner that she . . . all beautiful and perfect, might display a fulness of holiness greater than which is at all conceivable under God, and which no one, with the power of God, can even grasp."

3. The Predestination of Mary as the Mother of God. Christ is God, it was fitting that He also should give as God and He Himself should grant to Mary the superior joy of giving to Christ, as man, could give nothing to God, but nothing would prevent Him, as man, from receiving divine favors. By an admirable exchange and by a divine gesture of infinite thoughtfulness, God then decreed that Mary would give temporal life to Him from Whom she would receive all that she is and was. Thus Mary was given the inestimable privilege of mothering the Son of God. God reserved the right to create the human soul of Christ, but even this creation was subordinate to the consent of the Virgin of Nazareth. Mary was thus predestined to give to Christ all that a mother lovingly bestows on her child. Something of her own substance, the benefit of her mother care and gentleness of her affections. The divine maternity is Mary's diadem, crown, and according to many theologians, it is the central doctrine, what is technically called, the primary principle from which all other doctrines of Mariology logically flow. By reason of the two natures of Christ, there is a twofold sonship. Because His divine nature was generated from the Father from all eternity, Christ is the true Son of God the Father. Because His human nature was generated from Mary, Christ is the true Son of Mary. This twofold sonship does not make two Sons. Being one undivided Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Christ the Son of the Eternal Father is absolutely identical with Christ the Son of the Blessed Virgin. Hence, Mary is truly the Mother of God.

4. The Predestination of Men and of Angels. With Christ and Mary the cycle of predestination seemed complete; God had to go no further. But we know from revelation and from observation that God did will to create other creatures. Why? The reason must always be sought in the fathomless goodness of the Blessed Trinity, as the Vatican Council teaches. God decreed other creatures, angels and men, on whom Christ and Mary could bestow the plenitude of their love. Christ would grant angels and men a share in His divine life through sanctifying grace. Thus mankind would constitute a spiritual family of Christ and of His Mother, and the angels would be their servants. And all the rest of the material universe would be the throne and footstool of Christ Who hands over to men the earth and its riches. But the nations of men would still be Christ's inheritance, for in the Psalms we hear God saying to His Son: "Ask of men and I will give you the nations for an inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession" (Psalm 2, 8).

Mary's predestination to the spiritual maternity of angels and

men fits here. Proof of this doctrine is derived from the predestination of the absolute primacy of her Son as seen in the words of St. Paul to the Colossians: "(Christ) is the firstborn of every creature: for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and in him." From these words, we can argue that Christ not only enjoys an absolute primacy over all, but is likewise the meritorious cause of the supernatural life of all intelligent creatures, both angelic and human. In other words, the same grace of Christ which saved men after the fall, prevented the angels from falling. Now as we showed above, Mary was predestined to share one and the same decree with Christ. We conclude therefore that she not only shares His primacy over creation, but she is also the secondary meritorious cause of the grace given to both angels and to men. In this sense Mary is the spiritual mother of all rational creation.

Before considering the fifth intention or step in God's eternal decree of creation, we must pause to study the further elements that enter the picture of predestination, elements to which Scotus failed to pay sufficient attention. Those elements are: first, redemption and the "mystery of iniquity"; second, the trial of the angels; third, the fall of Adam; and fourth, the sins of all men. Since Scotus does not treat of these elements in a sufficiently convincing way due to the imperfect development of theology in his day, we will follow the ingenious suggestions made by a contemporary theologian, Fr. John F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., who uses the grand premises of Scotus to complete the masterful theory of the Subtle Doctor.

5. The predestination of Christ as Savior of Mary and of the angels. A few notions on the nature of a gift will aid in fully comprehending the implications of the predestination of Christ and of Mary as redeemer and as co-redemptrix, respectively. First, a donor must give of his own whatever he wishes to give to another person. Secondly, the recipient must have no right whatever to the gift. In view of these principles, we would have to admit that if Christ did not suffer, He would have appeared only as the distributor of graces, not as a giver of graces. Therefore, it was highly fitting that Christ should merit for the sweat and blood of His brow: first whatever He could merit for Himself, namely, exterior glory and the exaltation of His holy Name; and second, all the graces He would distribute to Mary, to angels, and to men. The source of Christ's merit would be all His actions, but especially His suffering unto death, for if action is in some way common to the Creator and to the creature, suffering and death are possible only to the creature. Since, therefore, God willed that His

future Christ should attain the highest degree of love, and since "greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friend," the Blessed Trinity decreed that Christ would merit by His willing life but especially by His suffering unto death on the cross, all the graces He would distribute to others. The first graces that Christ earned would be distributed to His Virgin Mother, and after that angels would receive of Christ's fullness. Thus all Mary's prerogatives from the first moment of her existence, the Immaculate Conception till her last moment on earth, her glorious bodily Assumption into heaven—all these privileges are pure gifts from her Divine Son.

We now interrupt our consideration of the order of intention in God's eternal decree of creation in order to treat of Mary's prerogatives that flow from Christ's bestowal of the fullness of grace upon His Blessed Mother.

The first privilege is the Immaculate Conception. The history of this doctrine is studied with controversy and doubt, which we discuss at greater length in our second paper today. But it is one of the glories of our Order that one of our own Friars, John Duns Scotus paved the way for the eventual solution of those difficulties and doubts. It was Scotus who showed the doubting theologians that Mary's sinless conception would not take anything away from the dignity of the Redeemer, as they had feared, but on the contrary would add immeasurably to that dignity, for Christ would bestow a superior gift of redemption, namely pre-redemption on His Virgin Mother. Prior to Scotus, theologians of no mean calibre—among whom are our Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure, and other notables like St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas—thought that St. Paul's words, "In (Adam) all have sinned . . . and need redemption through Christ," were a conclusive argument against the Immaculate Conception. But it was Scotus's genius to show that St. Paul's words simply meant that all owe their justification to Christ. Paul's teaching does not preclude, however, that Christ could pre-redeem someone if He so desired. It is interesting to note that the very theologians who deny the predestination of Christ before the sin of Adam—men like St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas—are the same ones who strongly urge that Mary's privilege would detract from the excellence of Christ as redeemer. But the Scotists to Scotus who so cleverly used the retort against those earlier theologians and threw their very argument right back at them, as we will see in our second paper, the theologians of a later date saw that the Immaculate Conception incomparably increased the dignity of Christ as universal redeemer. Thus in Scotus's panoramic view of predestination both of Christ and of Mary, the Immaculate Conception flows

as a corollary from Mary's plenitude of grace—a corollary that was held in the Eastern Tradition and in the minds of the faithful, even though it was missed by many Medieval Western theologians.

The doctrine of Mary's freedom from all personal sin, mortal and venial, also flows from her fullness of grace as well as from her exalted dignity as Mother of God.

