

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

AND

SOCIAL REFORM

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by

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A thesis presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School, Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts.

MILWAUKEE WISCONSIN

August 1937.

PREFACE

In this, the twentieth century of social unrest we find sociologists, economists, scientists, and politicians seeking for causes of, and remedies for, the many social ills that disturb society today. Numerous causes have been unfolded; various methods of solution have been recommended and tried by social and political leaders; and yet society is as maladjusted, as unquiet and restless, as dissatisfied as it ever was. It seems to balance on the verge of a revolution. Although some groups of society have been relieved, calmed, or partially satisfied, no permanent cure has been found or applied. Much is said and written of our critical period in history, of the crisis which we are facing, but no program has been launched which will effectively solve any social problem. Not even the fundamental cause has been exposed. How can we account for such a situation in this so-called advanced civilization of our day--a civilization which has made such stupendous progress from a material standpoint and which prides itself on having conquered so many diseases, on having eased so many discomforts, and having satisfied so many cravings of society? Must we, in the face of all

this material advancement, admit our utter failure to improve and advance our cultural civilization? Must we admit that we have failed to increase man's contentment and happiness at least in some proportion to the advantages with which material progress has favored him? Must we throw up our hands in despair, and as by-gone generations have done in the ages of the past, condemn our present age as the worst age in history--as an age in which social ills have reached their climax--decry it as the age of the anti-Christ--as a time when God will soon destroy the world and end all its miseries? A pessimistic attitude will not bring about a solution, neither can the problem be attacked from a purely material viewpoint.

When we examine the social theories proposed and the attempts made to bring back into society, justice, peace, and happiness and see how sadly they have failed to bring results, or effect any permanent cures of our social ills we must certainly conclude that something is radically wrong with the theories, principles, and methods used by our social physicians. Why is it that they have so utterly failed? It is because all their efforts are rooted in materialism. A materialistic age will naturally be partial to materialism and ignore the spiritual nature of man; consequently

neither a materialistic student of social problems nor a behaviorist will ever find the fundamental cause of our social upheaval nor discover an effective solution that will bring about any permanent social reform.

If our proud, would-be social physicians would but humbly admit that their failure and, like true scientists, seek the fundamental causes of our social problems they would certainly also find the proper remedy.

No true, humble, scientist will need to go far in his search for light and guidance to discover the most perfect program of social reconstruction. It has been definitely planned and worked out under the guidance of the wisest Social Agency in existence. The Catholic Church is this Social Agency. With twenty centuries of experience in dealing with all forms of social problems prevalent even in our day, she is truly the only Agency capable to direct us through this trying crisis. She has lived through many of them in the past, and she is equally able to cope with the present and the future. Unhampered by materialism, she is truly scientific. She will not only point out the underlying cause of all social ills but will also with greatest wisdom advise us concerning the most perfect remedies possible in bringing about the social reconstruction of society today.

More than fifty years ago, when our present social problems were already taking strong root, Pope Leo XIII, the Father of our laboring people, said: "My social reform is the Third Order of St. Francis."¹

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1. Quoted by Martin, Paul R., The Gospel in Action, p. 216.
Also Stanislaus, Fr. O.S.F.C., The Third Order of St. Francis, p. 9.
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Since his day each successive Pontiff has recognized in the Third Order of St. Francis the potentialities of social reform. "Rome has spoken" through encyclicals and other letters time and again down to our present day. Each Pontiff has urged the establishment of this Order in every parish. Not only have the Sovereign Pontiffs earnestly sought its promotion, but each has also been a zealous member of the Order. The hierarchies of the church, including many Archbishops and Bishops of the United States have likewise urged its promotion. Why their appeal has not been heard, why the voice of Christ's vicar on earth has not been heeded with greater enthusiasm on the part of priests and laity is difficult to understand except it be for lack of leadership. Do we not need a St. Francis, the Knight of the Cross, the

Troubadour of Christ, to bring us out of this chaos of social upheaval and lead us to victory--a victory that will triumph over selfishness, irreligion, lust for pleasure, lack of restraint of every passion, disregard of our neighbor, and over temptations to despondency and despair? St. Francis accomplished this in the thirteenth century when social and political ills were not so vastly different from those of today. Human nature has not changed since the days of St. Francis. His principles, the basic precepts or principles of the Gospel, which must be the "nucleus of all true social reform" ² will bring about most effectively the social reconstruction of which society is so greatly in need.

2. Quoted by Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 169.

That society was not made perfect then and will never be perfect is an accepted fact because of the fallen nature of man for whom this world will never be a paradise. That it can, however, be improved by application of truly scientific principles and methods of social reform is also well recognized. We need not despair because of existing social evils nor should we be satisfied with present conditions. It is natural

for man to seek advancement and happiness, but this can be effected only by the application of the most vital principle of social reform--namely the reform of the individual. This principle is opposed to the one which seeks to bring about a social reform by a reform of the masses. The Third Order of St. Francis is a most effectual means of reforming the individual because it aims primarily at self-sanctification and its natural consequences--social reformation. This end it effected admirably, almost miraculously, in the thirteenth century. The Third Order is an antidote against the materialism of today, as Pope Pius XI states.

"Enroll yourselves in the Third Order and at the very time that materialism inundates us with an invasion of barbarism, the imitation of Christ will deliver us from its slavery, while the blasphemies of men all but threaten us with the anger of heaven, the prayers of the humble and penitents will avert the storm. While families are destroyed and society is being poisoned by corrupt morals, the purity of Tertiaries will contribute largely to save them in an admirable manner."³

3. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 139.

The aim of this thesis is to unfold and examine the social theories, principles, and methods of St. Francis and note the possibility of their application to present-day social problems. His Third Order is

examined as a means of social reform. Its influence on the thirteenth century and on the succeeding centuries is investigated and consideration is made of its potential influence on our modern social and religious needs. "For who does not realize that spiritual blessings are now commonly held in higher repute, and that the nations, taught by their late experience, are beginning to see that they need look for no peace and security except from a return to God?" 4

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4. Pius XI, Rite Expiatis, Encyclical on the Seventh Centenary of the Death of St. Francis, April 30, 1926.
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The completion of this thesis is largely due to the sympathetic interest and kind assistance received from various sources. The writer is especially indebted to Dr. Paul J. Mundie, Professor of Sociology, under whose guidance this thesis was written. Sincere thanks are due to him for his constant encouragement, helpful criticisms, and kind suggestions. For source material, otherwise unavailable, the writer is grateful to the generous aid of the Capuchin Fathers of the Province of St. Joseph. Gratitude is further due to the writer's Superiors in religion who have made the undertaking

of this work possible, and to the Sisters who have so generously given help to the task of giving form to this thesis. To all the writer expresses her sincere appreciation.

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INTRODUCTION

"Fortunately for us," says W.J. Knox Little, a Protestant admirer of St. Francis, "there are few saints so far removed from our own time as St. Francis, of whose lives and actions we possess such authentic details." 1

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1. Little, W.J. Knox, St. Francis of Assisi: His Life and Work, p. 15.
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Dr. Little, writing in 1897, states in his preface that he has studied everything, medieval or modern on the subject, that has come within his reach. He states that he has depended upon original authorities and his judgment of St. Francis is independently formed from them. Dr. Little briefly gives three principal sources of our knowledge of St. Francis as follows:

"There is first the life by Thomas of Celano, a brother of the Order, much esteemed for his saintliness. He knew St. Francis intimately, and wrote his life, by order of Pope Gregory IX, a little more than a year after the saint's death.... Some years later by request of the Provincials of the Order, Thomas wrote.... "The Second Life of St. Francis."

(2) A new life was undertaken. This was done at the request of the General Chapter of Geneva in 1244. Three of the early companions of St. Francis, Rufinos, Angelo Tancredi, and

Leo were appointed to do the work; and especially to supply the omissions as to St. Francis' early days found in Celano's life....This was called the "Life by the Tres Socii", and is the second important source of our knowledge.

(3) It was an epoch in the Franciscan Order, when St. Bonaventura was elected General in 1257. In 1260, at the request of the brethren, he undertook his life of the founder, which was meant to be, and for long held to be, the authoritative biography. He had himself known St. Francis intimately....His life of St. Francis was published in 1263, and is known as "The New Legend". St. Bonaventura, in the first part collects with care information unpublished before. This gives real value to his part of his work. In the second part he merely abridges and alters Thomas of Celano, and the earlier biographies." 2

2. Ibid., pp. 15-17.

Father Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., an outstanding authority on the life of St. Francis agrees with Dr. Little when he says:

"Some six hundred and eighty years have elapsed since the death of St. Francis, and in the interval a large literature has gathered round about his life. But the real sources of Franciscan history,--the works which have supplied the Saint's many biographers with most of their material, the well-springs, so to say, of Franciscan literature,--may be counted on the fingers of one hand. They comprise the First and Second "Life" by Thomas of Celano, the "Legend of the Three Companions", and the "Legends" by St. Bonaventure." 3

3. Robinson, Paschal, O.F.M., Some Pages of Franciscan History, p. 2.

Of Thomas Celano, Abbe L. LeMonnier, A French biographer of St. Francis writes:

"The first biography of St. Francis was written less than two years after his death. The author, Thomas of Celano, had been selected by Pope Gregory IX, who was careful of all that could contribute to the glory of his friend, and the choice was in every respect a happy one. Thomas had entered the Order early; he had lived several years with Francis; to say that he had seen him living, is not enough, he had devoured him with his eyes." 4

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4. LeMonnier, Abbe L., History of St. Francis of Assisi, p. 5.
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Father Paschal, O.F.M. says of Celano's writings:

"Up to date no error or equivocation has been proved against Celano, and he still remains, in the face of false criticism with its allies, the first of Franciscan biographers in the order of time,--the very Father of Franciscan History. Moreover, his First "Life" is, as Mr. Montgomery Carmichael has well styled it, "the oldest, purest, the only unimpugned source" of Franciscan biography. So true is this that, if this "Life" be taken away, Franciscan history is left without foundation." 5

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5. Robinson, Paschal, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 5.
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The Legend of the Three Companions or Life by the Tres Socii was intended to supplement the writings of Thomas of Celano. Its authenticity has been called in-to question. Father Paschal says, "At best the Legend,

as we possess it, is a disappointment; we might reasonably have expected much more from the source whence it is supposed to proceed." 6

6. Ibid., p. 9.

Abbe LeMonnier, as also Father Paschal, agree with Dr. Little regarding the "New Legend" of St. Bonaventure. They also state that St. Bonaventure deliberately suppressed the facts relating to the trouble St. Francis had with the more lax members of the Order who desired to change his ideals in the practice of poverty. St. Bonaventure did this "to bring into harmony the two extreme parties.... This suppression, however, desirable for edification at the moment, renders the second part of his work less valuable as history." 7

7. Little, J.W. op cit., p. 17. LeMonnier, Abbe L. op. cit., p. 11. and Robinson, Father Paschal, op. cit., pp 10-11.

Father Paschal says of St. Bonaventure's aim:

"This conciliatory aim may be observed in the judicious way St. Bonaventure distinguishes between what St. Francis recommended and practised himself, and that which he strictly enjoined on his followers. In so far, then, as

St. Bonaventure aimed at writing a life that would give satisfaction to all, his production has been rightly described by M. Sabatier as a *legenda pacis*." 8

8. Robinson, Pachal, O.F.M., *op. cit.*, p. 11.

The suppression of facts by St. Bonaventure does not diminish the factual and authentic knowledge of St. Francis at the present time. The credit is due to the Bollandist (Jesuit) Fathers to whom were brought the original manuscripts of Thomas Celano and the Legend of the Three Companions. (The original first Life of St. Francis by Celano was brought to the Bollandist Fathers from a Cistercian Abbey of Longport in the diocese of Soissons: The Legend of the Three Companions was discovered in a convent of Minorites in Louvain.) The Bollandists published these in a work entitled the Acta Sanctorum.

Dr. Little Says:

"In their magnificent work, the 'Acta Sanctorum', they have collected all they could as to the life of this great saint as well as of others. They have also published the life of the 'Tres Socii'. 'The Second Life', by Celano, they did not publish, owing to a mistaken notion apparently, that it was a mere supplement. This however, has been published by Rinaldi. The Bollandists have also published extracts from the abridgment of John of Ceperano. Thus we possess all the 'Ancient Legend', i.e., the early and most authentic lives. Further, they have published the life by St. Bonaventura which is also in the folio edition of that saint's works." "It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Father Rinaldi, a Franciscan,

published the 'Second Life' of Celano, from a manuscript he had discovered, together with a fresh edition of 'The First Life', from a manuscript which he considered superior to that of Longport." 9

9. Little, J.W., op. cit., pp. 17-19.

The greatest controversy seems to be concerned with The Mirror of Perfection or Speculum Perfectionis. M. Paul Sabatier found a manuscript in the Mazarin library. He edited it in 1898 and for some time claimed this as the most ancient biography of St. Francis written by Brother Leo as early as 1227 and that it therefore preceded the biography of Celano. After further studies he admitted the uncertainty of the date and authorship. Father Paschal disproves Sabatier's theory and then says of Professor Sabatier:

"....if he were only able to prove the Speculum to be really the legenda antiquissima, he would go far toward advancing his pet theory that the 'First Life' by Celano is in the nature of an official reply to the Speculum Perfectionis. But up to date M. Sabatier has failed to oust Thomas of Celano from the position he has held long as the earliest biographer of St. Francis." 10

10. Robinson, Paschal, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 16.

Father Paschal then goes on to explain the origin of The Mirror of Perfection as passages taken from

The Legend of the Three Companions and from Celano's works. Father Paschal says:

"If we may accept the decision of those who have made the subject peculiarly their own, the Speculum Perfectionis, as M. Sabatier has given it to us, is a compilation, probably of the year 1318. A careful examination shows that it was not composed at the same time, or immediately after St. Francis's death; it is obviously the work of several hands. It is certainly based on the writings of the Companions of St. Francis, and especially on those of Brother Leo." 11

11. Ibid., p. 17.

Of less importance but of great interest are traditional writings. The Sacrum commercium, a poetic allegory telling of the mystic espousal of St. Francis with Lady Poverty. Its author is not known. The most important of the Early Chronicles of the Order are those of Thomas of Eccleston and Jordan of Giano who relate of the coming of the Friars into England and Germany. The Fioretti or Little Flowers of St. Francis dates from before 1328, according to Paul Sabatier. Most biographers do not attach much importance to these writings from a historical point of view. Abbe L. LeMonnier says:

"The traditions of that history (of St. Francis) are too recent, and if they can be employed at all, they must be carefully selected....I have read them more than I have quoted them....There are three deserving of special mention, because

they sum up and represent all the others. They are the 'Fioretti', the 'Book of Conformities', and the 'Chronicles of the Minorites'. The 'Fioretti' or 'Little Flowers of St. Francis', belong to the fourteenth century. They are supposed to have been written by Giovanni di San Lorenzo, of the noble family of Maregnolle, who in (1534) was raised to the episcopal throne of Bisignano."

