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**SOME IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE**

October 22 and October 23, 1972

Tertiaries meet with the Minister General at Little Portion Friary.  
See separate section.

November 1972

Tertiaries meet with the Minister General at San Damiano Friary.  
See separate section; and watch for later announcement of date.

April 6-8, 1972

Retreat for men and women tertiaries at Mount Sinai.  
See page 2.

May 4-6, 1973

THIRD ORDER GENERAL CHAPTER at Redwood City, California.  
Further details in later mailings.

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**REQUEST**

Please return the attached card. Br. Robert has asked that a current card file be compiled so that our information is up to date. We ask for this card, even if you have sent in the information before.

Our Chaplain says that of all the items of our tertiary rule on which we report, perhaps the one which seems to present the greatest difficulty is the obligation to make an annual retreat. Last year, we invited our women tertiaries to share in a retreat at the St. Joseph's House of our Poor Clares, but notice was rather short. We also advertised a retreat for men at Little Portion in Lent, but this was cancelled since only one or two tertiaries expressed an interest.

Now for 1973, we give ample advance notice that arrangements have been made for a retreat for men and women, over the weekend of Lent V, April 6-8, 1973. Men retreatants will be accommodated at the friary guest house, and women at St. Joseph's House of the Poor Clares, where the addresses will also be given. Please try to plan ahead to attend this retreat, and send your requests for accommodation to the Guestmaster or Guestmistress (Mt. Sinai, N.Y. 11766).

### HOUSE OF PRAYER

It is often necessary for the body as well as for the soul for us to go for a short period of time to rest and to pray.

In order to satisfy this need within the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, Marie Hayes, of Tucson, Arizona, has offered the facilities of her home for use by tertiary women. The house is located close to an Episcopal Church where there is a daily Mass, and where Morning and Evening Prayer are said in the church.

Any tertiary who would like to spend a short period of time for spiritual renewal is welcome to inquire for further information to:

Mrs. Marie J. Hayes  
7064 S. San Fernando Ave.  
Tucson, Arizona 85706

### FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITY

The San Bernardino Fellowship is doing very nicely. We have a plan this year of visiting different locations, even 60 miles away, to include tertiaries in our meetings when it might otherwise work a hardship on them to meet with us. On Saturday, June 17, we met at Mount Calvary Church in Los Angeles with Father Harley Smith, a priest tertiary and at 84 years of age the oldest active priest with a parish in the United States. He seemed very fit and we thoroughly enjoyed meeting with him. At our meetings we've been having a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This definitely adds to our fellowship.

The San Bernardino Fellowship has met monthly except during summer months. We visit San Bernardino County Hospital twice yearly, during the week before Easter and the week before Christmas, to leave little brochures with the Nativity and Resurrection stories, which we obtain from the American Bible Society. Our other projects are done on an individual basis.

Kenneth W. Cox

## FAMILY NOTES

We congratulate Fr. Liebler on his appointment as Honorary Canon in the Diocese of Utah. Br. Robert has more information about this in his message. Marie Hayes was chosen by the graduating class of the public high school in Tucson where she teaches to give the Baccalaureate Address. Elizabeth Knight made a pilgrimage to Assisi, and met there some of our English friars who staff a house there for the summer. Ernest Drake has moved to Cambridge Bay, Northwest Territories, Canada - miles north of the Arctic Circle, and off the top of most maps; and now probably outranks Marion Earp, in Fairbanks, Alaska, as our most isolated tertiary. We offer our sympathy to Anna Bartel because of the death of her husband. We learned that after a period of not feeling well, Br. Anthony, SSF died July 22nd, at Little Portion Friary.

As the fall and winter season get underway, please include the Newsletter as you plan publicity for special events. Since we have included just about all of the material at hand in this mailing, we look forward to hearing from you, with thoughts, news, and suggestions. Send them to:

Mrs. Edward Webb, Editor  
4008 Buckingham Road  
Baltimore, MD 21207

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A DIFFERENT VIEW

(The following is an excerpt from a letter, from Mary Moberg, who lives on a boat on the California coast.)