The divine Maternity which we spoke of in point three above, serves as a necessary premise for Mary's perpetual virginity. For since Christ is only one Person, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, He can have only one Father, His Heavenly Father. Thus, there can be no question of a human father for the human nature which Christ put on in the womb of His Mother, Mary. Therefore, as St. Luke tells us (1, 35), Mary conceived Christ virginally, through the power of the Most High. And as the conception was virginal, so too was the birth—this is the doctrine of the virgin Birth, which, unfortunately, many Protestants confuse with either the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. And because Mary consecrated her life to God, she vowed to spend her entire life in spotless virginity. Hence it is that Mary was a virgin before, during, and after the birth of her Son.

Because of Mary's singular preeminence as His Mother, Christ also willed that after her days on earth came to an end, He would personally escort His Mother's body and soul into heaven. Thus is derived the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Now we return to the order of intention in God's decree of predestination.

6. The predestination of Christ as Savior of Men. As we indicated before, the concept of a gift implies that the recipient has no title whatever to the gift. Now if the recipient is guilty of sin toward the donor, a gift will be all the more generous and unmerited. Pardon, therefore, is the perfect gift. God did not will to deny His Christ this superior form of giving His very life in pardoning His enemies. Therefore God decreed three things: first, He permitted Adam and Eve to fall into sin; second, God permitted the sins of all subsequent men; and third God willed to include all Adam's children, save Christ and Mary, in the original degradation of man. Now what we have just said does not in the least imply that God impelled men to evil or encouraged them with their sins. Fr. Bonnefoy notes that this explanation of the permission of sin has to certain superficial authors seemed unworthy of God. But he observes further: "The permission of evil is a positive act of God, and it would be impious to say that God placed this act without a reason, without a proportionate cause." Consequently, as

many of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church teach, in order that Christ might know the superior joy contained in the perfect gift of pardoning, God decreed to permit sin, and foreseeing the fall of Adam, God decided to include all men, Christ and Mary excepted, in Adam's disobedience, so that Christ might have mercy upon all.

7. The predestination of Mary as coredemptrix. As we have seen above, it was most fitting that God, with all due proportion, include the Blessed Virgin in the same decree as Christ. Thus God decreed that Mary would be Christ's associate in the work of salvation and would merit with Christ and dependently upon Him, graces that were to be distributed to angels and to men. The doctrines that Mary is coredemptrix and dispenser of all graces, stem from this teaching. Hence, we believe that because Mary brought the Redeemer into the world, she cooperated *mediately* or remotely in the work of our redemption, and that because she joined her merits and satisfactions with those of the Savior and for the purpose, she cooperated *immediately* or proximately in the Redemption. Since it was decreed that Mary should cooperate with Christ in the work of redemption, God saw fit to grant Mary the privilege of becoming the dispenser of graces. Thus, by divine disposition, all favors granted by God to men are granted in view of and because of Mary's intercession.

In the perspective of the above doctrines we can now see the beauty and fittingness of the Universal Queenship of our Lady. Mary acquired her dominion over her subjects, not only by being the Mother of the King and His associate or consort in His mission of leading the members of His kingdom to their common end, but also by the fact that she formally and actively cooperated with the King in the work of redemption. It was precisely through the redemption that Christ and Mary recaptured or conquered their kingdom from the unjust possession of Satan. Just as Christ is king because of the hypostatic union and the added title of conquest as redeemer, so Mary is Queen because of her divine Motherhood and her role as co-redemptrix. In other words, Mary is Queen by divine relationship and by right of conquest.

Hence, since our Lady was predestined in the same decree as Christ, the Queenship of Mary follows as a fitting consequence from the Kingship of Christ our Lord.

Hence, since our Lady was predestined in the same decree as Christ, the Queenship of Mary follows as a fitting consequence from the Kingship of Christ our Lord.

Conclusion.

Karl Adam once wrote that the free will of Western man "has never more consciously, even more energetically and completely with-

drawn itself from the supernatural goal, with the consequence that its whole striving tends to a deification of natural ends and of values far removed from the final values, so that at last it has invaded the Holy of Holies and begun to blaspheme Christ." If Karl Adam is right and Bishop Sheen is correct when he said in a sermon given at a Marian rally held in Washington at the end of 1954: "Russia has the cross without Christ; we in the West have Christ without the cross,"—if these men are right, then the modern friar has his work cut out for him. The *renovatio accommodata*, the renewal of spirit adapted to our times, which Pope Pius XII refers to, means in the Pope's own words: "You must serve the cause of Jesus Christ and His Church as the world today requires." As Fr. Eligius noted in his comments, the world of today needs a sense of values, a vital realization and deep conviction that the finest things in life are not a Cadillac, the largest and most expensive home in the neighborhood, the fattest bank account, color television, a vacation in Florida. A spiritual writer once observed that the friar of today has the same job as the friar of the thirteenth century. Today's friar must be a living, dynamic sign of contradiction to the materialistic sense of values that like a deadly cancer has infected all the levels of our society, and even, the writer goes on to say, has made its influence felt in the life of religious.

The friar must make others see that while they rightly condemn Communism with its diabolical system of dialectical or logical materialism, they themselves must not be lulled into accepting and living a system of illogical materialism—a materialism accepted wholeheartedly in practice, though roundly condemned in theory.

St. Francis and the friars of the thirteenth century effected a spiritual and religious revolution by their radical or grass-roots return to the Gospels and to the writings of St. Paul. For the modern friar, the renewal urged by the Pope must be based upon a restudy and rethinking of the sources of our Franciscan life and spirit. With a thorough grasping and understanding of the sources of our Franciscan heritage, the friar of today must use his imagination and resourcefulness in order to adapt the perennially valid spirit of St. Francis to the needs and demands of the present day.

The fire of love enkindled by St. Francis whom St. Bonaventure called a burning coal in the furnace of divine love, the Sacred Heart of Jesus; that fire which was taken up by Scotus when he tried to show how all things are made for and through Christ—that same seraphic fire must burn in the heart of the modern friar if he is to fulfill the vocation Francis and the Church expects of him. In this paper, we had to be somewhat technical in showing the predestination of Mary. But

as St. Bonaventure teaches, theology must lead to love. The obvious conclusion, then, to this treatment of predestination is that the appraisal and rethinking of the synthesis begun by Scotus will help friars of today effect a return to the sense of values lived by St. Francis. For St. Francis as well as for Scotus, Christ is first in the scale of sense of values; Mary is second—as we have attempted to show; angels are third; man is fourth; and all the other material things made for man's use and enjoyment are last. Today's sensate and sensual scale of values places a premium on the use of creatures as instruments of pleasure and enjoyment. Today's friar must show a spiritually aware world that creature comforts, though good in themselves, must not become an end or purpose of man's life.