"The Book of Gold, or of the Conformities of the life of our blessed and seraphic Father Francis with the Life of Jesus Christ our Savior'. Such is the title of the book that was presented to the Chapter at Assisi, in 1399, by a holy religious named Bartolommeo, a native of Pisa and a very learned man....The book, which at its first appearance was enthusiastically received, has fallen into complete discredit." 12

12. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., pp. 14-15.

Father Paschal says, "It is needless to say that these works must not be classed among the sources of Franciscan history, properly so called; at best they reflect but secondhand impressions of St. Francis and his first followers." 13

13. Robinson, Paschal, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 23.

In the seventeenth century appeared the works of an Irish writer, Luke Wadding. He compiled eight volumes of "The Annals of the Minorites". Dr. Little says this work is "of real value, although it suffers

from his ignorance of some of the earlier documents."14

14. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 19.

Abbe L. LeMonnier also says that "There are few collections of such importance." 15

15. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 18.

Father Paschal does not consider them as valuable.

He says:

"The Irish annalist's series of weighty tomes, which aim to give the history of the Friars Minor in chronological order from the beginning, are most readable, and spite of some shortcomings from a scientific standpoint, are perhaps more often consulted for reference than any other single work on the subject." 16.

16. Robinson, Paschal, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 23.

The most enthusiastic Protestant student of the sources of Franciscan literature in modern times is M. Paul Sabatier. In his Vie de St. Francois which he wrote in 1890 he has assimilated practically all the results of previous studies. The weak point in his work is that he separates St. Francis from the Church. Father Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. says of him:

"Sabatier started out with an assumption unworthy of any true scholar....He loved St. Francis with such intensity as to live in spiritual communion with him, and therefore made him beloved by others. But he loved him as a man and as a man only; his supernatural life and the very essence of his sanctity escaped him entirely....The fact that his book was placed on the Index showed how dangerous it is for souls to consider St. Francis as a man--and as a man only--separating him from the Church and mutilating his conception of the universe." 17

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17. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., The Franciscan Message to the World, p. 277.
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The most impartial and unprejudiced Protestant biographer seems to be Dr. W.J. Knox Little; in the preface of his book St. Francis of Assisi he states that he has depended only upon original authorities and that his judgment is independently formed from them. Dr. Little is in sympathy with St. Francis and is an admirer of Pope Innocent III and of Gregory IX. He does make several misstatements regarding the Catholic Church, but that can be expected from his Protestant interpretation of Catholic teachings.

Abbe L. LeMonnier wrote about five years before Dr. Little. His work is also based on original sources and reflects the interpretation of a Catholic writer. Dr. Little says of him, "The Abbe LeMonnier has written a Life quite to be relied upon, but distressing from its bad style and

its fulsome Roman tone." 18

18. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 20.

This last remark is not surprising from a Protestant point of view.

The most recent and most reliable authorities as biographers of St. Francis are the works of Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. and of Father Paschal Robinson, O.F.M. Father Cuthbert has traveled in Europe and has read all the original source material available. He has written many treatises on St. Francis. His English translation of The Mirror of Perfection is considered by Father Paschal as the most satisfactory. Father Paschal is also noted for his research in original documents. His Writings of St. Francis of Assisi and the Real Saint Francis are very valuable as they reflect the true spirit of St. Francis. His translation of the Canticle of the Sun is the most satisfactory of all translations as he was quite successful to give it "the naif rhythm of the original Italian." 19

19. Walsh, James J., The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries, p. 257.

Several recent writers have treated of St. Francis as a social reformer. Among the most outstanding may be mentioned Pope Leo XIII in his Auspicato an Encyclical concerning St. Francis and the Third Order as a means of social reform; Father Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. in his Franciscan Message to the World; Paul R. Martin's, The Gospel in Action; Leo L. Dubois', Saint Francis of Assisi, Social Reformer; Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C. in The Romanticism of St. Francis and in Catholic Ideals in Social Life; and Father Cyprian Emanuel, O.F.M. in a series of articles entitled Saint Francis of Assisi - The Patron of Social Action which appeared in "The Catholic Charities Review" from December 1926 to September 1927. Since 1934 the Franciscan Educational Conferences have contributed valuable papers and discussions in the field of Sociology; in their treatment of this subject the Franciscan ideals are emphasized.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Disturbed Society of the Twelfth
and Thirteenth Centuries

An important and unprejudiced evaluation of the social theories and principles of St. Francis can be made only by studying them in their proper historical setting. The political, social, and economic factors of his day played an important role in determining the purpose and mode of his actions. Medieval civilization was not so vastly different from that of our day. Yes, we often even find ourselves quite at home especially in its social life. Human nature ever remains with us, essentially quite the same, no matter what goes on in our political and economic world. That human nature is inclined to be selfish, ambitious, and ever dissatisfied we know from experience. No one finds himself so perfect that he does not readily see that self-control in one way or another is essential to a social life if one is to possess in some measure the peace and happiness which his nature is continually seeking. If one keeps in mind how human nature reacts towards the things of this world, towards the people with whom it associates, towards authorities, and towards

oneself, one can properly evaluate the social theories and principles that are best suited to promote the welfare of each individual and of society in general. Though our mode of action may change as social, political, and economic standards change with the progress of society, yet the fundamental principles which guide our actions ever remain the same. They are as applicable to modern society as they were in the days of Christ and in the days of St. Francis. Maurice de Wulf states this thought as follows:

"The truth of the time of the Greeks is still the truth of the time of Thomas Aquinas and of Duns Scotus. Truth is something enduring. Of course there is left a place for progress and extension in human knowledge, there are adaptations of certain doctrines to social conditions; this appears, for example, in the scholastic doctrine of the mutability of ethical laws. But the principles which rule the logical, ethical and social activities remain unchanged; they are like human nature of which they are expressions, and which does not change From this standpoint we may say that the philosophers of the thirteenth century are conscious of the responsibility of building for eternity." 1

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1. DeWulf, Maurice, Philosophy and Civilization in the Middle Ages, pp. 145-146.
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Whether we live in a monarchy or in a republic, its rulers are bound to the same duties of promoting the welfare of their subjects. Their subjects also, in every period of history, are bound to respect

authority. The goods of this world are for the rich and for the poor. They must be used in accordance with the mind of the Giver of all goods. The rich and the poor are bound by laws of charity. Covetousness is forbidden to both. St. Francis understood this and carefully selected the principles of the Gospel to teach men how to live. A Protestant writer says rather enthusiastically:

"St. Francis was one of the greatest, noblest, and holiest men ever raised up by God for a splendid work of His glory. In an age of pigmies, in an age of middlingness like our own, we do well with awe and humility to contemplate so great an example of the power and love of God. His exact methods were not, indeed, the methods which would be most effective or are most needed now; but we are unreal and unwise if on this account we quarrel with them or put them aside and so miss their meaning, unless, indeed, we are willing to put aside and quarrel with the methods of Jesus Christ Himself." 2

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2. Little, W.J. Knox, St. Francis of Assisi: His Times, Life and Work, p. 34.
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In what condition did St. Francis find society in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? Avarice and selfishness were very prevalent. The rich sought for greater riches, greater pleasures, and greater comforts. The poor envied the rich,

coveted their goods, and failed by idleness and murmuring discontent to promote their own progress and welfare. The rich ignored their obligations to the less fortunate, and the poor were blind to the dignity of their position and to the blessings that accompany a holy poverty. These social conditions filled the thirteenth century with quarrels, revolts and hostilities. It was as unusual for the people then to realize and appreciate a social ideal as it is in our own day. But the ideal existed then none the less and is ever as efficacious in removing social unrest as St. Francis proved it to be. The author quoted above says:

"There was much cruelty and oppression, the poor were in almost hopeless misery; the rich wrapped in worldliness, selfishness, and luxury. Religion had become to a great extent merely nominal. The Church was failing in her mission, deeply corrupt, and terribly inefficient; words had take the place of thingsNothing could save such a society but a complete break up of men's ideas. Francis effected that, and he effected it by the closest following in the path of his Master that this world has probably ever seen." 3

3. Ibid., p. 27.

One class of people sadly neglected and despised were the lepers. People were convinced that only a miracle could cure them, and the prevailing idea in

the minds of most of them was that the horrible disease was a punishment of God upon a sinner. The sufferers were banished from society, provided for very meagerly in leper houses and leper-farms. There they were to a large extent obliged to provide for and to take care of themselves. "There were leper-hospitals before St. Francis' day; and religious congregations, such as the Crucigeri, devoted to the care of the lepers. But undoubtedly St. Francis and his friars fostered the movement of pity and gave it a wider impetus." 4

4. Cuthbert, Rev. O.S.F.C., The Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 178.

The poor people were usually fed, but the lepers were shunned. This kind of treatment sadly did not measure up to the standards of charity exemplified by Christ. But there was a change in the thirteenth century and this change was especially marked when the influence of St. Francis began to make itself generally felt.

Cf. Martin, Paul R., The Gospel in Action, p. 27.

That the social evil of leprosy was quite prevalent and poorly treated may also be inferred from the following passage by W.J.Knox Little: "It is evident then, that the wisdom of the time, medical and social, was entirely at fault in view of this tremendous and increasing social evil; to close the eyes to it, to shut unfortunate sufferers out, to treat them as though they were especially marked as sinners, like those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, was the only thing they could think of." 5

5. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 102.

Causes Of Social Unrest - Feudalism

Many causes of social unrest were due to the outworn and decaying institution of feudalism. "Serviceable as the feudal system had once been for the protection of the people, it gradually outlived its utility with the new developments of political and social conditions and became oppressive." 6

6. Martin, Paul R., The Gospel in Action, p. 89.

The miseries of the serfs have often been exaggerated, but with the political and economical changes of the early thirteenth century feudalism even at its best deserved to be discarded. "Commerce was increasing by leaps and bounds, the towns were becoming great trading centers and economics had begun to take on a new meaning." 7

7. Ibid., p. 81.

Therefore the feudal system, in which land instead of money was the ordinary reward for service, was no longer adaptable to the fast growing towns and City-States. The feudal lords, however, were not resigned to surrender the support of the people who were bound to them by oaths of fealty. They resented the spirit of independence that their subjects had acquired as they drifted into towns where they engaged in labor and trade. These towns-folk now refused to engage in the constant petty wars of their lords who repaid them only with a meager existence. Even the Church had become intimately entangled in feudalism through her bishops and priests. They were temporal as well as spiritual lords and such were

also the abbots of monasteries.

Cf. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., p. 23.

"Freedom, consequently, was scarcely known; wars and quarrels were numerous, and the people who might be inclined to peace were dragged perforce into the quarrels of their superiors.... But already resistance showed itself in Italy. The serfs were dominated Minori in Italy and especially in Umbria. Gradually they loosened the yoke. They were persevering in commercial enterprise and efforts of industry. They acquired some wealth. Then they united and resisted oppression." 8

8. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 6.

For the many who had already extricated themselves from the bonds of feudalism, life was becoming very fascinating.

"The joy of living had been reborn and was growing; the pleasures of activity began to be understood. Laborers cultivated a patch of ground no longer under feudal domination; Merchants travelling from one part of Europe to another to buy stuffs and sell them at a great profit,....all these found their occupations more pleasant than formerly and made profit out of them; and pleasure and profit were of mutual assistance." 9

9. Salvatorelli, Luigi, The Life of St. Francis of Assisi, p. 26.

These people had tasted of wealth and pleasure and

their sole aim was to acquire more. To this class belonged Peter Bernardone, the father of St. Francis. These were the rich who were growing richer and who intensified the burden of the poor. They became selfish and abusive, living a life of ease and luxury and vice. For these St. Francis, who knew riches, also had a message of social reform.

Decline of Monasticism

Another cause of social disturbance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the decline of monasticism. The chief cause of this decline was the possession of vast wealth in the form of large estates. The abbots were so engrossed with their numerous interests as temporal lords that their spiritual duties suffered in consequence. In their earlier existence the monasteries had nobly served the needs of the people. A writer says of them:

"The monasteries were the asylums where in time of need the hungry were fed and the naked clothed. Agriculture and trades were taught....Upholding the teachings of the Church and keeping alive that spark of human charity which was based on divine motives, the monasteries were indeed social bulwarks without which the Middle Ages would have been as entirely cold and heartless

as were the pagan days which had gone before."¹⁰

10. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 16.

But now the new towns were beyond the reach of the influence of the monks who remained on their isolated estates in the inland. An attempt of monastic reform was undertaken at Cluny in the eleventh century. The Benedictine monks of Cluny instilled new religious zeal within their own cloister and awakened the same spirit in a great many other monasteries. This was done by means of organizing a federation of monasteries. Up to that time the Benedictine monasteries had been independent. At the beginning of the twelfth century, two thousand Benedictine houses were dependent on the Cluny system. Cluny christianized feudalism by introducing Christian principles and ideals into the minds of the feudal barons. They also undertook the reform of the secular clergy, both priests and bishops.

Cf. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., pp. 24-29.

"But the very prosperity of Cluny, especially with its extraordinary wealth, became one of the chief causes of its declining influence. At the beginning of the twelfth century its monastic life had become more lax, and henceforth its influence as a social force waned." 11

11. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., p. 30.

After the Cluny reform had performed its service, a Benedictine congregation of Citeaux under the abbot, St. Bernard, continued the work of reform. When he died in 1153, medieval society had achieved the height of its monastic ideal.

Cf. Ibid., p. 32.

"The Benedictine monasteries had fallen into decline chiefly through excess of wealth which had finally weakened their austerity." 12

12. Ibid., p. 74.

The Protestant writer criticizes them less severely. He says:

"The evils had spread into the Church. Among the clergy and among the religious there was a general and fatal laxity. The Benedictines had ceased to be so vigorous and so powerful as of yore. The Cistercians were, indeed, preserving their monastic life as before, but they were quiet in their cloister, and exercising no wide sway upon the times. St. Bernard was dead. There was no commanding voice to reach men's souls." 13

13. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 283.

Evils In The Church

Not only did monasticism decline because monks had abandoned themselves to worldly interests, the Church too, was tottering under the burdens of temporal interests, war and vice. "The feudal system had done its work in checking anarchy, but it had introduced vast worldliness into the Church. A worldly spirit had come from great power, great dignity, great wealth." 14

14. Ibid., p. 7.

The Popes were, to a great extent, temporal rulers as well as spiritual rulers. Under Innocent III, in the thirteenth century, the temporal power of

the papacy had achieved its height. The two vast temporal and spiritual powers of the papacy were recognized as legitimate and accepted as such by temporal rulers and their subjects in the Middle Ages. But the burdens of these offices seemed too heavy for the Popes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. An Italian historian writes of the Pope:

"Wherever he turned his gaze, Innocent III saw difficulties and disputes.... In France the scandalous and mysterious affair of the divorce between Philip Augustus and Queen Ingeborg was still pending.... In England the question of the Archbishop of Canterbury's stipend had brought about a direct and open quarrel with King John;.... In Spain, Castile was making ready for war against the Moors; but the King of Leon was their secret ally. In Portugal the Bishop of Oporto was at war with King Sancho." 15.