I do love my life here on the water. My husband, Ken, has been a sailor all his life, and he expects me to be as good at it as he is. We have lived on a boat for two years this June. Kirk, our son, was two years old when we moved aboard. We feel it's a good life in which to rear a child, though it's more lonely than in a regular neighborhood situation. Kirk has grown up around adults and is therefore mature for his age.

It's a lonely life for us all. There are few women to talk to -- it's mostly a man's world. My husband works in a boat yard here in the harbor. I'm a familiar sight around there (more than most other wives), for I work on our boat during the day and have full access to the tools and shop materials. Since I understand the "ropes" and the jargon, I often help when they are short-handed or need a fourth hammer or a third hand. I have thus become "one of the boys".

I guess it takes a special breed to live this way and like it. It was something we always wanted to do, but when it came down to push and shove, I almost backed out. It was all those lovely "things" that held me to a house. We sold, threw out, or gave away 75 % of everything we owned. The other 25% I couldn't part with. I took 75% of that and stored it, took the rest to the boat, and tried to make it all fit. I ended by throwing away 50% of that. Six months later I went to sort through the storage and wondered why I had kept all that "junk". I recommend that every tertiary move to a boat. It taught me the value of true poverty in owning as few things as possible. Since we moved aboard we haven't locked our doors once. What is there to steal worth the taking?

(continued)

There is a camaraderie with people on the sea or around water that exists nowhere else. It's a life and death situation some times; everyone realizes it and is more than willing to grasp the pioneer spirit and love his fellow boater -- at least while he is in his boat.

Boat people come in three classes: Racers (those who go too fast or who race in regattas and booze the rest of the time); Salts (who live and breathe boats 24 hours a day, year in and year out); and Saltines (Sunday excursionists). The first and the last live in the work-a-day world and only enter our world on weekends; to them it's leisure. For us it's serious business, and our life is hard for them to understand.

I have found Salts to be hard people, almost New England in their social life. They are hard also in religion, and most can't abide it or have little to say for it. It's not that they aren't religious, for they are. It's just that they don't go along with the formalized religion they feel is expected of them. When out in a boat they tell the beads of Navigation and Piloting. Their only Sunday service is the same cockpit duty they have pulled throughout the week. Their only prayer is a quick head, agile feet and fingers, and a good knowledge of weather signs. Their faith is in stars, charts, and a good compass. If worse comes to worst, they might utter the mariners' prayer, "O God, Thy sea is so great and my boat so small." But mostly they rely on themselves to handle a given situation. If they can't, they shouldn't be there at all.

Christ's love for the fishermen is easy for me to see. They are a cursing bunch of people -- rough and splinter-edged, the most of them. But they are close to God in their way and usually depend on no one but themselves. They are lonely as monks, and stable for it. They love the sea, as a landsman never could; and God must have loved it, too, since He made so much of it here on this planet."

Mary Mobert

FROM THE "FARRRR" NORTH

July 10, 1972

Dear Mrs. Webb,

Thank you for your letter concerning a note for the Newsletter about my work and location. It is pleasing to know that you are not lost to the world once past the arctic circle.

My employer here in the north is the Government of the Northwest Territories, a joint body of elected and appointed members. The particular department is that of Social Development - a name chosen so as to encompass all social services and to assist in the understanding that the area belongs to the Eskimo people, and our presence is to serve the needs as they see them, not imposing our own southern standards or bias. My particular function is that of Area Supervisor, and my profession is Social Work. I am responsible for the administration of social services for the area north of the arctic circle and along the arctic coast, an area just larger than your state of Texas.

(continued)

While a lot of the people live on the land, particularly at this time of the year, there are seven main settlements in the area: Cambridge Bay, Coppermine, Holman Island, Bathurst Inlet, Spence Bay, Pelly Bay, and Gjoa Haven. Cambridge Bay is the largest of the settlements, having a population of approximately 700 people. The main occupations are hunting, fishing, trapping, and carving. Temperatures in the area range from 60 below zero, up to 60 above in the short six weeks of summer. There is at least one church in each of these communities, and services are officiated by Anglican Church Army personnel or Catechists. The priest for this total area is Fr. Peter Bishop who lives in the settlement of Coppermine. The services are in the vernacular of the people, with the Copper Eskimo dialect being used in the west, and the eastern dialect in the east. A shortened form of Prayer Book Matins is used with a great number of hymns. The Eskimo people enjoy the singing of hymns which have been translated into Inuit or Eskimo.