If the friar follows the exhortation of Pope Pius XII for a *renovatio* *accommodata*, a renewal adapted to our times, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit rethinks for himself the doctrines we have been considering, and if he tries to teach those with whom he comes in contact the sense of values of Francis as those values were given theological and speculative precision by Scotus and other thinkers, if the friar shows a spiritually famished world the real beauty and usefulness of material creatures, but the far more important beauty and intrinsic value of man's spiritual nature, then I think that friar is making medieval St. Francis live again in this our day.

(To be continued)

BORN AGAIN

Little one, are you amazed to see your creation?
Fear not, but come on tottering steps.
Tumble into My pity that made you,
Delighted to look upon you,
Flamed into pain at our parting.
Remember My pity, foolish heart:
How it sought you, found you out of My grace,
Broken and bruised beneath My stooping.

Careless child, come hide your shame in My Heart.
I know your sorrow; I gave it to you.
Be at your ease in My mercy.
Lift up your eyes and see
How you grow young with My repenting.

Receive the miracle of your second innocence
Into the wondering arms of your first meekness.

Hear My Pentecostal breath blow into blossom
The bud of My Easter love
Tightly closed on impatient grace.
You are become a garden cloistered about Me
Where My kindness will crucify you
Into myriad new creations.

Sister M. Agnes, P.C.

Crosses Over Nagasaki

Gerard Huber, O.S.A.

Tr. by Sr. M. Hildemar, S.M.I.C.

Sr. M. Francis, S.M.I.C.

FOREWORD

There are few countries in the Christian world where the Church is richer in heroes of the faith than in Japan. The success of St. Francis Xavier and his successors in the apostolate among the Japanese is nothing less than astounding. If we look upon the rich spiritual harvest of the past half century, we have to admit that hardly ever the seed of God's word fallen on more fertile soil. Sixty years after the introduction of Christianity, Japanese Christians numbered already a million. But the Ancient Enemy aroused a storm of such tremendous violence that the young garden of the Church seemed totally destroyed. The persecution was so devastatingly cruel and the tortures were ingeniously varied that a Japanese historian described Christianity as drowned in its own blood.

Among the richest pages of Oriental church history are those which tell of the entrance of the Franciscans into the Japanese mission and the heroic combat of the twenty-six protomartyrs. Six of these martyrs belonged to the First Order of Saint Francis, seventeen to the Third Order, and three to the Society of Jesus. The present work is an attempt to describe something of the early work of the Franciscans in Japan and the persecution that brought such glory to the Church. Using the most recent historical research and borrowing freely from the wealth of literature on the period, especially the Japanese works that have appeared within the last twenty years, the author has tried to clarify the obscure and much controverted beginnings of the Franciscan mission in Japan and to uncover the driving motives behind the persecution of 1597.

The author, however, wishes not only to offer his work as a proof of authentic mission history, but also as an effort to comply the fervent request of Saint Peter Baptist to his confreres in Manila, four days before his death: "Do not neglect the work of propagating the Faith."

I. BETWEEN BUDDHA AND CHRIST

It was in 1254 that Europe first heard of Japan. The source of information was the fascinating travelogue of the Franciscan missionary, William van Ruysbroeck,¹ who wrote a detailed account of his experiences in Inner Asia and at the Court of the Great Khan of the Mongols. His remarks about Japan, the "Golden Island Zipangu," were no more factual, however, than those of his contemporary Marco Polo (1248), for they were based on information gathered at the Court of the Great Khan.

The first European to set foot on Japanese soil was the Portuguese Fernando Mendez Pinto who landed there in 1542.² From him Europe received the first reliable account of the exotic island empire.

A few years later the first Christian missionary appeared in Japan. It was Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus, who reached Kagoshima on August 15, 1549. He was accompanied by three Japanese Christians named Paul, John, and Anthony whom he had met in Goa and who had told him about their native land. A strange twist of fortune had brought them to Goa where they had been instructed in the Faith and baptized by the Franciscan bishop, Juan of Albuquerque.

Xavier found the Nipponese Empire in a state of complete anarchy. The daimio were constantly at war with one another and the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiteru was too weak to control them. In Koyto, which was then the capital, the emperor sat enthroned in inaccessible majesty, while the shogun attempted to rule the empire in his name. In reality, however, neither the emperor nor the shogun possessed sufficient strength to govern the country effectively. The powerful daimio, who regarded themselves as independent feudal lords, simply ignored the authority of Koyto and battled endlessly against one another. The daily bloodshed and terrorism went on and on, and to the misery of permanent civil war were added the scourges of devastating earthquakes, famine, and epidemics. The people were in utter distress. Shintoism, once the national religion of Japan, had been completely superseded by Buddhism, which in turn had become so infected with worldliness that its representatives in the priesthood competed with secular princes and aspired after nothing but power and wealth. Buddhist priests and monks became involved in so many political quarrels and intrigues, and became so dissolute in their pleasure-seeking, that they rivaled and even surpassed the most licentious courtiers.

The people, plagued almost beyond endurance, longed for peace and order. In their profound misery they were denied even the consolation of religion, for Buddhism no longer possessed the spiritual

* Published by Dietrich Coelde Verlag under the title: *Kreuze ueber Nagasaki*

vitality to support them. As a religion, Buddhism has not only held on the people but had even fallen into disrepute.

Into this land of turmoil and suffering came Francis Xavier bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God to the despairing people. It seemed as if flames of holy fire leaped from him and kindled whatever they touched. In his own person he gave the example of the doctrine he preached, and immediately the people thronged to him as to a savior. He remained in Japan only a little more than two years, but the work he began was carried on by men who followed him. They were men of his spirit and zeal, and faithful was their apostolate that within thirty years after Xavier's arrival in Japan there were some two hundred churches in the various provinces of the country and 150,000 Christians among every rank and class of the population. The daimio of Bungo, Omura, Arima, Hiro and Goto as well as several princes of Honshu professed the religion. Twenty years later the number had more than doubled and this does not include children born of Christian parents, but adult converts. Had the Church continued to grow at the same rate Japan would have been a Christian nation within three or four generations.

The age that saw the introduction of Christianity was one of the most interesting and stirring epochs in the history of Japan, and at the close of the medieval period. The country was in a ferment, and was soon to be completely transformed.

If the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiteru was unable to bring peace to the war-torn country, it was not through any lack of good will. He sincerely desired to put an end to the interminable internecine wars and calm the restless masses. Poverty, violation, and distress of every kind had driven the people to such a state that rebellion was imminent. The shogun saw in Christianity the best means of warding off impending catastrophe, and accordingly he promoted and protected the new doctrine as far as he could. But he failed to reckon with the temperamental power of the Buddhist leaders. The bonzes and monks, still mighty in wealth and political prestige, had no mind to allow the new religion to win the people. If the shogun favored it, he had best be disposed of. They plotted against him and launched a surprise attack on his capital in Kyoto. After a desperate defence, he was taken and put to death. With his downfall in the year 1565 ended the reign of the house of Ashikaga which since 1338, had provided the country with feudal shoguns.