15. Salvatorelli, Luigi, op. cit., p. 134-135.

The Popes were consulted in temporal affairs and their approval was sought by rulers and subjects. The interdict was commonly used. It was a severe but effective method of punishing oppressive or unworthy rulers. The conflict between the papacy and emperors was an outstanding feature of the thirteenth century. The emperors, jealous of their

powers, interfered in the spiritual rights of the papacy through simony and lay investiture. The most outstanding of these conflicts was the one between Frederick II of Germany and Pope Innocent III.

Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., describes its consequences as follows:

"The struggle was most disastrous for the welfare of Christendom and the Church.... and though the struggle issued in the downfall of the Hohenstaufen, the Church bore the scars of the wounds that had been inflicted on her in its course for many a long day.... For whatever the faults of individual Pontiffs might be, or whatever their imperial opponents; it was the Papacy that stood for personal and civic freedom, and the Hohenstaufen who wished to bind the bodies and souls of men with the chains of absolutism. It was not that Frederick resented what he might consider unwarrantable interference on the part of the Pope in temporal affairs, but rather that in his boundless ambition he desired to rule both as Caesar and as Hierarch throughout the whole extent of the Empire." 16.

16. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., The Third Order of St. Francis, p. 53-54.

Of the bishops and priests many were feudal lords, living in luxury and as frequently engaged in quarrels and petty wars as the feudal barons, ".... for they were temporal princes within the limits of their fiefs and prelates in their dioceses.

They owed to their overlord support in time of war, and....were warriors of a rough and primitive type." 17

17. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., p. 32.

The conditions of the tottering Church are vividly described by Abbe L. LeMonnier:

"A worldly spirit spread through the Church. Ecclesiastical dignitaries were mixed up in business affairs and interests, and imitated the manners of the great lords. They vied with them in luxury, in ambition, and sometimes, alas! in vices of all sorts.... It was a scandal, and an injury to the conscience of the public. A strong reaction seemed necessary On all sides but one remedy was called for, a return to the simplicity of the early Church." 18

18. LeMonnier, Abbe L., History of St. Francis of Assisi, p. 105.

Pope Leo XIII refers to these conditions in the Church in these few words: "Not even those who by their position should have served as a check to others, kept clear of the taint of these vices." 19

19. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato, Encyclical concerning St. Francis and the Third Order, September 17, 1882.

St. Francis did not denounce the emperors and clergy, but by his social ideals he became the pillar of the

tottering Church.

Heresies

With the laxity in the monasteries and the sorely wounded Church, the masses of the people fell into a spiritual lethargy. Their souls became fertile soils in which ever wide-awake enemies of the Church and the would-be reformers might seed heresy. Pope Pius XI speaks of them:

"There were those who, blaming the sins of individuals on the Church of God, proudly believed themselves called by God to reform the Church; but when they began shortly to repudiate the teachings and the authority of the Apostolic See, their motives became plain enough, while it is well known that many of them soon fell into lustful and luxurious ways and even into open disturbance of the public peace, shaking the very foundations of religion, of property rights, of the family, and the state. It was an instance of what has repeatedly happened here and there in history, when seditions against Church and against State went hand in hand, one abetting the other." 20

20. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis, Encyclical on the Seventh Centenary of the Death of St. Francis, April 30, 1926.

The Waldensians, or Poor Men of Lyons, were a type of these heretical sects who attacked everything they saw in the Church. They urged prelates to put on wooden shoes and replace the sword with a

spade. When Rome justly rejected their programme of reform, they founded private churches. They advocated a return to the primitive simplicity of Christianity but fostered communism and a spirit of revolt against the Church.

Cf. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 106.

Of all the heresies, the Albigensian was the most pernicious to Church and State. It spread rapidly in the flourishing towns of Northern Italy, Germany, and Southern France where with little labor nature provided the necessities and luxuries of life. A Jesuit historian says:

"It was precisely in these regions that unworthy ecclesiastics, high and low, disgraced their office by luxury, pride, lust and avarice, and created scandals which were the more severely criticized, as a spirit of political independence, mingled with democratic and even communistic tendencies, was everywhere astir in the rising cities. Under these circumstances it was easy for Manichaen emissaries coming from the East to kindle the embers of heresy into a conflagration which threatened the existence both of the Church and of the State. The new sectaries called themselves Cathari, the Pure, or Albigenses, from the town of Albi, the center of their activity." 21

21. Guggenberger, A., S.J., A General History of the Christian Era, Vol. I, p. 365.

The Albigensian system originated in the old pagan Manichaean Dualism. It assumed two first principles, a good God, the creator of the spiritual world, and an evil god, the creator of the material world. It denied the dogmas of the incarnation, the resurrection of the body, all the sacraments, and the whole system of Catholic teaching. It rejected the authority both of the Church and of the State. Its moral code was a positive incitement to vice. The majority of the Cathari or Albigensians rejected matrimony but allowed and practiced free love without restriction.

Cf. Ibid.,

They gained great popularity by their attacks upon the luxury and worldliness in the Church. The people, ignorant in religion and lacking all respect for the clergy, accepted their heretical teachings.

Crusades

The Middle Ages were also the ages of the Crusades, the ages of knighthood and chivalry. With the laxity of religion, chivalry and knighthood acted to some extent as forces of moral and social discipline. But the holy purpose of the Crusade, the pious enthusiasm for the deliverance of the Holy

Land from the hands of the Turks, was almost lost sight of in the thirteenth century. It degenerated into a scheme for adventure and for the gaining of wealth. W.J. Knox Little concludes from the evils connected with the Crusades that they were "an immense mistake." 22

22. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 63.

This, however, is an unjust condemnation. Neither Pope Innocent III nor the Crusades are to be blamed for the unworthy motives of many of the individual Crusaders who were such only in name. They debased and discredited the Crusades and brought about the failure of their purpose. The Crusades of the tenth and eleventh centuries had acquainted people with the riches of the East. With the decline of feudalism and the rise of the commercial towns, trade was stimulated. By the thirteenth century a profitable trade had been carried on between the merchants of the new cities and towns and the Eastern tradesmen. The religious motive of many Crusaders thus degenerated into a commercial enterprise. This brought about a failure in winning the Holy Land by means of war. St. Francis was not blind to the evils

of the Crusades. Yet he did not denounce them, neither did he encourage the holy wars.

An Age Of Transition

From this historical account of disturbed society of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we must not conclude that those centuries were worse than our own. Neither were they better. To evaluate it impartially one must do so with a historical mind in the light of the medievalist. Those centuries were centuries of transition similar to our modern civilization. Maurice DeWulf summarises the situation: "The twelfth century witnesses a new civilization established in a striking form. The struggles of kings with vassals, the coming of the communes, the establishment of citizenship, the freedom of the serfs, - all of these facts are evidence that the balance is being established among social forces." 23

23. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., p. 60.

Pope Leo XIII says of its good and bad qualities as follows:

"The spirit of that age with its virtues and vices is known well enough. The Catholic faith was quite deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and an inspiring spectacle it was to see so many, animated by the fervor of their

piety, set out for Palestine bent on victory or death. Still license had warped the morality of the people, and nothing was so generally necessary as a return to Christian sentiment." 24

24. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato

Dr. James J. Walsh says of the century in which St. Francis lived:

"His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christinity after its primitive age; more interesting than even the century of the Reformation; and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which this interest attaches itself, is St. Francis. And why? Because of the profound popular instinct which enabled him, more than any man since the primitive age, to fit religion for popular use. He brought religion to the people. He founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the Church. He transformed monachism by uprooting the stationary monk, delivering him from the bondage of property, and sending him, as a mendicant friar to be a stranger and sojourner, not in the wilderness, but in the most crowded haunts of men, to console them and to do them good." 25

25. Walsh, James J., The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 258.

It is safe to conclude that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were not vastly different from our own century. The social evils were rooted in the same source. To our own day we can also apply

the same remedies suggested by Father Agostino

Gemelli, O.F.M. in the following quotation:

"At the end of the twelfth century a twofold need was keenly felt throughout Christendom; that of living more strictly in conformity with the teaching of the Gospel, and that also of infusing the spirit of Christianity into those new forms of life which were springing up, above all into that tendency destined to become the distinguishing characteristic of modern civilization - the tendency to live a life of movement and action. Then God sent Francis." 26.

26. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., The Franciscan Message to the World, p. 5.

CHAPTER II

ST. FRANCIS * HIS CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

Having reviewed the historical setting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we are ready to consider St. Francis himself. In his faith, enthusiasm, and chivalry, Francis was a man of his age. "He lived in a transition period, and he had completely caught the spirit of his age." 1

1. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 5.

But Francis was preserved from the spirit of avarice, independence, and selfishness so characteristic of the age. Pope Pius says of St. Francis in the words of a contemporary biographer, Thomas Celano, and of Dante: "Like the sun he arose, as Dante sings; and Celano agrees with him when he writes: 'He sparkled like a star shining in the depth of night and like the dawn dispersing the darkness.'" 2

2. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis

Abbe LeMonnier says: "I repeat for the hundredth

time Dante's beautiful words: 'Such a life would be much better sung in heaven.'" 3

3. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 25.

Youth of St. Francis

Francis was born in 1182 in Assisi, Italy. His mother, Pica, was of noble birth and his father, Peter Bernardone, was a rich merchant quite engrossed with the riches he had accumulated through a profitable trade. From his early youth Francis assisted his father in the trade to such an extent that his education was quite neglected. He was taught to read and write French and Italian, but no further educational opportunities were given him. Peter Bernardone was, however, proud of Francis' abilities in the business career. He spared neither money nor privileges to encourage Francis to love the trade and to enjoy all luxuries that wealth could offer. That Francis did not become selfish in this environment is most probably greatly due to the noble influence of his mother. Francis, however, loved the pomp and display of his day. He often appeared in public, clad in the finest garments. He could

not find materials rich enough to please him, for he had a secret leaning to all that savored of the display of wealth.

Cf. LeMonnier, Bbe L., op. cit., quoting Celano I, p. 4; pp.32-34.

Abbe LeMonnier described this youth as follows:

"We can easily imagine him as he appeared to his contemporaries, young, active, full of eager emotions and capabilities of enjoyment, ardent and enterprising, and at the same time gracious and gentle in his manners, refined and agreeable towards all men. His was a plastic nature, full of resources and contrasts, that men loved as soon as they knew. It enabled him through all his different phases to retain the faculty of attracting hearts to himself." 4

4. Ibid., p. 41.

His Protestant historian emphasizes how Francis was preserved from any evil influences when he says:

"He was by nature, as a mere lad, gifted with indomitable courage. He had to the end that sweet and deep simplicity and truth which, even when men have it young, is so often blurred and corrupted by the world. In his gayest days of worldly popularity, when 'in the swim' - as we should say - with his light-hearted, thoughtless companions, he was never carried off his feet by it.... In those years of solemn changes, when men pass from childhood to manhood, how often, alas! here is the point of failure.... In his trial - and it is one of the greatest,

especially to one so winning, so fascinating as he was - Francis stood his ground." 5

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5. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
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Natural Qualities

Through liberty in the use of his father's money and his winning disposition Francis won the esteem of his youthful companions in Assisi. He was their leader in their tournaments and public rejoicings. He loved the song and the parade, the cheering of the crowd, much movement and zest, and the sense of leadership. "He dreamed of fame and honors, without any definite idea how fame was to come to him.... The deference paid him now by the city youth was but a foretaste of that which was to come." 6

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6. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Life of St. Francis, p. 7.
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Where many others would have come to a moral shipwreck, Francis assimilated only the cultural elements. All coarseness was foreign to his noble heritage. An obscene word made him silent.

Cf. Ibid., p. 8.

His French biographer says, ".... the qualities which formed the basis of his nature.... are four which appear to us to have characterized him more than the rest - intelligence, sincerity, joy, and courage."⁷

7. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 364.

As the son of a merchant, Francis was well informed of the news of the world. Father Cuthbert says:

"On their journeys, the merchants not only did business; they gathered and distributed the news of the world. They carried political and religious thought from one place to another along the route of their travel, and the news they brought was debated with that intensity which belongs only to the more impassioned moments of life, for at no time have men lived more keenly and with greater zest for the ideas than did the citizens of those mediaeval cities." ⁸

8. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Life of St. Francis, p. 3.

Francis was conversant with all the political and religious movements reflected in his country, but he was not a politician nor a religious disputant. He was no man to find fault. Pessimism, which had long depressed Italy, was foreign to him. He loved the world as it was. If things were not as they

should be, he was more concerned with the joy he found there.

Cf. Ibid., p. 13.

Upon this natural carefree disposition God's grace worked and purified Francis as he advanced in age. Throughout his life he retained the spirit of joy, courtesy, refinement, and chivalry. He always remained a knight-errant and a troubadour, but his worldly ambitions were purified and divinized in the intense love of Christ Crucified. From the worldling he became the Knight of the Cross, a happy Troubadour of God, the Herald of the King. "What Francis adopted from the idea of knighthood was fidelity - joyous, songful fidelity - the service of the Most High Lord and Lady Poverty."⁹

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9. Hammer, Robert, O.F.M., "St. Francis of Assisi as an Educator and His Pedagogical Method", Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting, Franciscan Educational Conference, Vol. XI, (November, 1929, p. 21.
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His Attitude - Toward God

As personality is the integrated total of one's attitudes, one can best appreciate the social

influence of St. Francis by an analysis of his attitudes. The carefree life of his youth was disturbed for a time by a serious and prolonged illness. This was the turning point of his life. At this time he meditated on the weaknesses of human nature and on the perishable things of this world. His fascinations with the world disappeared and Francis became convinced that he had not found the right way of living. Sickness had stifled in him the pride of his youth.

Cf. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 43.

Through these meditations his faith in God increased and the realization of his nothingness made him appreciate the need of a change of attitudes. In his faith in the goodness of God, Francis prayed and trusted. One day as he prayed in a deserted and crumbling Church of San Damiano, God made His will known to him. "And then he felt a marvelous love for the crucified Christ take possession of him, such a love as he had never felt before; and he knew that for the sake of Him, he would willingly perform any service even to the death....His Lord - the

Master of his life and service - was the Crucified, and He had made Himself known in that ruined church;" 10

10. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 32-33.