The main diet of the Eskimo is Cariboo meat, seal, and arctic Char, and some polar bear when it is available. During my short time with the Eskimo people I have had opportunity to try all of these foods and found them to be quite tasty, although I must admit, on my return from the settlements, my first action is to eat a more 'southern' meal in order to recouperate my digestive tract.

I could probably write for days on this area as I have grown to like it immensely, however, for the sake of brevity, let me end by saying something about the people themselves. The Eskimo emits a warmth and friendliness which can be felt on entering any community. The doors of their homes are always open and a welcome is part of the daily fare. It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to be a part of their community, and it is an excellent opportunity to realize the beauty of brotherly love and Christian living.

Your Brother in Christ,  
Joseph Paul, T.S.F.  
(E.W. Drake)

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OF INTEREST

Sister Anna Keer, Ob.S.F. and Sister Josephine Keer, Ob.S.F. sent in two articles about their work. We present brief snatches from them, and are sure they would be glad to elaborate, if you send inquiries to them.

"Four times a year, I type over four hundred envelopes for the Intercession papers of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. In typing these, one realizes how much the Host means to so many people for so many different needs, the objects for which the Confraternity was founded, and even the special intercessions for each day included in the Intercession Paper."

"Church embroidery in our day has been a lost art. Early in the 7th century, the women of England had attained great perfection in their needlework. The Church is full of color, in the various seasons and liturgical colors in use at various periods in the Church, extending over 3300 years. Embroidery is mentioned in Exodus 23:2-6 and 23: 39-41: 'And thou shalt make holy garments' ...."

SPRING MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
(Report from Peter Funk)

Those attending: Br. Robert, SSF, Anna Hoffman, The Rev. Kale King, and Peter Funk. Budgets were discussed. The Third Order has about \$1300. Expenses for the forthcoming year are budgeted at:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| English Chronicle or new publication                    | \$ 100      |
| Postage   | 600         |
| Stationery and related supplies                         | 450         |
| Printing (new manual, leaflets, etc)                    | 300         |
| Phone expenses  | 75          |
| Travel fund for Friar                                   | 500         |
| President's Emergency Fund                              | 300         |
| (expenses for travel of a tertiary<br>or other expense) |             |
| Itinerant Tertiary (?)                                  | <u>1500</u> |
|   | \$3825      |

A large part of the discussion centered on the need for the Third Order to handle more of its own operating procedures. The Friary helps as much as it can, but as we grow the responsibility must, of necessity, fall more and more on the Third Order. Brother Robert is doing an outstanding job of being in touch with so many scattered Tertiaries, though he is burdened by too much detail with our affairs when he is home at the Friary. A great deal of time is taken up by answering routine mail and requests, keeping track of finances, seeing that mailings go out, mimeographing letters, etc. We must remember he is also a Friar with responsibilities to the First Order. One of the great problems is that he travels extensively, and so mail piles up in his absence. Br. Seth has been enormously helpful in relieving Br. Robert of many of the details, but they still exist in abundance. Somehow we have to think of getting someone involved with the Third Order, to devote much of their time to our affairs, who can "backstop" Br. Robert and who will live in or near the Friary.

(Since the meeting, Helen Webb, who is editing the Newsletter, graciously has taken over mailing lists, keeping stencils updated, the monthly letters to postulants and novices in stock, mimeographing the newsletter and mailing it, plus many other odds and ends. We are so grateful for her generosity for this is in addition to caring for a family and working at a job. Helen lives in Baltimore, Md.)

Brother Robert explained how he kept track of expenses, the day book, etc.

It was suggested that for the next twelve months, our theme of reading should be on Prayer. A suggested list of books include:

Herman, E. Creative Prayer, Harper & Row. A basic book

Merton, Thomas, Seeds of Contemplation, Image. For guidance and meditation.

Merton, Thomas, Contemplation. Spare and brilliant.

Quoist, Michel, Prayers, Sheed & Ward. Startling, realistic, beautiful meditations rooted in our times.