In the midst of the subsequent debacle there suddenly arose a man with iron fists. His strength and genius enabled him to gain control

of the tottering state and to beat the warring factions into submission. This man was Oda Nobunaga. The old mission chronicles describe him as tall and slender of stature, courageous, magnanimous, and bold. The fame of his valor penetrated the mystic seclusion of the Emperor. Ogimachi, who commissioned him to bring peace and order to the country. Armed with the imperial command, Nobunaga proceeded to take drastic action against whatever powers threatened the welfare of the country. The power and influence of the degenerate Buddhist priests seemed to him one of the primary obstacles to peace. Accordingly, he determined to destroy their power and chose two ways of doing so. His first move was to favor Christianity by helping in the erection of churches and schools throughout the country, and by protecting missionaries against the attacks of the bonzes. He had observed the blameless lives of the missionaries, their holy equanimity and loving concern for the welfare of the people, and compared them with the dissolute bonzes who no longer sought the things of the spirit but only wealth and power and pleasure. This led to his second move—armed attack against the Buddhist monasteries. He proceeded against the monasteries that were scattered like fortresses throughout the country and commanded his generals to wipe them out with fire and sword. Nothing was spared; about three thousand bonzes and monks perished. But the surviving Buddhist priests were by no means crushed; they only awaited the moment for revenge.

After the purge of the bonzes, Nobunaga began to move against the second obstacle to peace, the obstinate feudal lords. Two able and courageous generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who were later to complete his work of unification and to enjoy the fruits of his labor, stood faithfully at his side. By 1582 Nobunaga was master of almost all the daimio on the main island. Only the daimio of Mutsu and Choshu in the south still opposed him. Against these he dispatched a strong punitive expedition, and gave the command to his favorite Toyotomi Hideyoshi. But the enemy was powerful and not easily overcome. Hideyoshi sent a courier to Nobunaga with a petition for reinforcements. Nobunaga ordered the daimio Akechi Mitsuhide to gather all available forces near Kyoto and to hasten to Hideyoshi's aid. Mitsuhide brought together an army of 300,000 men in the neighborhood of Kyoto, but influenced by the clever arguments of the wily bonzes, he turned traitor. Instead of leading his army to the aid of Nobunaga, he suddenly attacked Nobunaga on June 22, 1582, while he was dining in the famous temple castle of Honnoji. The castle was set on fire from all sides, and Nobunaga, seriously wounded by an arrow, perished in the flames. He was in the forty-ninth year of his life.

But the traitor did not enjoy his success for long. The Christian General Justo Takayama Ukon, one of the most valiant and intrepid daimio of that time, was also marching to the south. When he learned of the attack on the temple castle, and the murder of Nobunaga, he returned in forced marches to his fortified castle of Takatsuki in Kyoto. He won the two daimio Ikeda Nobuteru and Nakagawa Kiyoaki to his side, and together with them prepared a plan of campaign against Kyoto, where Mitsuhide had nestled down with the intention of making himself shogun. At Yamazaki the army of the Christian General Ukon met the enemy and on July 11, after a long and sanguinary battle, Mitsuhide's forces were completely routed. The traitor himself was slain by farmers as he was fleeing through their fields.

From then on Toyotomi Hideyoshi played the leading role in the history of Japan's unification. The eldest son of Nobunaga, too, lost his life in the attack on the temple castle. He had a son named Hidenobu who was the legitimate successor to the shogunate. But he was only three years old, and Hideyoshi made himself his guardian on the pretext that as Nobunaga's commander-in-chief he had both the right and the duty to do so. In reality, however, he had no intention of ever relinquishing the power that had so easily fallen into his hands.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi was perhaps one of the strangest upstarts in history. He was born in 1536, the child of a poor farmer in Nakamura, a small village in the province of Owari. Nature gave this remarkable man a decidedly peculiar appearance. With his dark brown complexion and monkey-like features, he was strikingly, but not unattractively, ugly. He grew into a cunning and daring youth, more disposed to foolhardy exploits than to rustic labor. He liked best to take his horses to pasture. There he could dream and indulge in wild heroism to his heart's content. One day Nobunaga passed through the village on an expedition and was struck by the unusual appearance of the youth. For all his ugliness, the boy was intensely alive, and his dark face was animated by a pair of brilliant black eyes that seemed to flash fire; his movements were quick and agile; his speech was clear and intelligent. Nobunaga, like all great men, easily recognized the potential greatness of others, and saw in this ugly peasant lad the makings of genius. Without hesitation he took him into his service as a groom. Thus began the career of the Japanese Napoleon. Following the death of his sponsor, Hideyoshi became a soldier and quickly rose in the ranks. Undoubtedly, Hideyoshi was one of the most remarkable military geniuses in history. Wherever he appeared, victory was certain. His soldiers followed him with enthusiasm, for he was a just and able commander.

When after the murder of Nobunaga, Hideyoshi seized the reins of the state, he built himself a castle in Caska and compelled all the daimio of the country to come together to celebrate its completion. To strengthen his position, he undertook a regrouping of most of the daimio. They had to leave their former districts and settle in provinces newly assigned to them. Thus the great feudal lords who had been absolute masters in their regions were reduced to the status of mere stewards, subject to transfer at the will of the supreme ruler. Hideyoshi forced the emperor to invest him with the dignity of kampaku (regent on behalf of the emperor) and to give him a new surname, Toyotomi, to blot out the remembrance of his humble birth.

In the beginning of his rule Hideyoshi protected Christianity and the missionaries, and encouraged his subjects to embrace the new religion. He had the bonzes turned out of their monasteries, smashed their idols and burned their temples. Yet, for all his genius, Hideyoshi retained the superstitious heart of a peasant. Taking advantage of this weakness, some of the bonzes, particularly the notorious Jakuin who was Hideyoshi's physician-in-ordinary, succeeded in regaining some influence over him. Imperceptibly Jakuin turned his attitude toward Christianity from benevolence to suspicion. Unfortunately two occurrences, insignificant in themselves but occurring at a crucial moment, played directly into hands of the bonzes. The goal of Hideyoshi's ambition, after the unification of Japan, was the conquest of Korea and China. He dreamed of making himself "master of the world." Thus he wrote to the Emperor of Korea: "I shall gather a mighty army, and by invading the land of the great Ming I shall fill the heaven of four hundred provinces with the buoyancy of my sword. It is my hope that Korea will be my vanguard." But for the crossing to Korea he needed large vessels, and ship-building was as yet unknown to the Japanese. Just at that time a large Portuguese merchant ship entered the harbor of Hirado. Hideyoshi heard of it and sent a courier to Hirado, inviting the captain of the ship to sail to Hakata, where he was temporarily residing, so that he could inspect the vessel. The captain went immediately to Hideyoshi in Hakata, but explained that his ship could not enter the harbor of Nakata since the mouth was too shallow and dangerous. The captain may have had a presentiment of Hideyoshi's real intention, for actually he was planning to capture the ship and use it as a model for his own ship-builders. Hideyoshi, however, appeared to understand the captain's reasons for not complying with his request, and entertained him royally; but behind the mask of diplomatic courtesy he was seething. Because there was still one man in the world who dared oppose his wishes,