Once Francis realized that God had a special work for him to perform, he whole-heartedly consecrated himself to His service. As once he dreamed of fame, now he was convinced that no greater fame could come to him than to be in the service of Christ, the King of Kings. In this new service Francis did not know what to do, but he waited for further instructions which he was certain would follow. With this consecration to the service of his King, Francis' attitude towards life changed. His love for his Master was enkindled, and with this love he embraced everything that concerned itself with God. The joy and enthusiasm of his youth returned. No one was ever more in the world and yet not of the world than was Francis after his conversion. Father Cuthbert describes his conversion as follows:

"And that was the singular thing about Francis' turning toward religion: it did not raise a barrier between him and the earth, but the earth itself became transformed in his sight

and gave him a new joy. In earlier days he had regarded it with a certain eager reverence as the scene and circumstances of high chivalry; now he looked upon it with even greater reverence because of this new life revealed in it, and found in it an even greater joy. Such an attitude of mind would hardly have been tolerated by the professional religious reformers who demanded an utter negation of present joy and held out as a reward some distant joy in another world. Instinctively Francis avoided their course: their theories had no relation to the realities into which he had been caught up. Occasionally in moments of acute doubt, he sought advice from the bishop, and came away strengthened and comforted." 11

11. Ibid., p. 31.

His Attitude - Toward The World

Francis loved the world and everything in the world but with a pure and divine love. Father Agostino Gemelli says of him: "Unlike the hermits though, he did not cross himself and stop his ears, as though to keep out the Evil One, when a frog croaked or a nightingale sang, or a flock of sparrows chirped with him. Far from it. He rejoiced to hear them singing like a great chorus,.... and composed out of them his hymn of praise to God." 12

12. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 17.

A Protestant admirer of St. Francis writes:

"A deep, personal, tender, absolute devotion to Jesus Christ and Him crucified was the mark of his life. Hence his generous, tender love for all that the Eternal Word had deigned to think of - the birds, the breezes, the flowers, the sunsets, the dawns: above all man, fallen and redeemed man, in all his misery, in all his opportunity, in all his splendid destiny, man in every rank and place, simply as man, but above all the miserable, the suffering, the poor. Everywhere he saw Jesus Christ and loved Him." 13

13. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 12.

Another writer described the beautiful attitude of Francis towards God's creation as worthy of our imitation in the following passage:

"We may greet the Sun as our Brother, the Moon as our Sister, and the Stars as our little Sisters too. Air and water, sea and clouds, trees and flowers, rivers and mountains, sky and sea, and birds and beasts of every kind, are all to be saluted as belonging to the great communion of life in which we have our fullest being. They thrill with joy and praise as do we. But their praises are to find highest expression on human lips. The pulsings of our hearts are in harmony with the throbbings of the universal life. We are part of that life, and Saint Francis has taught us to link ourselves to the realms of life encircling us, by the sweet words 'Brother' and 'Sister'. We dwell in the bosom of that life, and that life is ever imprinting its messages on our earnest studious minds, is ever teaching the song of its loving praise to our hearts so that they may become more and more attuned to the universal harmony. We, like the Umbrian Saint, may

win the love of birds and of the wild creatures of the woods, and find our joy in lovely communings beneath the canopy where our sisters the stars shine out upon us. We with Saint Francis may share the blessing of being caught up into the embrace of that Universal Love, which though its noblest shrine is the throbbing human heart, has its twinkling altar lights scattered throughout the wide expanses, and amid the heights and depths, of creation."14

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14. Grimley, Horace, St. Francis and His Friends of Today, pp. 269-270.
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Francis realized, as few ever did, that the world was not evil; it was God's creation and all creatures had a definite purpose in God's great universe. He identified all with God Himself and saw God in all.

"He loved the music in the trees when the wind rustled in the leaves and the piping of the birds, and the movement of some animal in the undergrowth: all beasts of earth or air were dear to him.... All these things seemed to him to lie close to the heart of created life and to the land of the creator, and they warmed his own heart and filled him with great reverence." 15

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15. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 55.
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The intense, simple, and childlike love of God led Francis to adopt nothing less than the Word of God, the Gospel, as his rule of life. Christ was

the Way, the Truth, and the Light. He would follow His way - would live His life and carry out literally the Gospel precepts. Where and how was he to find Christ and His Word? Naturally it was in the Church Christ had established for the salvation of mankind. True, the evils in the Church were great in the twelfth century. The clergy were not respected by the people of his generation. Francis looked not for the evils but for the Church he loved. The priest, though human, was the anointed, and Francis respected him as such. He knew and accepted the divine mission of the Church and its authority.

Cf. Little, W.J., op. cit., p. 27.

When on February 24, 1209, Francis attended Mass, he heard the Gospel in which are recorded the instructions of Christ to his Apostles. The words impressed him so much that after Mass he asked the priest to explain more fully the words he had heard. And when he understood what a disciple of Christ should do, he immediately carried it out.

Cf. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Social Action," The Catholic Charities Review, (April, 1927), p. 136.

In his Testament Francis wrote: "The Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the holy Gospel." 16.

16. Ibid., p. 137.

In a carefree but prayerful attitude Francis adopted and carried out the precepts of the Gospel in the service of his Master. Then "identifying his interests with those of Christ," he sought to announce the glad tidings of the Gospel to the troubled world and to teach all, the way of peace and happiness.

Cf. Ibid., p. 137.

His Attitude - Toward Social Evils

Francis fully understood that suffering and disappointments are also a part of man's lot in this life. Christ had suffered. He was the exemplar for all. Suffering, as well as comfort, was to lead men to God, the First Cause and the Ultimate End of man. Few understood better that man's heart was made for happiness in God and that it would not rest until it had found God. In joy and in suffering he daily

fostered the attitude of gratitude to God. "My God and my All" was his most frequent prayer. In his trials and sufferings he sang the "Praises of the Lord" or the "Song of Brother Sun" which he composed and taught his brethren how to sing.

Cf. Grimley, Horace, op. cit., p. 230.

Indeed this would be a better and a happier world if all would learn to be more thankful for the things they enjoy, not only when all goes well but especially when sufferings and disappointments are their lot. These Francis accepted as his due and in these he felt he was most like his Crucified Master. "With his life of fierce self-conquest and suffering he was, to all who came near him, a power of sunny sweetness, of bright and breezy delight, inspiring them to feel the exhilarating joy of being a Christian, the sweetness, the poetry, the comfort, the exaltation of trying truly to follow Jesus Christ." 17

17. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 13.

His Attitude - Toward
The Poor And The Suffering

In imitation of his Master, Francis acquired a

a special love for the poor, the forsaken, and the sick.

"We have seen that in embracing a life of absolute poverty, St. Francis put himself in a position to understand more closely the condition of the poor and to meet them, as it were, upon common ground. This was, of course, only one element that entered in to give Franciscan poverty its social and religious value, but it is the element with which we are most concerned at this time when we turn our attention to an examination of St. Francis' attitude toward the poor,...." 18

18. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 104-105.

The leper, at whose loathsome disfigurement Francis had formerly sickened, he now took to his special care. To overcome his former repulsiveness towards the lepers required conquest of self, but this he accomplished with God's grace. Forcing himself to be kind to the leper, he conquered his feelings and converted them into an ardent love. He loved the poor and the leper, because Christ had shown such love for them. He loved poverty because Christ had chosen poverty in His mode of life. Yes, poverty offered him more joy and peace than the riches and comforts of his father's house. He worked and begged because, says his biographer:

".... in his dependence upon the goodwill of men he found a more intimate sense of God's

Fatherhood and of the encircling bond of kinship which makes all the world a family and for this reason he henceforth regarded the beggar, in his utter dependence, with an immense reverence as one who held in his condition the secret of that active love which gives a man the full freedom of the family of God and makes the wide earth one domestic hearth." 19

19. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 49-50.

The beggars and lepers were the poorest and, therefore nearest and dearest to Christ Crucified, and he would teach them how to suffer for and with Christ. They must be made happy in their suffering. No one understood true happiness as Francis did. "To possess Christ is happiness. Happiness, thank God, does not depend upon conditions. If it did how many would be happy? The possession or privation of good things make life more or less agreeable, but these things are not necessary for happiness. The essence of happiness is the possession of Christ, and no one can deprive us of this infinite treasure." 20

20. Linneweber, Antony, O.F.M., "How Saint Francis of Assisi Won the Heart of the World," Ninth Annual, p. 59.

"Like his Master he entered into closet sympathy with the poor, the miserable, the lost. He brought fresh

hope into lives which were sinking into despair, and brought the sunlight of eternity into one of the darkest and most stormy days of time." 21

21. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 28.

Thus, St. Francis, did all he could to raise and comfort those who had lost their share in the happiness of this world.

His Attitude - Toward Himself

Brother Pacificus asked Francis one day: "What do you think of yourself, my Father?" "I," answered Francis, "I am the last of sinners." Brother Pacificus replied that he could not conscientiously either think or say such a thing. "I do think it," said Francis; "I am convinced that if a rogue had received as much grace as I have, he would be ten times more spiritual than I am." 22

22. LeMonnier, Abbe. L, op. cit., pp. 449-450.

This attitude clearly shows why Francis was always so grateful to his Lord and why he found so much joy in His service. He lost all thought of himself

in his ardent love for Christ. To serve Him and all God's creatures by teaching them to love and praise their maker was his privilege - his mission. In this work he forgot himself, because love of Christ transforms and ennobles all inferior love. He was the humble servant of all - the poor man of Assisi - A Friar Minor. Grimley says of him: "And, because he was very humble, he showed every kindness to all men, conforming himself fittingly to the ways of all." 23

23. Grimley, Horace, op. cit., p. 253.

Francis knew human nature and its weakness. That he would always be master of himself, he was quite severe in his self-denials. No one realized more fully the power of penance and mortification in the sublimation of human nature. Selfishness and egotism crowd out love of God and neighbor while suffering and self-imposed restrictions widen the narrowmindedness and deepen the shallowness of a human heart. Francis was of strong will and knew how to regulate himself as Gamaliel Bradford says of him:

"Evidently Francis was starting the greatest fight in the world, the one that all fundamental reformers have undertaken, the fight against human nature.... Over and over he enjoined upon his disciples that they must

keep the simple principles before them - love, quiet, faithful labor, persistent self-sacrifice, above all the fundamental idea of not wanting, the things of this world, rooting them out of their spirit altogether." 24

24. Bardford, Gamalied, Saints and Sinners, p. 48.

Triumphs Over Self:

Joy In Victory Over Self

By his self-denial Francis strengthened his will and triumphed over his human frailties. His biographers relate many instances of conquests over his natural inclinations. They also relate of the joy he experienced after each triumph of his better self. Before his conversion he reproached himself severely for refusing alms to a beggar. Immediately he recalled the beggar and vowed never to refuse aid to anyone who would ask of him. Shortly after his conversion he yielded to disgust and aversion to meet a leper. To punish himself he turned around, approached the leper, kissed his hand, and gave him alms. To avoid the anger of his father he had hidden himself in a cave for several days. Realizing that this was cowardly, he immediately went to Assisi. Before the Bishop's Court he bravely renounced sonship and made the restitution his father demanded of him. ".... Now I wish to say Our

Father who art in heaven, and not, father Pietro Bernardone," he said before the court.

Cf. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 39-40.

When he was about to repair the crumbling Church of San Damiano, he was forced to beg in Assisi for the material needed in the work. Yielding to a feeling of aversion for begging and trying to avoid the jeering of his former friends, he returned part ways to San Damiano. Again realizing his cowardice he retraced his steps, faced the ridicule heroically and begged what he needed. Once he experienced a great disgust for the food he begged. He constrained himself to eat it, and with joy he found that he even relished it. Later in his life he felt a great desire to change his active life of charity and preaching for a life of prayer and contemplation. He sought advice of his companion priest, Brother Sylvester, and of his friend, Saint Clare. When both advised him that his life should be devoted to the service of others, he gave his preference no further thought. In these and other examples of victory over his nature Francis truly shows his strong character and personality. Having conquered himself, he best fitted himself to

to conquer social evils and to teach men the wisdom and efficacy of penance or self-denial and the way to true peace and happiness. His example is worthy of imitation as one author states aptly:

"The name of Francis has ever been a solemn protest against sensuality; and his life will enable us to learn that lesson, too frequently ignored in our days and country: Moderation in living. This life will teach the people of today that the precious ornaments of a Christian are those which ennoble the soul - not those which pander to the irregular appetites of the body. Consequently, its adornment by the practice of virtue, and not the gratification of the body, should form the lofty object of man's ambition." 25

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25. Chalippe, Candide, O.F.M., Life of St. Francis of Assisi, p. 6.
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Social Leadership Traits

The traits of St. Francis as a social leader are worthy of consideration. From what has been said of his attitudes one can safely conclude that his personality was unique, yet in perfect sympathy and understanding of others. His originality placed him in the center of social attraction. Emory S. Bogardus in his Fundamentals of Social Psychology mentions six traits that constitute for social leadership. Briefly stated they are (1) a measure of self-assertion and aggression by which one feels

that he has something worth while to give to society and gives it. (2) A fine physique is helpful in social leadership. (3) Physical energy and endurance are necessary. (4) Self-confidence is essential, for one must realize that one has the needed skill, though over-confidence is bad as it creates superiority attitudes that are antagonizing. (5) Enthusiasm. (6) One must be noticeably an extrovert - must love to act. Francis possessed all these traits besides the most important one from which the above traits emanate and receive their force of social leadership - namely the forgetfulness of self in the love of God and his fellow-man.

Cf. Bogardus, Emory S., Fundamentals of Social Psychology, Chapter XII.

Gift to Society

Francis felt he had the most worth while thing to give to society - the love of God. Few ever appreciated the goodness of God as did Francis. In his gratitude he desired that all should unite with him in praising God. The message and the art of love of God was what he possessed and desired that all men should have. Father Gemelli says: "Precisely because it was so definite he passed on to

others his conviction of the intrinsic goodness of God." 26

26. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 18.

Fine Physique

Of the second trait as a social leader, biographers speak of Francis' as courteous, gentle, and refined. From their descriptions he possessed a very fine physique. Grimley perhaps exaggerates but describes St. Francis as

"A man most eloquent, cheerful in face, in demeanor benign, free from listlessness, without affectation, of moderate stature, verging towards littleness; head medium-sized and round, face however oblong and prominent, brow smooth and low, eyes neither large nor small, but dark and looking straight out, hair dark, eyebrows straight, nose well formed, delicate, and straight, ears erect but small, temples smooth, tongue peaceful, ardent and eager." 27

27. Grimely, Horace, "St. Francis: The Outward Man," op. cit., p. 253.

Physical Energy And Endurance

Francis did not lack in physical energy and endurance in spite of his austere life. Thus he had the third trait of social leadership. He shunned

idleness as "the devil's workshop" and prescribed labor for all his followers. "Francis never spared the idler who lived at ease on others' gifts.... he was insistent on the moral obligation of labour and the service of one's neighbor." 28

28. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 50.