Smith, Bradford, Meditation, Harper & Row. Workbook on prayer.

Thomas a Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, Image. Outstanding classic of meditations.

Powers, Thomas E., First Questions on the Life of the Spirit, Harper & Row.

Covers much information not found elsewhere.

(If there are any questions regarding the budget or other concerns falling within the province of responsibility of the Third Order Standing Committee, please let the members know.)

AN AMERICAN GUEST  
AT AN ENGLISH THIRD ORDER CHAPTER

Fortuitously, a trip I made to England this April coincided with a Third Order General Chapter of the English Province of the Society of St. Francis.

The meeting was held just outside of London at a college, and when I walked into the dining room where tea was being served, I was astounded. I have been used to our Fellowship meetings (6 to 12) and last year our Chapter (30 plus, attending). I looked out on a scene that seemed to be as crowded as a large business convention. As I recall, the estimate was that about 400 or more people were attending. Even so, some were disappointed, feeling that at least 600 should have been there.

I was welcomed with great enthusiasm and warmth and kindness. It was an instantaneous offer of friendship. What a delight to know that we belong to a family that welcomes us throughout the world. What I was aware of, especially among those who had the responsibility of directing the affairs of the Third Order, was a great sense of dedication, of energy, of new things stirring, frequently coupled with gentle, humorous teasing and quick sorties of the famed English wit. There was much laughter and joy. The overall atmosphere was one thoroughly cognizant that we live in changing times, and how will the Third Order meet this challenge?

The mechanics of Chapter were similar to our own. After the get-together tea, there was Evensong, supper and then a talk on Prayer by Br. Jonathan. The following morning, after mass and breakfast, small groups met together to discuss the talk, later coming together to report. Various thoughtful aspects were brought to our attention. A few examples:

"Prayer is rooted in the incarnation. .Prayer is asking the Holy Spirit to pray within us..We are concerned about the drug addict and other unfortunates because God loves them..There is no progress in prayer apart from discipline..Whatever comes our way comes from God, and we should use it in that sense and always be grateful..Where there is possessiveness, you will not find poverty of spirit."

In the afternoon, Br. John Charles, Chaplain, spoke on the Third Order and the future. Though there is not the space here to report on his entire talk, a few highlights might be interesting. He stressed that all three Orders will be constantly renewed in the spirit of the founder. There is no new Gospel, however, nor new Franciscan principles. We need the past, but we must live in the now. We are called on to change within the demands of a living God; and these changes will be continually challenging us. He emphasized that simplicity is being stripped for action, leaving ourselves open to God's direction. Obedience is the cross of Christ; however, Christ lies it on us individually and collectively, but it is his cross we share collectively that makes us an Order. God is trustful and in the future we will not be where we are now. We must have an openness to the world, to God, and to one another.

continued

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Within the context of the talk and other conversations I had, some of the changes that have already occurred or that were being considered began to be apparent to me. For example, there is an inclination to open the Companions of St. Francis (we are in the process of changing the name "Companions" to "Associates") to all denominations. Without being an official stance, it is nonetheless an unspoken, a de facto practice as of now. Is this something we should consider? Certain major changes in the English First and Third Orders are being mulled over, which will be of pertinent interest to us.

I found that the personal conversations I had with those involved with the affairs of the English Province immensely helpful and there was a great deal of shared information. Many Tertiaries expressed the opinion that this was one of the finest General Chapters to be held, reflecting a deep concern as to what their role of Tertiary meant in today's world. The feeling was clearly evident that the Third Order was in the process of becoming more of what an authentic Order should be. As such, the Third Order claims a profound influence on our life style. Though we live apart, our lives should be lived in a spirit of community. These thoughts and others understandably distressed some older members, who had not conceived of their role in quite this way.

Four or five English Tertiaries are visiting America this summer, and have the names and addresses of some of our own people. I am sure that we will give them the same warm welcome that was extended to me. It might be interesting for some of us to write to an English brother or sister. Perhaps one Fellowship may consider writing to another as part of a project. The more contact we have with our brothers and sisters in other areas of the world, the more able we are to share community experience. If you feel you would like to do this, you might contact:

Deaconess Dorothy Burlingham  
Flat A, Warden's Lodge  
Newland, Malvern  
WR13 5AX Worcester  
England.