Hideyoshi, who was honored in Japan as a war-god, drank to the of intoxication that night out of sheer anger. That was precisely the moment Jaknin had been waiting for. The courtier-bonzes accustomed to provide their master, who changed his women frequently as he changed his gowns, with the fairest maidens from parts of the country. That night, however, they appeared before him empty-handed and sadly apologetic. With malicious intent they tried to procure a noble Christian girl for Hideyoshi. Indignant the girl had declined their unfair request as contrary to the law of the land. With due embellishment and exaggeration the bonzes related the affair to the drunken Hideyoshi. It was more than his outraged pride could endure. What kind of religion could make a weak girl do anything above him? "If the new doctrine makes a mere girl my equal, what influence will it have on the whole country? Away with it!" the next morning, before Hideyoshi was quite sober again, the command was heralded throughout the empire: "Christian priests must leave the country within twenty days."

The decree was promulgated on July 24, 1587. According to the instructions, the missionaries went to Hirado and Nagasaki, but resolved to remain in the country if possible, carefully preventing anything that could again provoke the wrath of Hideyoshi. Apparently his anger had soon cooled. They closed their churches, refrained from preaching in public, yet they continued to visit Christians in their homes and to administer the sacraments to them. Although Hideyoshi came to know all this through Buddhist spies, he made no attempt to hinder the missionaries and contented himself with demolishing a few churches in Hyoto, Osaka, and Sakai. An outbreak, however, gave the missionaries their first insight into the true character of Hideyoshi, and during the following years they worked with the utmost restraint and caution. In his period of uncertainty and anxious care for the future of the Church the Franciscans entered the Japanese mission field.

(To be continued)

†

IDENTITY

Oh, Lord,
Are we like to Thee
Fragments
Of stained glass windows
In Thy Presbytery?

Are we
Dark
As the times
When rain has hidden
Sun
From eastern morn?
And—
Are we sometimes
Bright
As artists mixtures
From Creation's palette
Born?

Where do we come from—
Stained glass fragments of
Self,
In Thy Presbytery?
Are we bright from the
Might
Of the Adoro Te's?
Or is it Our Father's
Goodness—
His Benedicite's?
Cerulean — Azure light.
Gift!
Only Heaven's right.

Are we
Blood, sweat, and dirt
From stumbling,
And quick spurts
Of running fast to reach Thee?
Vermillion's intensity.

Or—

Are we colored by
Morning offerings, and
Charred holocausts
From rebellion's brief reign
Till in Thy love's
Absolvo Te
We see Thy way,
Gold!
Like Ceres' offering on a
Harvest afternoon.

Cerulean — Azure light!
Soft-hammered gold!
Vermillion bright!
Mullioned windows for
Eternity.

Lord,
If I may beg
A color fragment
In your windowed
Presbytery
Make me clear!
Color of that Deity
The Dove,
Gentle harbinger of Love,
So that Thy light
Shine through,
My destiny,
You.

Sister Mary Jeanne, O.S.F.

†

St. Francis Prophesied (V)

Fr. Byron Witzemann, O.F.M.

(Continued)

56. God revealed Francis' death, as He did Aaron's and Moses': first, "Take Aaron and his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. When you have stripped Aaron of his priestly garments, you shall put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron shall be gathered to his fathers, and die there." (Numbers 20, 25, 26).

Illment

Having spent twenty years in his converted way of life, Francis knew that death was now approaching for in the following incident God had revealed to him His divine will.

At that time Francis and friar Elias were staying at Foligno. One night as they were sleeping, a certain priest, dressed in white, appeared to them. He was a venerable old man of great age. And speaking by friar Elias he said: Rise, friar, and tell friar Francis that eighteen years have passed since he left the world to embrace the Gospel. Tell them also that he has but two more years to live and then the Lord will come to call him to Himself. The two years were now complete and the events were happening just as God had revealed." (St. Francis I: 109).

"And I, if you observe these things, promise you life eternal." Thus says the minister—the representative of St. Francis—we pronounce our vows. And so it is said that St. Francis frees the souls from purgatory and grants them eternal life. This supernatural power of St. Francis is prefigured:

First, by Abram, who freed his brother: "When Abram heard that his brother, Lot had been taken captive. He led forth his men . . . and pursued them all the way to Dan." (Genesis 14: 14);

Second, by the leaders of the Jewish race, who lead their people out of captivity: "Now these are the children of the province, that were taken into captivity, which Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had taken away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, by the hand of their leaders. Their leaders were Zorobabel, Josue, Nehemia, Rahelaia, Mardochai, Belsan, Mesphar, Beguae, Hehun and others." (I Esdras 2: 1, 2).

Fulfillment

Some interpret the multitude in the following incident as the Francis freed from Purgatory.

"On that same night (of Francis' death) and hour our glorious father appeared to another friar of praiseworthy life who was present. Francis was clothed in a purple dalmatic and followed by a considerable multitude of men some of whom then separated from the group and said to the friar, 'Isn't that Christ?' And the friar answered, 'Yes.' Then some others asked him, 'Isn't that St. Francis?' And the friar again said, 'Yes, it is.' For it seemed to the friar and to the multitude that the person of Christ and the person of St. Francis were one. And really this is hardly a rash judgement for those who have a true understanding, since whoever cleaves to God becomes one in spirit with Him and God Himself shall be all in all.

"Finally Francis and that wonderful multitude came to a beautiful scenic place which was watered with the most clear streams, and with the fairest of plants, radiant with beautiful flowers and with every kind of beautiful tree. Here there was a very beautiful and exceptionally beautiful palace which the new citizen of Assisi eagerly entered. In it he found very many friars and began to dine with them at a wonderfully set table filled with every kind of food." (Celano II: 219).