Father Agostino Gemelli says that St. Francis is a splendid exponent of the Christian doctrine of work. Toil became for him after his conversion an expression of love.

Cf. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 34.

Self-Confidence

The trait of self-confidence, which Emory S. Bogardus states is essential to social leadership, Francis also possessed. It was, however, not confidence in his own ability but in his conviction of the recognized will of God. His self-confidence had its proper source. He was the Knight-errant of the Great King and in His service he would do His will, manifested to him by his conscience and the authority of Christ's representatives. Abbe L. Lemonnier,

quoting Thomas Celano, the contemporary biographer of Francis, says: "Those who have made experience of his magnanimity, know well how free and fearless he was in attitude, how intrepid and sure of himself in his acts, how courageous and full of decision in his contempt for the things of this world." 29

29. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 378.

Yet, Francis was not over-confident. He was ever ready to seek advice and approval of others. Father Agostino says of him: "He was never small-minded in his way of loving either human beings or lower creatures. Feeling that he needed the sanction of the Church to carry out his projects, he went at once to Rome and presented himself to the Pope with the simplicity of a child and the audacity of a leader." 30

30. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 27.

An Enthusiastical Extrovert

The active life of Francis is an illustration that he was an extrovert character and full of enthusiasm. The preceding pages of analysis of his

personality and especially the quotations cited from his biographers prove this. In conclusion the following words of Francis himself will show his humble disposition that so powerfully attracted him to God and to his fellow-men. Abbe L. LeMonnier says of Francis:

"Remembering the word of the apostle: 'Let him who would glory, glory in the Lord', he one day thus beautifully commented upon it to his disciples. 'We must never glory in doing what a sinner can do. A sinner can fast, pray, weep, macerate his flesh, but one thing he cannot do: he cannot be entirely faithful to his Lord. And for us, that is our true subject for glorification, and we may glory in it if we give God the praise due to Him, and if, serving Him faithfully, we ascribe to Him all the gifts He bestows on us.'" 31

31. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 448.

Democratic Leadership Traits

Francis also had all the traits of democratic leadership. The same social psychologist gives five focal points of democratic leadership. They may be briefly stated as follows: (1) a social aim in which the leader considers the welfare of others. (2) In the manner of arriving at his aim the democratic leader will consult others, even his opponents. (3) In carrying out his aim he sets an example and gives indirect suggestions. He is not a dictator but secures cooperation by assuming the initiative

in carrying out his social aim. (4) The democratic leader espouses his cause or principle for its own sake though it cost him his life. He does not expect a reward in form of profits, rank or power. (5) The democratic leader is "at-oneness" with the humbler members of society. He does not "put on airs" but prefers simplicity.

Cf. Bogardus, Emory S. op. cit., pp. 146-150.

His Aim - Welfare Of Others

St. Francis possessed all the qualities of democratic leadership in an outstanding degree. He devoted himself to the service of others. He took the lead of weakness against power, of the oppressed against the privileged. Few had this aim greater at heart than did Francis. His social theories and principles discussed in later chapters will verify this. Leo L. Dubois says of the aim of St. Francis: "His power, was that of a great conviction and a great ideal: the conviction of a divine mission, the ideal of poverty. Francis believed he had seen Our Lord; he had received a mission to reform the world...."³²

32. Dubois, Leo L., Saint Francis of Assisi Social Reformer, p. 112.

Manner Of Arriving At His Aim

The second qualification of a democratic leader deals with the manner of coming to decisions regarding the attainment of the goal. A democratic leader, according to Doctor Bogardus will consult others, those most concerned, authorities, and at times even opponents, before acting. In his decisions he combines the judgment of all. Francis greatly respected established authority. He was not over-confident and sought the sanction of the Church in all his projects. When his first disciples came to follow him he consulted the Gospel as to the manner of life they were to lead.

Cf. LeMonnier, Abbe. L., op. cit., p. 79. also p. 100.

Leo Dubois says, "During all his life, Francis never took any important step in his reform movement without first asking the approval of the Church." 33

33. Dubois, Leo L., op. cit., p. 134.

Manner of Executing His Aim

In Francis, the manner of carrying out his decisions was most democratic. Francis set the example in all his social ideals and activities. He practiced

poverty beyond the manner he expected others to practice it. He labored and preached by example more than by word. The following words of Francis will show his aim as well as his method of teaching by example.

Abbe LeMonnier quotes St. Francis: "'We must,' he said, 'clearly understand our vocation. It is not for our personal salvation only, but for the salvation of a great many others, that God has mercifully called us. He wishes us to go through the world, and by example even more than by words exhort men to repentance and the keeping of the divine commandments'" 34

34. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 86.

Francis rarely commanded. Father Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., says: "Francis aimed at establishing obedience on a basis of mutual affection between the Superiors and their subordinates.... If obedience sprang from a loyal sense of trust he felt it would be carried out with freedom." 35

35. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 28.

Motive Or Purpose Of His Services

The fourth trait of a democratic leader requires the rendering of services without a thought on compensation. Emory S. Bogardus no doubt refers to material compensation. No one ever showed greater disgust for money than St. Francis. In his rule of the members of his First Order he forbade them to accept money for their personal use. That was not impractical at the time as money was not in use as the medium of exchange to the extent it is in our day. He vowed poverty and lived it. His motive of his leadership was purely to serve his Master and his neighbor. W.J. Knox Little brings out the idea of St. Francis regarding his renouncement of compensation when he says: "Self-renunciation in him too, was the most complete imaginable. If riches are power - as they are - still more so, in one sense, is poverty. St. Francis and his companions had given up all." 36.

36. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 145.

Francis was completely detached from every earthly compensation.

At - Oneness

The fifth trait of democratic leadership, is the ability to be "at-oneness" with the humbler members of society. St. Francis is most outstanding for his humility. Thomas a Kempis speaks of him in his imitation as "the humble St. Francis." Like his Master, he became poor so as to enter into closest sympathy with the poor and the miserable. Mandell Creighton says of St. Francis: "Never was there a man more absolutely simple, never was there a man who thought less of self, never was there a man who more carried the overwhelming power of love into everything which he did." 37

37. Creighton, Mandell, Historical Lectures and Addresses, p. 94.

Another writer says:

"The emotional, enthusiastic, and saintly Francis was the idol of the people. He thought like them, spoke like them, acted like them; he was for them the typical Italian, with all the characteristics the spirit, the aspirations of the time. This was naturally a source of power for Francis. Few men of the time possessed sympathetic understanding of the people, combined with energy and influence to equal Francis." 38

38. Dubois, Leo L., op. cit., p. 112.

In his humility he was very patient with weaknesses.

"The secret of his strength, both as regards his preaching and his influence on individuals, lay in his humility, determination and insight into character, in the fact that he came down to the level of his hearers and, touching directly on those interests nearest to their hearts, transformed and guided them Godwards...." says Father Agostino Gemelli. 39

39. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M. op. cit., p. 28.

Further on he says: "Francis understood his disciples, forestalling their needs and calming their fears. He always answered even the least of his friars with spontaneous kindness." 40

40. Ibid., p. 29.

More will be said about the social traits of St. Francis in later chapters when his social theories and principles will be considered in greater detail.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL THEORIES OF THE TWELFTH
AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIESConflicting Theories

To contrast and appreciate the social theories and principles of St. Francis it is necessary to know of the social theories of his age. As it was an age of transition, one can expect conflicting social theories. Emory S. Bogardus says: "The social thought of the Middle Ages was in part an outgrowth of the thought and life of the five centuries which intervened between the Christian Era and the Fall of Rome." 1

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1. Bogardus, Emory S., A History of Social Thought, p. 144.
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The influence of the thirteenth century on social thought is not properly recognized by historians. Doctor James J. Walsh says, ".... there was a mighty wind of the spirit of human progress abroad in that Thirteenth Century, whose effects usually miss proper recognition in history because people fail to group together in their minds all the influences in our modern life that come to us from that precious period." 2

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2. Walsh, James, J., op. cit., p. 5.
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Christian Social Thought And Individualism

By the twelfth century the Christian social thought was still dominant; but because of the political and economic disturbances, the fundamental social concept of love or brotherhood of man was lost sight of. The decline of feudalism created an attitude of mind that led away from the spirit of cooperative living. Radical reformers, such as the Albigensians and the Waldensians formulated theories that led to further social unrest especially for the poverty stricken. The rich upheld the theory of individualism but stripped it of its Christian social traditions. Yet the dignity of the individual was recognized and his rights emphasized to the extent that his obligations were ignored. The conflicts between nobles and their serfs, the constant wars between the feudal lords intensified hatred and made it habitual.

Cf. Bogardus, Emory S. op. cit., p. 144.

The people who had freed themselves of the feudal slavery and had found a new means of livelihood in trade or commerce were obliged to make new adjustments.

Influence Of The Crusades

The Crusaders also had introduced new lines of social thought as they returned from their wars.

"They created an intellectual unrest. They enlarged the horizon of many persons and gave rise to skepticism." 3

3. Ibid., p. 146.

Therefore in this period of transition one can readily see the need of a new social order to bridge over the gaps of maladjustment. Maurice DeWulf say:

"So, turn where we will, the twelfth century is a constructive one; great forces are in the making, though their action is not yet a combined one. The local spirit, which splits France, England, and other countries into small feudal municipalities, and is revealed even in the separate workshops of the artist, appears in every detail of the organized social and religious life." 4

4. DeWulf, Maurice, op. cit., p. 38.

Individualism stripped of Christian principles of charity and justice resulted in a spirit of selfishness and jealousy. The rich became selfish and the poor envious. The Gospel precepts of the social order which Christ had taught were forgotten or were

not learned. Because of the worldliness of the clergy and the neglect of religious teaching, society suffered a general social and moral decline. It was to be the work of St. Francis to reform society by a return to the principles of the Gospel.

Teutonic Influences

Wedded to this type of individualism were the Teutonic ideas of freedom that intensified social unrest to a still greater degree.

"Social thought in the Middle Ages received a considerable stimulus from Teutonic sources. The barbarous Teutons contributed ideas of freedom. They increased the emphasis upon the individual. They were rough, bold exponents of 'personal liberty,' and disregarded mere churchly procedure, social traditions, and some of the finer ideals of life and character. On the other hand, chivalry and knighthood were perhaps of Teutonic origin." 5

5. Bogardus, Emory S., op. cit., p. 146-147.

Before the decline of monasticism and before commerce and trade had received such an impetus, these ideas of freedom were either not widespread or were turned by the Church into forces of social betterment. "Chivalry became a form of social discipline which ruled in the latter part of the Middle Ages. It softened

manners and became the sponsor for virtue." 6

6. Ibid., p. 147.

That morals did not decline further and that faith was still kept alive was greatly due to the earlier influence of the Benedictine monasteries. Its influence in the thirteenth century was lost because of its own decline and because of its isolated locations. Fewer people were in touch with them.

Cf. See Chapter II concerning the decline of monastic influence.

Individualism, which became the chief social thought in later centuries, had in this type of society a fertile field for development. Society needed some one to save it from self-destruction in the mire of selfishness and strife.

Social Maladjustment

The idea that this world was made for man's enjoyment, for personal liberty, and for self-gratification was dominating man's social relationship. The true purpose of man's existence was lost sight of in the new interests of life both for the rich and the poor. Civilization was progressing in new physical and economic developments but lagging behind in

social adjustments. Many peasants and serfs who had freed themselves from the bondage of feudalism were lost in their freedom. Feudal lords clung tenaciously to the feudal institution that was worn out but was necessary to the protection of their power vested in estates. Society was favored with comforts and luxuries introduced into Europe through the Crusaders but it knew not how to use them to advantage. New means of livelihood were made possible through trade and commerce. This gave rise to urban settlements that resulted in social problems - not as complex as those of today - but nevertheless they were great problems to society of the age. Physical and material civilization progressed, but cultural advancement was retarded by wars, ignorance, avarice, and disregard of religion. The poverty stricken, the sick, especially the lepers who constituted a serious social problem, were left to struggle as best they could. There were few religious organizations, still fewer social organizations, and not any political agencies interested in their welfare.

Rise of Scholasticism

The twelfth century preceeded the days of St. Thomas and Dante, who defined the duties and rights of

citizens and the obligations and jurisdictions of the Church and State. "In the history of social thought, this period (800 to 1321) is notable chiefly for two developments, which stand in an antithetical but reciprocal relation to each other: the perfection of the Scholastic philosophy, which included a general theory of government; and the development of the anti-papal conception of the independence of civil governments from the Church." 7

7. House, F.N., The Development of Sociology, p. 30.

Aristotle's social theories were preserved in the libraries of universities and monasteries. Since they were of pagan origin, their worth was not appreciated until the universities of Europe had expounded them. Father Berard, O.F.M. says:

"It was, in fact, the Franciscans, both at Paris and at Oxford, who first introduced the new doctrines of Aristotle into their speculative treatment of theology. It is well known that Alexander of Hales (a Franciscan) at Paris represents the first successful attempt to apply the philosophy of Aristotle to theology and to render it fruitful for theological speculations." 8

8. Vogt, Berard, O.F.M., "Origin and Development of the Franciscan School," Franciscan Studies, (August, 1925), p. 9.

St. Thomas Aquinas, later a student of Alexander of Hales, adapted the theories of Aristotle for social and political use.

"Accepting Aristotle's assertion that man is a political animal but adding to 'political' the words 'and social,' he finds in this proposition a point of departure for his rather complex theory of law. That man is by nature formed for social life and cannot realize his nature outside society is restated by Thomas to mean that society rests on natural law, i.e., on the laws of nature, approximately in the sense in which we now refer to gravitation as a 'law of nature.' For its development, however, society requires human law, the law imposed by a government. Human law, in turn, is supplemented by divine law, which is given to men by revelation and preserved by the church." 9

9. House, F.N., op. cit., p. 31.

Father Berard, O.F.M. also says of Scholastic Philosophy: "It is, in large measure, the adaptation and development, under the guidance of Christian principles, of the philosophical doctrines of Plato and Aristotle." 10

10. Vogt, Berard, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 6.

But before St. Thomas' time, in the days of St. Francis, social maladjustment was marked and social problems were multiplying. If society was to be reformed, individuals needed to return to a more Chris-

tian attitude of mind. Society can be reformed only when individuals accept attitudes that are social and constructive. Reconstruction of society on the basis of the Golden Rule was possible only by a change in personal attitudes. This was the message of reform St. Francis came to preach by word and more so by example. The social thought which had been lost but was revived by St. Francis is well expressed by Maurice DeWulf:

"An immutable and eternal relation exists between God and human nature; and man, in recognizing the bonds which attach him to God, knows by this very act in what way he must direct his conduct to reach God. Family life, cooperation of the individual in the social group, natural religion are means which aid the ascent of the human soul toward the Infinite. For the philosopher of the thirteenth century life is worth living, and all humanity moves forward toward happiness.