Deaconess Burlingham is the General Secretary of the Third Order.

Peter Funk



September 1972

My dear brothers and sisters

This is not really a pastoral letter: however I know that the Newsletter contains several articles by our own tertiaries which together give us splendid pastoral guidance. So this allows me to say thank-you to several people.

First of all, I want to say thank-you to Dr. Alvah Hoffman. At the annual meeting of the Third Order Corporation on May 24 he tendered his resignation from the Board of Trustees because of his worsening health over the past year. I do not think I can do better than quote from the letter I sent him after that meeting:-

"...I find it difficult to think of the Corporation without you at the helm, and yet I do clearly see that you owe it to yourself and to Anna not to aggravate your very indifferent health with any burdens and stresses that you can possibly be relieved of.

"No one could have been more unshakably loyal and faithful than you have been, and I count myself fortunate to have had such wonderful backing from you both in assuming the responsibilities of Chaplain.

"You can feel a very proper pride and satisfaction in knowing that you hand over the business affairs of the Third Order, at a point where the Order has assumed a full responsibility for the stewardship of its own finances. This could never have come about without your single-minded leadership of the Third Order towards this goal.

"While we shall miss your guiding hand in our business affairs, we shall be more than ever grateful for what has always underlain it - your deep spiritual commitment to our Lord in the way of St. Francis, expressed through your devoted service of your brothers and sisters in the Three Orders of SSF."

Then, I want to say thank-you to our two Novice Directors, Peter Funk and Marie Hayes. The three of us spent a full day at Little Portion Friary in June reviewing the pastoral work of the Order, and I was made more than ever conscious how incredibly fortunate we are to have two such dedicated and capable tertiaries to fill those vital positions. You will see articles by each of them in this Newsletter, and of course those who have entered the Order in recent years are familiar with the fine series of instructions which Peter has prepared. He is presently engaged upon a revision and expansion of the series, and also hopes that eventually a concise version of them may be made available for all tertiaries.

Another thank-you, this time for Helen Webb. I know how much you all appreciate the fine job she has been doing as editor of our Newsletter. Now she has agreed, in addition, to handle most of the routine clerical work which until now has been such a time-consuming burden for me, swallowing up most

of the available time whenever I returned to the friary from a tour. She will send out the mailings to all tertiaries and will keep our address list up to date. So next time you need more report forms, etc., drop her a line and you won't have to wait till I get back from Timbuktu. For my part, I am quite optimistic that from the fall, I shall really be able to devote my time when at the friary to personal correspondence, reports, and draft rules, once I am free of those routine chores.

For thirty years our tertiary Fr. Baxter Liebler, assisted by Brother Juniper, has exercised a devoted ministry to the Navaho Indians in Monument Valley on the Utah-Arizona border. The few days I spent there in February were a high spot of my long tour early this year. Now I learn that on July 25th at St. Christopher's Mission, Bluff, which he founded, Fr. Liebler was made an Honorary Canon of the Diocese of Utah. I know you would want to join with me in congratulating Fr. Liebler and pray God's continued blessing on his ministry, which even though he is technically retired, goes on quite unabated, as I saw in February.

Finally, do let me ask you all to give your careful attention to the preliminary draft for a new Third Order Constitution which you will also find with this mailing. It is only a starting point, but much depends upon our making our feelings known so that in its final form it may represent a real consensus of tertiaries around the world. And if you can get to one of the meetings with our Minister General, please do. And if you cannot, then do send your views in writing so that they may be taken into account.

I shall be on tour in Canada from September 10 - October 16. If you particularly want a letter forwarded to me during that time, please indicate this on the envelope; otherwise they will be filed for my return.

With every blessing

Robert SSF: Chaplain, Third Order

Report from Br. Robert on Corporation Meeting:

At the Annual Meeting of the Third Order Corporation on May 24, 1972, a proposed budget for 1973 was approved. Besides setting aside sums for postage, paper, printing, and other administrative expenses, as well as for the travel of the Chaplain and other friars on Third Order business, a special sum of \$1500 was earmarked for 1973 for the expenses of our Third Order General Chapter. It was felt that this sum should be used principally in two ways: (1) in order to limit the cost of accommodation and meals for the weekend at Redwood City to \$10 per tertiary; (2) in order to assist those tertiaries with substantial travel costs who otherwise could not have attended. Obviously this sum is not adequate for more than marginal help with travel costs.