Another story may be quoted from the *Fioretti*:

"And St. Francis, turning towards that friary, spoke thus, 'My dearest friar, that when I was on the mount of La Verna, all in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, in this seraphic vision I was by Christ thus stigmatized in my body; and then Christ said to me, 'Do you know what I have done to you? I have given you the wounds of my Passion in order that you may be My standard-bearer. And as I, on the day of My death, descended into limbo and drew out all the souls I found therein, by virtue of my stigmas, and led them to paradise, so do I grant to you from this hour (that you may be conformed to Me in your death as you have been in your life) that after you have passed from this life you shall go every year, on the day of your death, to purgatory, and shall deliver all the souls you find there of your three Orders, namely, Minors, Sisters, and Penitents, and likewise the souls of your devoted followers, and this, in recompense of your stigmas that I have given you; and you shall lead them to paradise.' And those words I told not while I lived in the world." said, St. Francis and his companion vanished." (1)

58. The burial of Francis is even foreshadowed: first, in Jacob's death: "And when Jacob ended charging his sons, he drew up his feet upon his bed, and died . . . And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father." (Genesis 35: 2; 37: 32; 50: 2);

second, by the death of Asa: "They buried him in the tomb which he had hewn out for himself in the city of David. And they laid him on a bier which was full of spices and perfumed ointments . . . and they burnt them over him with very great pomp." (II Paralipomena 16: 14).

Fulfillment

Now his friars and sons, that had been summoned for the passing of their Father, together with the entire assembly of the folk, devoted that night wherein Christ's dear Confessor had departed to divine praises, in such wise that they seemed not mourners for the dead, but a watch of Angels. When morning came, the crowds that had come together, carrying branches of trees and many wax lights, brought the holy body to the city of Assisi, with hymns and chants. Moreover, they passed by the church of Saint Damiano, where at that time that noble virgin Clare, now glorified in heaven, abode cloistered with her Sisters; and there for a space they stayed, and set down the holy body, adorned with those heavenly pearls, that it might be seen and embraced by those holy virgins. Coming at length with rejoicing to the city, they laid the precious treasure that they were bearing in the church of Saint George, with all reverence. In that very place, Francis as a little boy had learned his letters, and there it was that he first preached in after days, and there, finally he found his first resting place." (Major Legend 15:5).

59. Francis' glorification is preseen:

first, in the words of Joseph: "To his brothers: 'You must tell your father all my glory and all of the things which you have seen in Egypt; make haste and bring him to me'." (Genesis 45: 13);

second, in the magnificence of Mardochai: "And Mardochai came out of the palace and from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and a gold crown on his head and clothed in the silk of purple. And all the city rejoiced and was glad . . . And in that province and city . . . there was gladness and joy . . . and a feast as a holiday . . ." (Esther 8: 15-17).

Fulfillment

"Great crowds gathered around Francis and praising God they

said: 'Praise and blessed be Thou our God Who has given us even though we are so unworthy, such a precious gift. Praise and glory be to Thee, O indescribable Trinity.'

"All the people of Assisi came out and everyone in the neighboring districts hurried to see the wonders which God had shown to His servant. Everyone in his own way sang his song of joy, praising the power of God Who had granted them such a favor. But the friars of Francis continued to mourn the loss of so great a father and showed their inward feelings with their tears and sighs.

"But then an extraordinary job soothed their grief. For when the friars saw the wonderful miracle their grief was forgotten. Their grief became a song and their weeping joy. Never before had they ever heard or read about anything like that which they were now seeing. Indeed, they would not have believed it, if it had not been so plainly revealed to them. In the dead body of Francis appeared the form of the Cross and Passion of the Immortal Lamb Who washed away the sins of the world. Francis seemed as if he had just been taken down from the cross. His hands and feet had been pierced with nails and his right side looked as if it was pierced with a sword.

"They noticed that his skin, which was dark, now became fair. And from this beauty they realized what Francis would be like on the day of resurrection. He appeared as if he were still living and not dead, since his face looked like that of an infant. And the other parts of his body became soft and as limber as those of a small child. The muscles did not contract, nor did the skin become as it usually does in death. Nor did his limbs become stiff, but they could be moved into any position.

"His beauty was very striking and his skin became even more beautiful. But even more astonishing was the fact that they did not see merely the marks of the nails in his hands and feet. What they really saw, looked like real nails but formed from the flesh and black like iron. His right side was red with blood. The signs of his martyrdom, however, did not make the friars horrified. Instead, they seemed to add a certain beauty and grace, just like small black stones in a white floor add to its beauty." (Celano I: 112, 113).

60. The entrance of Francis' soul into heavenly glory is compared

first, to Judith's entrance into the King's treasury: "Then the King's officers ordered that she should go in where his treasures were stored

she should stay there. And he would send food to her from his table." (Judith 12: 1);
 second, to the entry of Esther: "She was escorted to the royal chamber of king Assuerus." (Esther 2: 16);
 third, to triumphant recovery of the ark: "So David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord with joyful shouting and with the sound of trumpet." (II Kings 6: 15);
 fourth, to Simon's conquering of the Gentiles: "And they entered Jerusalem . . . with thanksgiving and branches of palm trees and harps and cymbals and songs and hymns and canticles, because the great temple was destroyed out of Israel." (I Machabees 13: 51).

Illment

"Then all the friars, to whom he had been such a loving father and leader, gathered closely about him and reverently awaited the day of his happy departure. It was only then that this most holy soul took its leave and was freed from the body to be taken up into heaven. So Francis' body went to sleep in the Lord.

"One of the friars and disciples of Francis, whom we all know, said: 'The soul of our most holy father goes straight to heaven and is placed above the clouds. Francis' soul was like a star being carried away in a white cloud, but about the size of the moon and as bright as the sun. I will not mention the name of this friar because I am afraid he wants no praise, nor does he glory in such publicity.'

"But I would like to praise our saint. 'O how glorious is this saint: one of the friars has seen his soul go up to heaven! It was as beautiful as the moon, as bright as the sun. And as he went to heaven in a white cloud he was shown most gloriously. O truly lamp of the world, shining brighter than the sun in the Church of Christ. Lo, how you have taken away the rays of your light. Now you are dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem. You have exchanged the companionship of us poor men for that of the angels and saints.'" (Celano I: 110, 111).

61. Francis' sublimity is preshadowed:

first, in the exaltation of Joseph: "And the Pharaoh said to Joseph: 'Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt'. And Joseph took his signet ring from his own hand, and put it on Joseph's hand. And he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot and the crier went out that all should bow their knee before him, and then they knew he was made governor over the whole land of Egypt." (Genesis 41: 41-43);

second, by the honor given to Jonathan by King Alexander:

"And he commanded that Jonathan's garments should be taken that he should be clothed with purple; thus they did. And the king him sit beside him." (I Machabees 10: 62).