Thus at once, the meaning of individual ethics and social philosophy changes. Life becomes a pilgrimage (via) toward our true fatherland (patria); duty done through the love of Christ takes on a higher value; the purely human ideal vanishes before the ideal of the 'Beatitudes' and the 'Sermon on the Mount'; social life is illuminated by the love of the other souls redeemed by Christ. Art itself becomes a symbol of the divine, and for Francis of Assisi, for Giotto, for the master builders of cathedrals, as well as for Dante, it appears as a way which leads the living generations towards heavenly immortality." 11.

11. DeWulf, Maurice, Medieval Philosophy, pp. 150-151.

Universal Society - Unity of Church and State

Much of social unrest was due to the conflict between the Church and State - between the papacy and the emperors.

Cf. See Chapter II.

The two powers were not independent of each other. The supremacy of the Church even in temporal affairs was recognized though the conflict was becoming more intense. During the reign of Innocent III the temporal power of the papacy was at its height. Social thought recognized the temporal power of the Popes over kings. F.J.C. Hearnshaw says: "The note of all mediaeval thought is its universalism. It assumes the existence of a single universal society, which, on its lay side, is the inheritance and continuation of the ancient Roman Empire; and, on its ecclesiastical side, the incarnation of Christ in a visible Church. The same society....is thus at once an Empire and a Church." 12

12. Hearnshaw, F.J.C., The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Mediaeval Thinkers, p. 12.

But the State was subordinated to the Church. The sovereign Pope had spiritual power that could inter-

fere in things temporal. The State was under Papal control. A person, king or peasant, excommunicated by the authorities of the Church lost all legal and political rights. This mode of thought survived the Middle Ages and was in operation until the seventeenth century. James J. Lichtenberger says:

"In the earlier period when the Roman Emperor was the recognized head of both Church and State it was tacitly assumed that the Church had a legitimate sphere of authority over moral delinquencies. In the later period when the Church began to claim a spiritual supremacy even over political rulers it was conceded that there was a genuine political function to be performed by the State.

In the absence of any clear or generally accepted division of function it was inevitable that conflicts should arise which would involve the question of ultimate authority." 13

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13. Lichtenberger, James J., Development of Social Theory, pp. 105-106.
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Yet already in the twelfth century the State was struggling for independence of spiritual control. In this the thirteenth century was also a period of transition. It was St. Thomas Aquinas who later defined the powers and duties of each.

Cf. Jarret, Bede, O.P., Social Theories of the Middle Ages, p. 217.

Dante was more enthusiastic about the surrender of the temporal interests of the Papacy. Father Bede Jarret says of Dante:

"He urged on the Papacy the surrender of all its temporal ambitions, of all its powers, of all its territorial possessions. As he saw it, its future lay along spiritual lines only, a dominating moral force, teaching, reproving, inspiring the kings and peoples of the West, reaching out to the East in its influence, converting Palestine as well as Constantinople, gathering into one the forces that make for righteousness - a vision splendid not yet to be." 14

14. Ibid., p. 235.

Many new social ideas had their origin in the Middle Ages, but a few new ones were developed in the twelfth and in the early part of the thirteenth centuries. These centuries of unrest and transition, the prevalent illiteracy of the masses, the wide-spread poverty and disease, did not conduce to new types of social thought. The social thought of earlier epochs, however, was preserved and constituted the foundation for the renaissance of social thought that began with Alexander of Hales and climaxed in St. Thomas Aquinas. "The struggle of kings and vassals, the communes, the establishment of citizenship, the freedom of the serfs" - all these social changes indicate that the Middle

Ages possessed elements of dynamic social thinking. 15

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15. Bogardus, E.S., op. cit., p. 152. - Prof. Bogardus quotes M. DeWulf, Philosophy and Civilization in the Middle Ages, p. 60.
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As social thought and theory reflect the conditions of the times, we may in summary of this brief consideration of social theories in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries conclude with Father Victor Mills, O.F.M.:

"The services rendered by the Franciscan Order in adjusting the far-reaching inequalities in the social life of the Middle Ages have long been recognized by historians both secular and ecclesiastic. Francis of Assisi appeared at a time when the world was undergoing a social and economic revolution of proportions never reached before nor since. A tremendous and sudden increase in commerce and industry, the rapid growth of cities and the decline of knighthood, all resulting in an unprecedented increase of the proleteriat - the Minores - generated social and economic problems with which the world of that day was ill able to cope." 16.

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16. "Social Activities in the Franciscan Order", The Franciscan Educational Conference, Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, Vol. XVI, (November, 1934), p. 1.
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Doctor Walsh agrees with Father Victor, O.F.M. when he stresses the influence of St. Francis on the thirteenth century. Doctor Walsh says, "There is no man

who lived in the Thirteenth Century who influenced the better side of men more in all the succeeding ages down to and including our own time, than the poor little man of God of Assisi." 17

17. Walsh, James J. op. cit., p. 266.

With this historical situation in mind the social theories and principles whereby St. Francis reformed society will be treated in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL THEORIES, PRINCIPLES
AND METHODS OF ST. FRANCISTheory of Social Values Based on Man's
Purpose on Earth

After his conversion Francis realized and appreciated more and more the noble purpose of man's life on earth. His sympathy was aroused for those who did not realize this purpose. In his realizations he had found such great peace and happiness that he pitied all who were ignorant of it. His kind and generous nature prompted him to have all share this great privilege with him. He would teach all men the Goodness and Mercy of God. Francis saw how men were seeking for happiness in riches, in pleasures, in honors, and in temporal power. He saw how discontented they were and how their aim led them to anti-social living. He saw the poor dissatisfied with their lot, living an idle life, envious of the rich and their hearts embittered with hatred. He saw and realized the evil effects this general attitude had upon society. God had enlightened him to a better way of living - a way of peace and happiness. By his example and by his teaching Francis would convince the world

that happiness does not consist in possessing riches or honors or power, that by being poor one could also be truly happy. Society needed a lesson on the true social values of labor, of suffering, of self-sacrifice, of consideration for one's neighbor. Society needed to be taught of the power of good in self-restraint by doing good deeds to others and in recognizing God's liberality. It needed to be taught that in these there is a far greater source of happiness - that these too have social values. Francis himself once had lived in riches, honors, and pleasures, but he renounced them in order to find true peace and happiness. He did not need to formulate new social theories in order to bring about a social reform. His interest was in the hearts and souls of individuals who were blind and ignorant of true values in life and its purpose. He was interested in alleviating the lot of those who found life a burden because they did not know how to live rightly. His aim is well expressed by Father Victor Mills, O.F.M.,:

"Neither Francis nor his followers felt themselves immediately called to assume the role of social saviors by advancing new theories on class relationship, capital and labor, private property or the numerous other existing difficulties which today we classify as social problems. They were, however, intimately concerned with the application of Christian principles to every walk of every day life. They realized that a sound Christian philosophy of life was the only salvation for all classes and conditions of men, and without primarily intending

to do so, they reintroduced a social and economic system on the basis established by Christ Himself. Francis, like every thinking Christian of whatsoever age, saw in the principles of Christianity the sole solution of social problems. Hence the Franciscans' first service consisted merely in teaching a forgetful world how the simple principles of the Gospel were to be applied. They merely analyzed existing social and economic difficulties in the light of Christ's teaching and judged them accordingly. The Franciscan Reform, as the movement inaugurated by Francis came to be known, succeeded as a thorough-going social reform chiefly because it was not interested in a superficial healing of social ills, but because it called attention to the underlying causes - the moral evils of the day: pride, avarice, lust and a vain dissatisfaction with one's state in life." 1

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1. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., "Social Activities in the Franciscan Order", Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, Franciscan Educational Conference, (June 28-30, 1934), pp. 1-2.
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Theory Of Individual Reform

The outstanding social theory of St. Francis was therefore the reform of each individual. Society would be reformed as a natural consequence. He recognized that the laws God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai were as essential to social justice, to peace, and to happiness as they were in the time of Moses. Christ, greater than any social reformer and the Author of all sound social theories taught men how to observe these laws. The love of God and of one's neighbor by each individual were and always will be the funda-

mental laws of social progress. Social thought cannot be divorced from moral law. This thought is stated by Father Sylvester Brielmaier, O.M.Cap.

"Of what avail is it to discourse on so-called social values, 'social duties,' 'social consciousness,' and 'social righteousness,' if these terms are allowed to remain in the abstract, and are not narrowed down to specific duties of individual consciences." 2

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2. "Moral Theology and Sociology," The Franciscan Educational Conference, Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, (November, 1934), p. 58.
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Then he quotes this same thought expressed by Mr. Thomas Woodlock at the First National Conference of Catholic Charities when he spoke of "The Development of the Social Conscience." Father Sylvester quotes Mr. Woodlock:

"There is no social righteousness other than and apart from individual righteousness, and there can be no social conscience as such other than that which results from individual consciences functioning upon social matters. In talking of the social conscience we mean not even this union of individual consciences, but merely the individual conscience of each one of us considering and judging of social affairs and making clear to each of us our duties arising out of our positions in human society. And in discussing the Development of the Social Conscience consideration is to be given to the individual Catholic's viewpoint

and attitude on the great social questions of the day." 3

3. Ibid., p. 58.

To remedy social ills it is therefore necessary to find the cause in the individuals who make up society. "Every genuine reformation must start with reformation of the individuals." 4

4. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., The Third Order of St. Francis, p. 69.

God, the creator of man, laid down the laws of right living in his commandments and man must live according to these laws if he wishes to attain the purpose of his life on earth. If men swerve from the observance of these laws, society suffers. Father Cyprian Emanuel, O.F.M. says:

"Coming, then, to more concrete terms, we can say that generally speaking, the more faithfully men observe the Commandments of God, the nearer do they approach the state of individual and social well-being intended by God in creation; and the more neglectful they become in this regard, the deeper do they sink into individual and social misery. Here we have at once the fertile source of social ills and the root to which the remedy must be applied.

The need of social reform implies, therefore that men have swerved from the path of the Commandments. Hence, if social regeneration is to be permanently and adequately effective, it must, as its first step, lead people to a prac-

tical realization of the far-reaching influence of these basic principles of morality on all the problems of human existence." 5

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5. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "Saint Francis and Social Action - The Secret of His Effectiveness," The Catholic Charities Review, (January, 1927), p. 17.
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The Dignity Of Human Personality

Francis recognized and respected the dignity of human personality in his aim to reform. In the light of Christ's love for fallen man Francis loved all - the rich and the poor, the rulers and the oppressed, the infidels and heretics, and above all the sick and lepers. In each he saw their better nature and had faith in their possibilities for good. He sought to awaken a sense of personal responsibility in their obligations towards God, their neighbor, and themselves. He was convinced that they were all men of good intentions though they were enslaved by false principles and selfish desires. Francis frequently admonished his followers not to believe evil of others. This principle was a powerful force of social influence on all with whom he came in contact. Father Cuthbert remarks of this power of influence when he says of Franciscans in general:

"Yet another effect of Franciscan

simplicity was the common tendency of the friars 'not to believe evil of others'; they more easily credited men with virtue or at least with good intentions: and this perhaps was in no small degree accountable for their peculiar influence for good. A man must be utterly demoralized if he is not strengthened or shamed by another's faith in his uprightness." 6

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6. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 68.
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Francis, in his Testament, speaks of his respect for the lepers.

"When I was in the bondage of sin it was bitter to me and loathsome to me to look upon persons infected with leprosy; but that blessed Lord brought me among them, and I did mercy to them; and I departed from them, what before seemed bitter and loathsome was turned and changed to me into great sweetness and comfort of body and soul" 7

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7. Quoted by W.J. Knox Little, op. cit., p. 103, from the "Testamentum Sancti Francisci."
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By respecting human personality Francis could appreciate each person's attitude of mind. "And it may be remarked in passing that in his appreciation of the value of a contact which rested upon common interest, St. Francis again proved himself to be possessed of that peculiar sense which makes for the ideal caseworker." 8

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8. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 62.
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Again the same author says: "Francis' own assumption of poverty and the obligation he imposed upon himself to beg his daily bread, gave him an understanding of the dependent and a sympathy toward them which had vital bearing on the social reform he was to effect." 9

9. Ibid., p. 33.

Francis, as a social case worker, took a human personality as he found it and tried to bring out of it its better self. This method is especially noticeable in his treatment and reform of the robbers who were hiding in the woods near where Francis and his brethren abode. The brethren asked Francis if it were advisable to give alms to the robbers. Francis answered:

"If ye will do as I shall tell you I trust in the Lord that ye shall win their souls. Go ye therefore and procure food, bread and good wine, and carry the same to them in the wood where they dwell, and cry out saying: 'Brother robbers, come to us, for we are brethren and are bringing you good bread and good wine!'

"They will come at once. Then do ye spread a napkin on the ground, and upon it place the bread and wine and serve the same humbly and cheerfully until they shall have eaten. But after the meal do ye talk to them of the Word of God, and do ye put to them at last for the love of God this first petition that forsooth they promise you that they will not murder or do harm to the person of anyone. For if ye shall ask anything at once they will not listen to you; but such they will at

once promise you because of your humility and charity." 10

10. Grimley, Horace, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

Paul Martin, in another passage, speaks of Francis as a social case worker when he says: "An examination of the case work method of St. Francis reveals him effecting for the adjustments of personality individual by individual, for he placed himself in the exact position of the unfortunates he would help, thus bringing about an attunement between them and himself which was most favorable for concrete results." 11

11. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 39.

Another method Francis used in his individual reform was his effort to prevent evils. Abbe LeMonnier says of him: "There were these vices against which he never ceased uplifting his voice. He did not select them by chance; they are those which, by their contagion, most profoundly trouble the life of a community - idleness, detraction, and bad example." 12

12. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 411.

Theory Of Brotherhood Of Man

In the reform of the individual Francis sought to consecrate every individual to the common good. This he aimed to accomplish by the revival of the Christian Social Theory of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Francis discovered this theory in his study and intimate love for Christ Crucified. Christ had taught this theory and practiced it. "Francis was quick to grasp the full meaning of this truth. All men became his brothers and he must needs spend himself in bringing them to the acknowledgment of God's common fatherhood through his apostolate." 13

13. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Social Action", The Catholic Charities Review, (February 1927), p. 47.