The hope is that every Fellowship will try to plan for one of its members to attend, and will together seek to find the costs of travel. If when a Fellowship

has done what it can there is still a margin uncovered, then the Fellowship can apply to the Standing Committee for a supplement, and of course we shall do what we can. In the case of isolated tertiaries, and of Chapter members, who naturally have a particular obligation to attend, application can be made direct to the Standing Committee.

PLEASE SEND ME.....

.....a Manual, more report forms, a replacement Tau Cross, a dozen of those "May be for you" leaflets, etc., etc.

For all basic supplies, please send your request in future to Helen Webb (Mrs. Edward Webb, 4008 Buckingham Road, Baltimore, MD 21207), who will also be sending out bulk mailings, noting address changes, and generally handling all those necessary but routine chores.

#### BOOKS ON POVERTY

Last fall, I suggested a list of six books on the theme of prayer, asking that each tertiary read at least one, and that each fellowship should discuss the books they had read.

(In that connection, I heard from Emma Kuhne in New Orleans that their fellowship, led by Fr. John Senette, recorded their discussion of Abraham Heschel's book, "Man's Quest For God" on a tape cassette, and would be happy to loan it to any isolated tertiary who read the book too.)

This fall, Brother Robert hopes to suggest a list of books on the theme of Poverty, Spirit of Poverty, Simplicity - to be printed in the next Newsletter. He would invite any tertiary to submit suggestions for this list (with a brief review and an indication of publisher, cost, and availability).

Br. Robert, SSF

## REPORTING

Last winter, the English Third Order issued some guide lines to their tertiaries who report in an annual letter. We reprint these in the hope that some of you may find them helpful in interpreting our present report form.

Questions for Annual Reports

1. The Eucharist. The Eucharist has for us a place of central importance and we depend on its grace. How far does your life reflect the joy, thankfulness and sacrifice of the Eucharist? In what ways do your personal relationships attempt to express Christ's love?
2. Penitence. How have you examined your life and conduct in the light of the Gospel searching to know the claims of Christ upon you and the ways in which you have failed to respond?
3. Prayer. Have you given time to daily prayer in response to the claims of divine love and in accordance with your Rule, seeking to be continually recollected and giving a definite place in your daily life to silence?
4. Self-Denial. How have you expressed in some concrete form the self-stripping of St. Francis?
5. Retreat. Have you made a Retreat since your last report?
6. Study.
  - (a) Have you tried by regular reading of the Bible and other books to increase your understanding of the Church's life and mission?
  - (b) Name the book or books you have read from the list suggested in the Chronicle.
  - (c) Have you refreshed your memory of the Manual?
7. Simplicity and Active Work. In what specific ways have you used your gifts and possessions to promote the ideal of human brotherhood?
8. Membership of the Third Order.  
Give the date of the last renewal of your pledge.
9. Responsibilities.
  - (a) Have you paid your subscription?
  - (b) When did you last consult your Director?

SECTION C  
FOR THOUGHTFUL CONSIDERATION

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MEDITATION

As Novice Director, I find that the most consistent problem people seem to have is with their meditations.

Meditation is, essentially, holding one idea before the mind which you examine carefully. As you reflect on a particular subject, obviously other ideas related to it will develop. The problem always is to keep your meditations within the limit of your main idea. Meditation should not be confused with daydreaming. Because meditation is a sensitizing process, it opens you up to an entirely new appreciation of whatever it is you are thinking about. It gives you insights you would never have had otherwise. You are no longer looking at things on the surface. In this way, it is a type of the "I-thou" relationship that Martin Buber taught, rather than the impersonal "thou-it".

The secret of a successful meditation is to choose a subject that has real meaning for you, one which centers around a specific point. I have marked up the Psalms extensively and often take a passage that strikes me as being pertinent to my needs. I use the Gospels and Epistles in the same way, and frequently a book of devotions.