Fulfillment

These prophecies we can see fulfilled by many of them already used, or to be used:

"At once the holy man began to shine in the glory of many great miracles, the light of the divine countenance being uplifted in him, so that the loftiness of his holiness that, during his life, he was conspicuous in the world for the ruling of men's lives through his example of perfect uprightness, was, now that he himself was risen with Christ, approved from heaven by miracles of divine power, so that belief might be thoroughly confirmed. And since in diverse parts of the world the glorious marvels wrought by him, and the blessings won through him, were kindling many to devotion to him, and inciting them to veneration for the Saint himself—so that his words and tongues, as well as these deeds, were loud in his praise—it came to the ears of the Supreme Pontiff, the lord Gregory the Ninth, that great things God was working through His servant Francis. Accordingly, he came in person to the city of Assisi in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1228, on the sixteenth day of July, a Sunday, with rites exceeding solemn, that it would take long to narrate. He enrolled the blessed Francis in the list of Saints." (Major Legend 15: 6, 7).

62. Francis longed to convert the infidels to Christ's teaching. Thus we see him in the court of the Soldan of Egypt. This is pictured:

first, in the mission of the two disciples of Christ: "Thou art the daughter of Sion: Behold, thy king comes to thee meek and lowly upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of a beast of burden." And the two disciples went and did as Jesus directed them. And they brought the ass and the colt, laid their cloaks on them, and made him sit thereon. (Matthew 21: 5-7);

second, in the lamentation of Michaeas: "O my people, what have I done to you, and in what have I molested you? Answer me. For I have brought you up from the land of Egypt, and have redeemed you from the house of the slaves . . ." (Michaeas 6: 3, 4).

Fulfillment

"Then taking the Brother that was his companion, Illuminatus . . . they started on their way . . . When they had gone on further

of the Saracens met them, and they, like wolves making haste upon sheep, brutally seized the servants of God, and cruelly and spitefully dragged them along, casting abuse at them, vexing them with stripes and binding them in fetters. Thus in manifold torment and beaten down, they were brought before the Soldan, and the divine counsel so disposing as the holy man had desired. When the prince demanded of them from whom, and for what purpose, and in what manner they had been sent, and how they had come there, the servant of Christ, Francis, made answer with courageous heart that they had been sent not by man, but by God Most High, that he might show to him and his people the way of salvation, and might preach the Gospel of truth. With such firmness of mind, with such courage of soul, and with such fervor of spirit he preached to the Soldan God Three in One and the Savior of all, Jesus Christ, that the Soldan was manifestly and truly fulfilled that saying of the Gospel, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict nor resist.' For, as the Soldan beheld the marvellous fervor of spirit and valor of the man of God, he heard him gladly and earnestly invited him to tarry with him. Then the servant of Christ, taught by the heavenly counsel, said, 'If you together with your people, will be converted to Christ, for the love of Him I will gladly tarry among you.' . . .

"But he offered him many costly gifts, all of which the man of God, hungering, not for worldly goods, but for the salvation of souls, condemned like mire. The Soldan, perceiving the holy man to be so absolute a despiser of worldly things, was moved with amazement and conceived a greater devotion for him." (Major Legend 9: 9).

The *Fioretti* goes on to say:

"At last, when St. Francis saw he could gather no more fruit in those parts, he prepared by divine guidance to return to the Holy Land with all his companions; and having assembled them together, he went back to the Soldan and took leave of him. Then said the Soldan to him, 'Friar Francis, gladly would I convert me to the faith of Christ, but I fear to do so now, for if this people heard of it they would surely slay you and me and all your companions; and since you yet work much good, and as I have certain affairs of great moment to dispatch, I will not be the cause of your death and of mine. But tell me how I may be saved; lo, I am ready to do whatsoever you lay upon me.' Then said St. Francis, 'My lord, now must I depart from you, but after I am returned to mine own country and by the grace of God have ascended to heaven, after my death, as it may please

God, I will send thee two of my friars, at whose hands you shalt receive the holy baptism of Christ and be saved, even as my Lord Jesus has revealed to me. And do you meanwhile get yourself free from hindrance, so that when the grace of God shall come upon you, you shall find yourself well disposed to faith and devotion.' The Lord promised and thus he did. Having said this, St. Francis returned to that venerable college of his holy companions, and after some time he gave up his soul to God by death of the body. And the Lord, having fallen sick, awaits the promise of St. Francis, and the guards at certain of the passes and commands them that the friars appear in the habit of St. Francis, they shall straightway be before him. At that very hour St. Francis appeared to two friars, and bade them tarry not, but hasten to the Soldan and accomplish his salvation, according as he had promised. And at once the friars forth, and having crossed the pass, were led by the said guards to the Soldan. And when the Soldan beheld them he was filled with joy, and said, 'Now do I truly perceive that God has sent his messengers to me for my salvation, according to the promise of St. Francis to me by divine inspiration.' And when he had received instruction from those friars in the faith of Christ and holy baptism, he was born again in Christ, died of that sickness, and his soul was saved through the merits and prayers of St. Francis." (1)

63. Francis is accredited with the honor of having given the dead to life. Elias and Eliseus also gave life to the dead:

first, "And the Lord heard the voice of Elias; and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived." (III Kings 17: 22);

second, "So, rising from his prayer, he (Eliseus) laid himself down on the dead body, putting his mouth upon the body's mouth, his eyes upon its eyes, his hands upon its hands, and as he stretched himself upon him the child's flesh grew warm." (IV Kings 4: 35)

Fulfillment

"A boy named Matthew from the city of Todi had lain dead for eight days as if he were dead. His mouth was tightly closed. He could not see the skin of his face, hands and feet had turned black as a skillet. All despaired of his life, but when his father invoked St. Francis he was miraculously cured." (Celano I: 10)

"Furthermore, even as that blessed man in life had been distinguished by marvellous tokens of virtue, so too from the time of his departure to this present time, he shines throughout the world in the light of famed marvels and miracles, the power glorifying him. For the blind and the deaf, the dumb and

the dropsical and the paralysed, the possessed and the lepers, the shipwrecked and the captive, have found succour by his merits, and all the diseases, needs, and perils he has been an aid. But in that many dead have been miraculously raised through him, there is made manifest to the faithful the glorious working of the power of the Most High." (Major Legend 15: 9).

64. Christ gave to Francis, because of his merits, the task of distributing His graces. In whatever necessity Blessed Francis is invoked, Christ grants the petition through St. Francis. This final of St. Francis is prefigured:

first, through the gift that Asseurus gave an account of his marriage to Esther: "...and he also gave rest to all the provinces, and gave gifts with royal liberality." (Esther 2: 18);

second, in the gift of Solomon to the queen of Saba: "And King Solomon gave the queen of Saba all that she desired and asked of him, beside what he offered her of the royal bounty." (III Kings 10: 13).

