## The Peace Prayer Three Studies

A Word from the Editor

ord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love: where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, unity; where there is error, truth; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand: to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is forgetting ourselves that we find ourselves; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)

Were we to look at the first edition of Kajetan Esser's critical edition of the writings of Saint Francis, we would discover that Esser never mentioned what had become a popular prayer attributed to Saint Francis, the Peace Prayer. I remember a conversation in which Ignatius Brady confronted his confrere with that observation. "Everyone knows," Kajetan replied, "that Francis

never wrote that. It's a modern invention!" In his second edition of Francis's writings, Esser heeded Ignatius's advice and listed "Make me an instrument of your peace..." as one of the writings erroneously attributed to the saint.

Nevertheless the popularity of the "Peace Prayer of Saint Francis" persists. Many Franciscans continue to promote some version of it simply because it captures what they consider to be the spirit of the Poor Man of Assisi. For many, it has been their introduction to the Franciscan spirit and has characterized their approach to the contemporary spirit of justice and peace.

We thought it appropriate to present three different studies of the "Peace Prayer" in the same edition of *Greyfriars Review* in which we initiate a series of articles on the prayers of Saint Francis written by Leonard Lehmann. Each study approaches it from a different perspective, yet each curiously arrives at many of the same conclusions regarding its origins and its inspiration. Unfortunately none of these studies had found its way into the English language, possibly because many have either considered it genuinely Franciscan or have assumed the attitude of Kajetan Esser, i.e., everyone knows that the prayer cannot be attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, so why bother about it! We hope that the publication of these three articles will be beneficial to all our readers. We found them most insightful.

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