Selecting a regular time and place is helpful. It is best to be alone. When you know that a door may be opened or someone might speak to you, your warning system is keeping you too alert to the outer world. Be comfortable but don't slouch. You are relaxed, but like an apparently dozing cat, ready to pounce on an idea. Before beginning, say a brief prayer of guidance to help center your mind. Spend at least 10 minutes a day, each and every day. It is better to have a shorter period of time, and to do it daily, rather than occasionally. During "dry" periods, use the time to read one of the devotional books and reflect on the subject matter.

Carry the thoughts you have either read, or developed yourself, with you throughout the day. We are the product of our thoughts. This is one of the reasons meditation is so important, for it yokes our thoughts more closely with the divine. It is an excellent preparation for prayer.

Peter Funk

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"Having trouble with your meditations?" is the title of a short, paperback by Lee Stevens, O.H.C., (Holy Cross Publications, West Park, NY 12493). Some section titles of this practical booklet are: purpose of meditation, method, time, place, length, distractions, meditation and spiritual reading, dryness and aridity, discipline, results, helps. Also included are suggested books: about meditation (elementary, advanced), meditation outlines, and complete meditations.

H.W.

## WHY KEEP A RULE OF LIFE ?

The word, "religious" does not mean "devout" or "Church-going". It is said to mean "under bond" or "under rule". The word "discipline" seems to come from the word "disciple". A life for God, then, is a life truly under bond, a bond not of our own making, but built into the nature of our creature-ship and God's love.

A rule of life is not something imposed on us, any more than our religion is. It is not something we make up for ourselves, either. Our Lord Himself gave us the Rule of Life. The rich, young ruler said to Him, "Good Master, what must I do to be saved?" To this our Lord replied, "You know the precepts of God; keep them and you will be saved." But the rich young man thought himself already a pretty terrific precept-keeper. Seeking more light, he persisted: "All these things have I kept from my youth up...What lack I yet?" It was then that our Lord clearly said, "If you would be perfect, (if you want to be more than a precept-keeper), go, sell all that you have and become poor." He said, "Come, follow me; leave everything, in complete obedience."

A rule of life takes our Lord at His word. Many people do not do this...they interpret...and the Lord, "looking upon them loves them". The keeper of a rule is a simple man. He says, "Ok, Lord, if You meant what You said; here I am, let me try..."

"But--," you interrupt, "that was 30 A.D. Surely He didn't mean that for me!" A Franciscan is a man who happens to believe that our Lord says this to him, and that he need not, as the rich young man did, go away sorrowing.

More than handing out a rule, our Lord was an originator of the religious life. He himself lived in a religious community with his disciples. The Franciscan community is as much as possible like that of our Lord. Its men and women are artisans, housekeepers, tax collectors, and fishermen. Its primary rule is to follow the Master wherever He leads, in poverty, purity and humility, enjoying His love and doing His will. An individual alone cannot live all of Christ's rule---therefore the religious community. A man cannot grow in Christ without adopting Christ's pattern---therefore a rule of life. A man living for God must live in two worlds: his own, and the Kingdom of God; therefore, the active life rule of mercy and love, and the regulated spiritual exercise of the kingdom in prayer.

The Franciscan Rule is not the way for all men. But the Third Order is called, in the word of its Rule: "to sanctify the physical through the sacraments, to train and develop the mind through faith, to maintain home life and fellowship with others in peace and love through the grace of God, to sweeten all life, even that of dumb beasts through kindness, courtesy, and charity; to help and uplift through service, especially in the service of Holy Church; and to oppose materialism by unshaken faith in the power of the supernatural...in a word, the spirit of the Third Order is the spirit of the Holy Gospel --- Jesus only, Jesus always, Jesus in all things.

## THE VOCATION OF A "PROFESSION"-AL RELIGIOUS

When aspirants come to me for information about the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis, they seem to be concerned about two things. First, they feel that they are already devout Churchwomen: they attend services every Sunday and frequently through the week when services are available; they have a full prayer life of thanksgiving, petition and intercession, and they say Morning and Evening Prayer. So they question the advantage in joining a religious community. How can their Christian witness be improved by such membership? Second, they are frequently wives and mothers, wholly dedicated to their families, and they worry that membership in a religious community will interfere with their present vocation. They fear a conflict between vocations.