Fulfillment

"Our most glorious father Francis had in the twentieth year of his conversion entrusted his soul to heaven, completing his successful beginning of a holy way of life with an even more successful end. Crowned with glory and honor, and surrounded with glowing jewels he now stands before the throne of God, eager to help those whom he has left behind. What requests would God deny to him who bears in his sacred stigmata the very form of Him Who, being equal with the Father, 'Has taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, reflecting the brightness of his glory and image, of his substance and who effected man's purgation from sin?' (Hebrew 1: 3). Why should he not be heard, he who 'being in the fellowship of his sufferings became like to Christ Jesus in death' (Philippians 3: 10), and who bears the sacred wounds which are imprinted in his hands, feet and

"Already Francis is thrilling the whole world which has been enlightened by a new joy. And to everyone he offers the aid of true salvation. The whole world is enlightened with the bright light of his miracles. The whole world is illumined with the lustre of a new star . . . Thanks be to God for the world no longer mourns, since abundant miracles are daily wrought on account of Francis' intercession. From east and west, north and south come men and women with good proof that it was Francis who aided them through his intercession. While Francis lived on earth, this lover of heavenly things would not accept

any worldly property. As a result he could all the more completely and surely obtain all that is good. Now he who would not possess even a little has everything; he has exchanged time for eternity. Everywhere he comes to the assistance of all; everywhere he is to help all and thus, loving unity as he does, he suffers no loss in sharing with others." (Celano I: 119).

Conclusion

Thus it is seen to what extent the events in the life of St. Francis can be prefigured in the Old Testament and sometimes in the New Testament. Truly it can be said that these figures are proper to Francis alone, but to whom can they be better attributed since Francis is the most perfect follower of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Whom these most appropriately do apply? Therefore it can be said that these can typify Francis, after Christ, before they prefigure anyone else.

1. Quoted from: *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, translated by T. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 168-169. adaptations were made. This same incident is found in the *Liber Conformitatum*.

1. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, as cited above, p. 56-57)

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THE VISITATION

In the blush of the morning,
The voice of a Maiden
Singing from over
The far-distant hills—

Hark to the Maiden,
The joy one, the star,
That from the dark mountains
Rises like dawn—

Too long in the quiet
Of Nazareth's dusk
Have you, Gentle Dove,
Dwelt in the nest.

Come unto sinners,
O Daughter of David,
Singing from over
The far-distant hills.

Tranquil, your footsteps
O'er hearts that are heavy,
Sweet are your whispers
To ears that are hushed.

We flock like the wild birds
To you, O fair mountain
And rush like Elizabeth
To gardens enclosed.

Behold how we love thee,
Immaculate Mother!
O star of our life-time,
Be our sweet rest.

Chant to thy children
The bright, glowing love-song,
And from thy virgin-heart
Spill forth to us joy!

Poor Clares—Greenville,, S. C.

Franciscan Briefs

It might interest our readers to know a few statistics about the Order of the Friars Minor. The *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, the official journal of the Order publishes for quite some time the statistics as to October 4 of each year.

On October 4, 1958, the Order had 26,162 members. The five biggest Provinces were: The Netherlands, with 1,335 members; Holy Name Province, New York: 969; Venice Province of Saint Anthony: 861; Sacred Heart Province, St. Louis: 755; Province of St. Joseph (Northern half of Belgium): 714. The five countries with the greatest number of Friars are: Italy: 6,229; U. S. A.: 3,586; Spain: 2,270; Germany: 1,748; The Netherlands: 1,335. The Province of Corsica is the smallest with only 30 members. On October 4, 1957, the Order had 26,330 members or 168 more than in 1958.

By way of comparison, in 1768, with a Catholic world much smaller than it is now, we had some 77,000 members distributed over 167 Provinces; right now we have 82 Provinces and Custodies. At the end of the nineteenth century the Order had some 14,000 members, in 1907 17,000.

To complete the picture of the English-speaking Friars as of today: England has 271 Friars, Australia, 257, Ireland 372.

The total membership of the Third Order Secular was, on October 4, 1958, some 1,173,175. The French Canadian Province had by far the strongest Tertiary sodalities with 109,700 members. The most famous tertiary alive is Pope John XXIII.



INDULGENCES FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Relics (December 13, 1894) the Sacred Penitentiary (March 24 and April 24, 1945) have granted the following indulgences.

1. To the faithful who shall read the books of Sacred Scripture at least a quarter of an hour with reverence due to the Divine Word as spiritual reading, there is granted an indulgence of 3 years.

2. To those, moreover, who have read at least some verses of the Gospel with a devout mind and have, furthermore, devoutly recited the following invocations, kissing the Gospel: *By the word of the Lord our sins be blotted out; the reading of the Gospel be to us a source of consolation and protection; May Christ, Son of God teach us the words of the Holy Gospel*, there is granted:

an indulgence of 500 days;

a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions, provided that they shall read the same daily for a whole month;

a plenary indulgence in the hour of death, if they shall have carried out pious exercise often during life, provided that, having confessed and been strengthened with the Holy Communion, or at least contrite, they shall have devoutly invoked the Most Holy Name of Mary with their lips, if capable of this, at least in their hearts, and shall have patiently accepted death from the hand of God as the wages of sin.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Blessed Virgin

PART II. SOME CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANT ATTITUDES TOWARD OUR LADY

Fr. Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.

At first when we think about such a subject as Protestant attitudes, our tendency is to shrug our shoulders and mutter: "So what? Who cares what the Protestants think anyhow?"

As genuine and as sincere as such sentiments may be, I think that we make a grave mistake when we fail to consider the teaching of our Protestant brethren. In fact, in the encyclical *Humani generis*, Pope Pius XII counsels Catholic theologians to know the teaching of non-Catholic thinkers. The Pope writes: "(Catholic theologians and philosophers) have a grave responsibility for defending truth, both divine and human, and for instilling it into men's minds; they must needs acquaint themselves with all these speculations, to a more or less extent erroneous; they must needs take them into account. Nay it is their duty to have a thorough understanding of them." The Holy Father's words, I think apply also in, at least, a limited extent, to the friars who have to deal with souls. That is why we have decided on this subject for this afternoon's discussion. I hope it will prove of some interest.

1—Some American Protestant Ideas on the Divine Maternity. During the Marian year, 1954, Fr. Kenneth F. Dougherty, S.A., conducted a survey of the opinions of 100 Protestant ministers on the question of Mary's divine maternity. I would like to present, in summary, the results of that survey.

As could be expected, Protestant attitudes toward Mary range from the awesome bewilderment of the Baptists to the reverent emotions of Anglo-Catholics, Anglicans and Episcopalians. Episcopalians build churches and hospitals in honor of St. Mary. High Church Anglicans recite the rosary to procure favors through Mary's intercessions. Moderate and low church Episcopalians regard all devotion to Mary as "papish superstition," and affirm that Mary is simply a woman to whom no cult is owed because she is the mother of man, not the Mother of God.