Francis was greatly concerned with the sufferings of Christ - that Christ shall not have suffered in vain for any human soul. To His cause Francis consecrated himself as the Knight of the Cross and with Christ he resolved to labor and to suffer in order to win all souls to peace on earth and to eternal happiness in the next. Man was to reach this end by loving God above all earthly goods and honors and by loving his

neighbor as himself. This principle was the elimination of selfishness that was disturbing the social order of his age. W.J. Knox Little, a Protestant writer says:

"When men talk of the 'Age of Faith' they forget the deepening and spreading infidelity in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.... The movement of St. Francis was a strong blow struck for the Christian religion. The great feudal nobles, the men of the town as well as the suffering poor, wakened up to feel that the Christianity which produced such a life and such teaching, was still the religion by which men might well live and die." 14

14. Little, W.J.Knox, op. cit., p. 9.

That the teaching of St. Francis effected a consideration of the common good was also expressed by Pope Pius XI when he said: "For such was the corrective influence which he exercised on all thing human that, besides widely restoring faith and morals, his principles of evangelical charity and justice found their way even more deeply into the readjustment of the so-called social life." 15

15. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis.

Another writer states the all-embracing charity taught by St. Francis as follows:

"It was through an all comprehensive charity that Francis saw the means, not only of imparting hope to those who needed it most, but likewise of softening the hard hearts of those to whom wealth and position had been entrusted, yet who had abused both because of their greed and avarice. He sought to level the various classes of society in the common love of Christ, whatever might be their rank in life; and to break down the barriers that caused human brotherhood to disappear back from the philosophy of life; to bring Christians to that happy state of which Tertullian speaks when he describes the communities of interests that prevailed during the first century or as after apostolic times." 16

16. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 59.

Pope Leo XIII, recognizing the application of the Christian social theory of the brotherhood of man, says of St. Francis:

"His great charity embraced all men. Yet the needy and the downtrodden were especially dear to him. Indeed, he seemed to delight in occupying himself with those from whom others commonly fled or daintly kept aloof. In this way he did much to promote that universal brotherhood, the perfect ideal of which Christ restored to the world, molding the human race into one great family under the common fatherhood of God." 17

17. Auspicato.

The Gospel Precepts

In the precepts of the Gospel Francis found the

precise way in which the Christian social theory of the brotherhood of man was to be carried out. For himself and for his followers he adopted literally the words of Christ in the Gospel and made them the rule of his life. He recognized in the Gospel precepts the most effective principles to guide individual and social reform. An explanation of the Gospel as a means of social reform is eloquently stated by Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., as follows:

"It is to be held as undeniable that Christ did not aim exclusively at the sanctification of the individual, but that the Holy Gospel contains the most powerful and fruitful social message ever given to mankind; whilst on the other hand a definite social programme is not to be sought for in the Gospel. The teaching of Our Lord on the social question was not of a systematic kind: rather we might call it fragmentary and incidental; but by comparing and piecing together the various heads of his doctrine regarding social matters, all the true elements of every genuine social reform are to be found. Christ was primarily not a social reformer but a revealer of the Divine Truth, and it is this very fact that gives to his entire teaching a character of universality, and makes it applicable not only to the social conditions prevailing in his own time but to those of every age. As it is happily remarked: 'Centuries will follow centuries: men will disappear and make room for others; but the Sermon on the Mount will always be of the same social value.'" 18

18. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 68.

That Francis recognized in the Gospel the prin-

ciples of social reform through the reform of the individual is explained by Father Cyprian in the following quotation:

"Thus the entire reform movement inaugurated by St. Francis assumed its character and individuality from the Gospel. Having adopted Christ's point of view and having made Christ's interests his own, his sole aim was to lead all classes of Christian society back to Christ through Christ's own medium - the Gospel in all its purity. The Friars were destined to be leaders in the movement, not only by their preaching of the Gospel, but more so by living it themselves in the fullness of its perfection." 19

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19. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Social Action," The Catholic Charities Review, (April, 1927), p. 138.
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How St. Francis applied these Gospel principles to the every day life of the people will be treated of in the chapter dealing with the Third Order. "The rebirth of the Gospel and the primitive Church is the great achievement of St. Francis," says the same writer quoted above." 20

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20. Ibid., p. 138.
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Father Agostino Gemelli says: "The religious movement started by St. Francis and guided by him into the channels of his three different Orders answered

the two great needs of his age: a return to Gospel standards of life and a Christian revaluation of action." 21

21. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 43.

Another Franciscan writer of Francis and his followers says: "It was through them that the Lord recalled the faithful to a more Christian understanding of the Gospel and a more serious and practical acceptance of the Gospel as a norm of daily life." 22

22 Hoffman, Victorine, O.F.M., "Franciscan Preaching in the Past," Report of the Ninth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conferences, (September, 1927), p. 137.

The Theory Of Poverty

That the spirit of poverty would bring blessings of peace upon society was the second social theory of St. Francis. In it he saw a powerful force of individual reform and of social reconstruction. Through the spirit of poverty the upper class of people would be liberated from the bondage of selfishness, restless anxiety, and greed. They would taste of the joy in giving, of the compensation for kind service rendered, of the peace as a result of rightful use of

their possessions. By the spirit of poverty the status of the poor would be raised from the degradation of pauperism and squalid poverty to the dignity of social beings. Both, the rich and the poor, would come to realize that their purpose in life is a nobler one than the striving for earthly goods- that attachment to them destroys peace and happiness. They would come to realize that worldly possessions, pleasures, and powers satisfy the animal man but do not raise the dignity of his superior nature. They would find that the reward of poverty is liberty, justice and charity - truly a worthy recompense.

Few understand the spirit of poverty as St. Francis understood it. Many have a misconception of its true meaning and fewer of its application. Father Agostino Gemelli, a convert from materialism and Marxism, recognized the meaning of the spirit of poverty of St. Francis when he said:

"It did not spring from an idea that the things of this world are of no account. It did not imply contempt for earthly things, so as to be able more easily to cast them aside. Nor did it involve a shunning of human intercourse in fear and disgust.... Franciscan spirit of renunciation is an entirely different thing. St. Francis did not deny that life is beautiful, for that would have implied as slight on its Author. Nor did he not renounce love. But what he did condemn was possessing and the desire

to possess.... Emptied of this acquisitive instinct, what still remains of love? A feeling of admiration, or of pity, and a wish to be of service.... He forged a new ideal of liberty and happiness precisely out of that condition of apparent dependency on the good will of others, of inferiority and humiliation chosen by Christ as his lot on this earth and viewed by worldlings only with contempt." 23

23. Gemellie, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 23-24.

Does dependency on the good will of others imply a social evil or a condition to be removed from society? Francis did not think so. To him it meant a social force that would create a community spirit and would foster a mutual understanding. In it he realized the dependence of man on Divine Providence and a demonstration of brotherly love. Man is really more dependent on the good will of others than he is willing to admit. If he would recognize this fact, he would appreciate dependency more and accept it for its social value. It would be an antidote against the anti-social attitude "I am not my brother's keeper," prevalent today as in the days of St. Francis. Father Cuthbert describes the attitude of St. Francis as follows:

"But in his dependence upon the good will of men he found a more intimate sense of God's Fatherhood and of the encircling bond of kinship which makes all the world a family; and for this reason he henceforth regarded the beggar, in his utter dependence, with an immense reverence as one who held in his condition the secret

active love which gives a man the full freedom of the family of God, makes the wide earth one domestic hearth.... Moreover it must be remembered that Francis' willingness to receive from others was indissolubly wedded to a readiness to give - a combination not always linked together.... Francis never spared the idler who lived at ease on other's gifts.... he was insistent on the moral obligation of labor and the service of one's neighbor.... Only whilst he gives his own service he will bargain for no wage but be wholly dependent upon his neighbour's good will and God's over-ruling providence." 24

24. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 50-51.

In another treatise on St. Francis the same author says: "Franciscan poverty has proved itself in history as an effective protest against the world's avarice and absorption in material gains; and it undoubtedly lays claim to serious considerations by Christian economists, in so far as it asserts that human fellow-ship which is implied in the Catholic conception of the Fatherhood of God." 25.

25. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 17.

As the thirteenth century was an age of faith, the people quite readily grasped the meaning of poverty as taught by St. Francis. A Protestant writer who

aimed to portray St. Francis in his proper historical setting says of the attitude of the people toward the new theory of the blessings of poverty:

"For the common people, who feel and understand without reasoning, the life of Francis had two meanings. It proclaimed that property was not the sole good, nor, indeed, one of the most important; that he who had it was not necessarily unhappy. There are good things that cannot be appropriated, that can be distributed without risk of using them up, more precious than gold and more valuable than any property; air, sun, green fields, love of one's fellows, and faith in God. All this had been said and written for a long time and by many people: now it was being put into practice and could be seen by everybody. And the life of Francis also proclaimed that God did not exist only in churches and convents. He was found among men who loved each other as brothers, in the smile of nature around them, in every pure heart and untroubled mind." 26.

26. Salvatorelli, Luigi, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-144.

On the meaning of the spirit of penance through the spirit of poverty to the rich, the same author says:

"The change of life invoked by Brother Francis, the 'penance' of which he spoke, could mean to the poor man of the city and the labourer in the fields (whose lives were already a penance in themselves, in the common meaning of the word) only the resigned or glad acceptance of their daily burden. It was the rich and greedy merchants, the luxuries and the tyrannical nobles - it was they, above all, who had to change their lives; to restore their ill-gotten gain, to abstain from usury and oppression, and to become reconciled to their rivals and their enemies.... And in them too the preaching of Francis found an echo; indeed, the first apos-

tles of the revived Christian life came from these higher social levels." 27

27. Ibid., p. 103.

That the spirit of poverty is not anti-social but is a source of peace and contentment, many do not appreciate or they fail to understand. This is stated very explicitly by another writer as follows:

"There is a poverty from which joyousness has no need to be banished. Such poverty can speak of itself as endowed with the wealth of contentment. It is the poverty which has found itself in sweet alliance with simplicity, 'My riches consist in the fewness of my wants' are words that have often found utterance on the lips of lovers of simplicity. They might well have been spoken by the Umbrian Saint. The teaching enshrined in the words may ever be proclaimed by every one upon whom something of the spirit and power of Saint Francis have descended." 28

28. Grimley, Horatio, op. cit., p. 269.

St. Francis' own words on poverty verify that the above authors understood his love and appreciation of poverty rightly. Poverty was his ideal and Francis regarded it as the basis of his perfection. The more he could detach himself from the love of earthly cares and possessions, the closer he knew

he was arriving at perfection of his better self. When he first came to realize the advantage of poverty and was one day seriously absorbed in meditation, his companions asked him the object of his dreaming - whether he was thinking of taking to himself a bride. Francis answered them, "Ah, yes, truly! I was thinking of taking a Bride, one more noble and wealthy and beautiful than you have ever seen." 29

29. Fedler, Hilarin, O.M.Cap., The Ideals of St. Francis, p. 76.

After Francis chose the Gospel as his rule of life, his regard for Poverty increased and he sought to follow it as literally stated in the Gospels.

Father Fedler quotes Thomas Celano, saying:

"Then it happened that one day - it was the 24th of February 1209 (1208) - he heard at Portiuncula the Gospel of the Mass describing the sending of the apostles: 'And going, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils; freely have you received, freely give. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff....' These words sounded in his ears like a new revelation. 'That is what I seek, what I desire with all my heart!' he exclaimed joyfully, cast away staff and shoes, exchanged the leather girdle for a rope,

and fashioned a garment for himself out of coarse material." 30

30. Ibid., p. 79.

Father Cuthbert quotes St. Francis in a little sermon he gave to his brethren on the treasures of poverty as follows:

"And this is what I call a great treasure, that there is nothing here provided by human industry, but everything is provided by Divine Providence, as we may see manifestly in this bread which we have begged, and this stone which serves so beautifully for our table, and in this clear fountain; and therefore I desire that we should pray to God, that he would cause holy Poverty which is a thing so noble that God Himself was made subject to it, to be loved by us with our whole heart.'" 31

31. Cuthbert, Father, Op. cit., p. 248.

Poverty And Liberty

Poverty, as it is most commonly understood, is a social evil - a condition that ensnares one like a spider in the web of mere existence. It is regarded as a detriment to social progress, and evil conditions that enslave mankind mentally and socially. To it is attributed crime and social disorder. It means a restraint to all freedom of social and

cultural development. To Francis poverty was a liberator - a means for the removal of all anti-social condition commonly attributed to poverty. With the spirit of poverty Francis would remove all injustice, crime, envy, and discontent from society. With its general observance social justice would prevail which in turn would bring about the use of material goods as intended by the Author of Nature. It would free man from the animal tendency to seek only to satisfy his sensual appetites or instincts to the detriment of neglecting his better self. It would make him God-like. With social justice and charity man would be free to pursue his nobler purpose in life for he would not be fettered down with worries and cares that are not the result of the spirit of poverty but of injustice in the rightful use of one's possessions. A rightful use of material goods would promote the Christian brotherhood of man. Father Cuthbert says of poverty as Francis regarded it: "No better definition of the poverty loved by St. Francis has yet been given than that sung by Fra Jacopone da Todi: - 'Poverty is in having nothing and in desiring nothing, yet in possessing all things in the spirit of liberty.'" 32

32. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., The Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 1

In the words of Francis himself we note the same idea of liberty in poverty. When Francis had drawn up his rule of life for himself and his followers and sought ecclesiastical approval of it, he was counseled by the Bishop to reconsider this mode of life. To the Bishop it seemed hardly prudent to renounce all ownership. Francis answered unhesitatingly. Dr. Little quotes St. Francis:

"'My Lord,' he replied, 'if we keep property we shall need arms to defend ourselves and we shall be continually involved in litigation and feud; and this will oftentimes prevent us from loving God and our neighbor: therefore do we desire to possess no temporal goods in this world.'.... Francis therefore returned to his waiting brethren, with his liberty intact and with the bishop's blessing if not with his unreserved approval." 33

33. Little, W.J. Knox., op. cit., pp. 75-76.

To Francis, therefore, poverty guaranteed him the greatest opportunity of freedom to devote his entire life to the service of God and his fellow men.