In answer to their second problem, we should realize that as baptized Christians we have only one vocation, and that is to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master so that we may "become perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect." This is our vocation, our calling, so we should be constantly aware of the Presence of Christ in us whether we are praying, sweeping, gardening, teaching, or resting; thereby, consecrating every moment of the day. In all our doings we should always be listening to the voice of the Master which tells us what the will of the Father is for us at every moment.

Now this is a very difficult task, as anyone who strives to do it can well attest. We do not become like Christ overnight. This is an eternal project that begins at some point in our lives when we make a definite commitment to "turn around": to look for the eternal in the temporal.

In answer to the first question, we can assert that there are some people who feel that they can become more fully aware of the Christian vocation by dedicating their lives in community with others. This is the purpose of the religious orders in the Church. When St. Francis founded the first and second orders of his community, he realized that there were many people who were called to do various kinds of work in the world, and so he founded his Third Order. In the early days members of the Third Order wore a particular kind of garb and were recognized as religious, even to the extent that they could not be tried in a Civil Court.

Today, of course, this is no longer the case. Third Order members no longer identify themselves publicly by exterior dress; however, by their lives they should be readily identified by their dedication to love and service. And this brings us back to the purpose of religious orders. The initial training during the period of postulancy and novitiate is a period of formation. During this time, the aspirant reads particular kinds of books, follows a definite Rule of Life, and is guided by the Novice Director in a better understanding of the religious life. After this period, the novice is "professed". This is a very serious step in the life of an individual because it means that, before God's altar and in the presence of the congregation who "witness his profession" and the priest who "accepts his profession", he is making a solemn promise that he will follow Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master - through the practice of Poverty, which does not mean destitution but the offering of ourselves and what we possess to God so that we no longer identify ourselves with

our possessions; through the practice of Chastity, which does not mean celibacy although it may include celibacy, but is the striving to purify and consecrate every experience of our lives; and Obedience, which is not the blind following of someone else's will but is the absolute listening to all creation. When we learn obedience, everything speaks to us because we hear God speaking to us through everything.

Franciscans, then, whether they are members of the First, Second, or Third Order, are professional religious in search for meaning. Their profession is a public admission that they aspire to be professional religious. As professionals they pray more at regular times, they study more because as professionals they must be aware of current trends within the Church as well as the history upon which the Church is built. They give themselves more wholeheartedly to the service of their fellow men. They are in the process of what God has intended them to be: the light of Christ in the world.

This morning I was reading a little booklet called GROWING UP CHRISTIAN by the Rev. John E. Corrigan. In it he quotes a homely example from Father Marc Oraison. I repeat it to you because I believe that it shows very clearly how the increased awareness which we strive for, as religious, enriches the lives of others as well as our own.

. . . a French housewife who went to the neighborhood grocery - the small-scale equivalent of the American supermarket - to shop for her family's dinner. At once she became involved in relationships that demanded the constant exercise of Christian virtues.

The first of these was the virtue of prudence as she tried "to fulfill her role as wife and mother before God". Her questions ranged over the tastes of the members of her household and the certainty that her choices must win their agreement. Moreover, her selections had to be thrifty, within "her ability to pay without putting the household in debt". Her prudence foresaw, in short, "everything that will make the family dinner successful".

But Father Oraison's shopper was not alone in the shop. The cast included the grocer, a moddy shopgirl troubled by fears for her fiance in the military service, and sundry shoppers -- a demanding busybody and an impatient man. So the housewife had to summon up successively the virtues of patience, discretion, humility, and fortitude as she encountered each of them.

When she arrived home, at the conclusion of the parable, she poured herself a cup of coffee--"but not two, since coffee makes her nervous and her children on the way home from school demand her to be calm (the virtue of temperance)."

To be a Franciscan may require many changes in habits and thinking patterns. Habits are slow to develop, but if we begin, we know that we are sure to reach the end which is love and joy and peace for ourselves, and for all whose lives touch our own.

Marie Hayes  
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