Father Antony Linneweber, O.F.M., says of him: "In the eyes of our saint, poverty was not a cruel robber who deprived him of everything he had and left him penniless and despondent; but a fair lady who led him into a promised land of perfect freedom." Then

he quotes G.K. Chesterton, a great admirer of St. Francis, in the following poetic passage:

"He was as free as the wind, he was almost wildly free in relation to that world around him. The whole idea of St. Francis was that the Little Brothers should be like little fishes who could go freely in and out of that net. They could do so precisely because they were small fishes and in that sense, even slippery fishes. There was nothing that the world could hold them by; for world catches us mostly by fringes of our garments, the futile externals of our lives. One of the Franciscans says later, 'A Friar should own nothing but his harp' meaning, I suppose, that he should value nothing but his song, the song with which it was his business as a minstrel to serenade every castle and cottage, the song of the joy of the Creator in His creation and the beauty of the brotherhood of man. In imagining the life of this sort of visionary vagabond, we may already get a glimpse also of the practical side of that asceticism which puzzles those who think themselves practical." 34

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34. Linneweber, Antony, O.F.M., "Asceticism and Mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi," Report of the Eighth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1926), pp. 44-45. The quotation of G.K. Chesterton is taken from his book, St. Francis of Assisi, pp. 150-151.
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Poverty And Common Sense

Many writers speak of the Romanticism of St. Francis and of his poetic ideals regarding poverty. Yet Francis was actually very practical. He did not lose his common sense when teaching the spirit

of poverty to others. With unspeakable gratitude and with song he praised God for His bountiful care of His creatures. He made use of whatever he needed - and gave thanks. Though he was sometimes too severe with himself in his bodily deprivations he did not advise others to any extreme tortures. He was in secret severe with himself but very kind and considerate for the needs of his brethren. In fact he confessed his fault of having been too severe with himself. Father Hilarin, referring this statement to the writings of The Three Companions of St. Francis says: "On the very day of his death he believed himself bound to an apology and confessed candidly that he had sinned greatly against Brother Body." 35

35. Fedler, Hilarin, O.M.Cap., op. cit., p.219.

But Francis appreciated and recognized the value of penance and self-forgetfulness. His generous self-imposed mortifications and his gracious acceptance of bodily suffering for love of Christ Crucified were richly rewarded. Before his death he became the very image of Christ Crucified by being favored with the sacred Stigmata.

But Francis emphatically advised against rigid self-imposed fastings and tortures. His emphasis was on sacrifices voluntarily accepted and cheerfully borne. An interesting account is told by his biographers of the fatherly care of St. Francis for his followers. His common sense and charity are also very evident in his own words:

"One night a religious, exhausted with fasting, began groaning and saying, 'I am dying of hunger'. At the cry of his sheep in distress, Francis....rose immediately, and ordered them to bring the best food that was in the refectory, and lest the poor brother should be ashamed to eat alone, he sat down to table with him, and made all the others do the same. When they had eaten, to make charity quite perfect, he gave them a short exhortation on the virtue of discretion.... 'God....gave us to understand that in voluntary sacrifices which we offer to Him, each one must exactly measure his own strength. It is no less wrong to refuse to the body what is necessary for it, than it is to give it what is superfluous.' And he added, 'We have been eating a little meal with our brother; we need not fear that we have failed in temperance. Charity edifies souls it, is never at the service of sensuality.'" 36

36. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., pp. 129-130. Also related by Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., pp. 120-121.

Father Hilarin Fedler says of the Rule of St. Francis, which again shows his discrete moderation:

"But while all other Orders forbade the use of meat even on days not of fast, Francis permitted it unreservedly on these days,

within and without the monastery. In this he adhered simply to the injunction of Christ to the apostles: 'Eat what is set before you.' He ordains expressly in the third chapter of both rules; 'according to the Holy Gospel, it is lawful to eat of all foods set before them.'"

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37. Fedler, Fr. Hilarin, O.M. Cap., op. cit., p. 225.

A Protestant writer says of the wisdom of the Rule of St. Francis: "It seems to have been a simple rule, for, like all clear-sighted and great men, he preferred that things should grow, and that his little community should be guided by principles, with considerable liberty of action, and not embarrassed too much with details." 38

38. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 121.

Another Protestant writer says: "In his sermons Francis did not ask anyone to follow his example. He had reduced himself to poverty like that of Christ in order to be able, like Him, to preach penance to mankind." 39

39. Salvatorelli, Luigi, op. cit., p. 105.

In the practice and preaching of the spirit of poverty Francis was quite a contrast to the heretical reformers of his day. These so-called reformers were more numerous than Catholic reformers until St. Francis and St. Dominic established the Mendicant Orders. In 1130 the eloquent Arnold of Brescia, an intimate friend of Abelard, maintained, that according to the Gospel, priests and religious have no right to possess property or to hold titles of honor. To carry out this principle in the days when many abbots, bishops, and clergy were feudal lords would have brought about a violent revolution. In 1180 the Waldensians or the Poor Men of Lyons attacked the Church and denounced the clergy. When Rome rejected their program of social reform, they founded private churches. Their preaching and simplicity of life had a great influence on the ill-desposed people and drew many away from the Church. The influence of the Cathari or Albigenses was also disastrous to Church and State.

Cf. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 106.

The best account of the social influence of the heretical reformers in contrast with St. Francis is related by Dr. Little in the following quotation:

"Arnold of Brescia had moved men, especially in Lombardy, by his somewhat extreme denunciations of riches, particularly among the clergy. The 'Poor Men of Lyons', or Waldenses, took the same line and moved men's hearts, though alas! They fell into exaggeration and religious error. The Albigenses or Cathari gained great popularity by their bold attack upon luxury and worldliness in the Church. They got a strong grip both in France, Germany, and Italy, but unfortunately, like many socialistic reformers, they ran into violence and extremes and then into deadly Manichaeian heresy. Attempts such as these were made. They showed the reality of the evil and the need of reform. But they failed in great measure from want of force or want of balance.

"It was otherwise with St. Francis. He set himself to correct the terrible evils before his eyes. He succeeded beyond imagination because of his method and his spirit. Some men seeing a state of things around them which needs reform, allow themselves to fret and fume, to be irritated and angry, at all that they find threatening or baffling in the facts and conditions of their life. They are impatient.... There is another way. It was the way of Francis. He had boundless patience, boundless self-command, inflexible purpose. He loved God as revealed in Christ Jesus, with a tender deep and passionate emotion. In consequence, he loved his fellow creatures.... By his gentleness, courage, thoroughness of example, still more than by his genius, he alleviated the hard lot of the oppressed, and exercised a vast influence in undermining the evil principles which made that lot unbearable. He was a great social reformer.... And no less was he a religious revivalist." 40

40. Little, W.J.Knox, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

In A History of Social Thought the social influence of St. Francis is well recognized, but of

his method the author speaks in rather uncertain
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 terms. He evidently did not understand and con-

sequently could not appreciate the social values
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 of the ways of St. Francis. He says very briefly:

"Because of the abuses which sprang up in connection with the monasteries, certain positive reactions against the monasteries arose. St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) turned from the monastery to actual life. He inaugurated a method for the regeneration of society. He and his followers lived and spent themselves among the actual poor, subjecting themselves to the economic conditions of the poor. They helped the poor, not by giving alms as expiation for sin and to secure self-salvation, but by the first-hand giving of their lives. St. Francis ignored the regular ecclesiastical conception of charity and gave it all the reality of a new and genuine social force. By renouncing the possession of property and living as the poor live, he obtained what he could secure in no other way - the poor man's point of view. In this way, also, he secured an entrance into the poor man's mind and heart that could not be had so well by any other method. By renouncing wealth and accepting literal poverty he reached the core of the problem of poverty. St. Francis was motivated by a desire to live a life of love. He spent not wealth but his life for the poor." 41.

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41. Bogardus, Emory S., A History of Social Thought, pp. 147-148.
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In summary, on reasonableness and social value of poverty as taught by St. Francis the words of Father Edwin Dorzweiler, O.M.Cap., are very fitting. The author also refers to our present day

attitude towards poverty by quoting William James.

Father Edwin says:

"Francis taught men the hidden charms of poverty. He showed them that poverty was not at all the hateful thing that it was commonly regarded to be. Much of its ill repute came from the false constructions that were put upon the values of life. Happiness was not to be looked upon as the privilege of the rich; it dwelled also in the hovels of the poor. In the frantic endeavor to amass material things and to forefend the possibility of poverty, men lose that quiet of mind which is so essential to human enjoyment. William James scored the unreasonable dread of poverty when he said: 'Among us English-speaking peoples especially do the praises of poverty need once more to be boldly sung. We have grown literally afraid to be poor. We despise any one who elects to be poor to simplify and save his inner life. If he does not join in the general scramble and pant with the money-making street, we deem him spiritless and lacking in ambition. It is time for thinking men to protest against so unmanly and irreligious a state of affairs. The prevalent fear of poverty among the educated classes is the worst moral disease from which our civilization suffers.' The praises of poverty were never more boldly sung than by the Poverello of Assisi. And his love for Lady Poverty became contagious. People flocked to him and imitated him and learned to enrich their lives with the contentment and happiness of Franciscan poverty." 42

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42. Dorzweiler, Edwin, O.M.Cap., Discussion of Paper: "St. Francis of Assisi as an Educator," Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1929), pp. 26-27.
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Poverty And Labor

The love for poverty and his respect for begging did not diminish in Francis his high regard for labor. Francis had a dread of laziness. In work he found an antidote against vices that degrade man. His primary aim in work was not wages or remuneration. His Testament reads: "I worked with my hands and I still desire to work, and most earnestly do I desire that all my brethren should employ themselves in honest work. Let those who do not know how to work learn, not from anxiety to receive wages, but for good example and to avoid idleness." In the fifth chapter of the Rule Francis wrote: "Those friars whom the Lord has fitted for work shall work faithfully and devotedly, in such wise that avoiding idleness, the enemy of the soul, they yet do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all temporal things ought to be subservient." Francis advises as strongly against work for its own sake as against laziness. Many quotations and historical instances could be given to show the zeal of St. Francis for positive labor and dread of idleness.

Cf. Dobbins, Dunstan, O.M.Cap., "Franciscan Educational Ideals," Report of the Eleventh Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1929), p. 49.

One historical instance that shows in Francis' own words his dread of idleness is related by Father Hilarin who refers the account to a contemporary writer of the life of St. Francis: He says:

"When the Friars were at Rivo Torto, thus relates Thomas of Celano, there was among their number one who counted as nought when begging alms, but for several when eating. As soon as the saint heard of his conduct and saw that this Friar was living on the labor of others, but would not work himself, he said to him: 'Brother Fly, go thy way, since thou consumest the labor of others and art slothful in the work of the Lord. Thou art like the barren and idle drone, who earns nothing and does not work, but consumes the honey of the working bee.' At these words the carnal-minded man returned to the world, which he had not sincerely left." 43

43. Fedler, Hilarin, O.M.Cap., op. cit., p. 150.

Few people rightly understand the attitude of St. Francis towards begging and its relation to labor and to poverty. Begging in his mind was not intended as a substitute for labor or to be resorted to only when there was need of provisions. Neither was it an encouragement to idleness. But Francis did have a high regard for begging, as in it he saw the exercise of the virtue of charity on the part of his neighbor and the Divine Goodness of the Providence of God. In this Francis rejoiced. He spoke of begging and the provisions obtained

through begging as the "Table of the Lord." To receive provisions from the "Table of the Lord" Francis considered to be a greater privilege than to receive them for services rendered. Father Cuthbert says:

"When we are told that labor and not mendicancy is the basis of the economical life of the Friars Minor, the inference is apt to run counter to the explicit words and conduct of St. Francis and his first following. The whole story of the first Franciscan days proves that mendicancy was not regarded merely as an occasional expedient in times of distress 'when the wages of our work are not given us': mendicancy was to Francis the nobler poverty.

"And yet at the same time it is true that he insisted on the moral obligation to labour and serve others....

"At first sight it might seem as though there were here a contradiction to the exaltation of mendicancy as the more worthy poverty. But the contradiction is partly in our own habit of thought which instinctively regards 'the honest workman' as morally superior to the beggar; partly to the failure to grasp the idea itself as it existed in Francis' mind. Francis did not, as is the common fashion, regard labour and aims as an antimony in the life of the poor. The beggar and the labourer symbolized to him two aspects of a sacred truth which he in special manner connected with the idea of Christian poverty: that truth was the truth of Divine Providence.

"Out of this faith in Divine Providence arose the special form of the Franciscan's relationship both with God and creatures. God to him was before all else, the Great Father, the Infinite Love Who encompasses creation with watchful care; and men and all living things were the family of God, who fulfil their life in trustful dependence upon His loving care. With the realization of this faith as the

supreme form of all his religious life, Francis came to regard the beggar's dependence upon the good will of men, as the symbol of every man's proper dependence upon God: and straightway the beggar became sacred to him." 44

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44. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Romanticism of St. Francis, pp. 11-14.
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That Francis did not intend begging to replace labor or to encourage idleness is also stated by Abbe L.

LeMonnier:

"Of idleness he said that for all men it is a source of vice, because it quickly opens the heart to all unhealthy thoughts, and loosens the tongue for vain or wicked words. He added that for Minors it is an injustice and an impudence: an injustice, because in begging for everything they wrong the poor, and are a burden on the rich; and impudence, because for a man who most probably could not have lived at home without labour, it is impudent to live in a convent on the labour of his brethren who are as poor as he." 45

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45. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 411.
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Surely, no one will fail to recognize that the spirit of poverty and the appreciation of the dignity of labor are powerful agencies of social reform. To spend one's life in pursuit of earthly goods or in accumulation of wealth for its own sake is wasting one's life in trifles. Earthly goods and wealth have a nobler purpose when used rightly. Earthly

comforts and luxuries do not constitute a source of true happiness. Though labor is the lot of fallen man and will always be a source for penance, it is a blessing to man and a means whereby he can attain his true purpose in life. Only in-so-far as man is working towards his ultimate goal can he secure happiness. St. Francis showed by word and example the nobler purpose of labor. He regarded it as an obligation but also as an expression of love. He consecrated it to a higher purpose than a means of making one's living. He imitated Christ. He recognized that "the law of labor is the fundamental law for social happiness, social order and economic progress. Christ recognized and perfected it by word and example." 46.

46. Ries, Hyacinth, O.M.C., S.T.D., "The Sociology of the New Testament", Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1934), p. 45.

Authority And Social Peace

Francis was not in sympathy with agitators and radicals in their methods of social reform. Yet his influence resulted in a regeneration of society that is recognized in the history of social thought. Authority and obedience to authority was very sacred

to him. Living at a time of outstanding social and evil unrest - of petty wars and civil strife, he was not an enthusiast of liberty through war. Francis was a great advocate of peace through peaceful means. There are perhaps fewer periods in history in which people were more tired of war and more eager for peace than in the thirteenth century. So constant were the petty wars that they had almost forgotten the blessings of peace. The world longed for peace and did not know how to restore it, but society was exhausted with all types of conflicts. The reader is referred back to Chapter I in which the historical conditions were related. For all types of strife Francis had a message of peace and a means to restore it. Francis did not advocate a change of social and political institutions. Leo L. Dubois says of Francis: "Most conservative in his principles, censuring none of the existing institutions, whether in the religious, political, or economic domain, his reform was essentially a reform of society through individual virtue." 47

47. Dubois, Leo L., op. cit., pp. 147-175.

Dr. Little says: "Like Christ he 'came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill.' He knew and accepted

the divine mission and authority of the Church, but he threw life and reality into what were fast becoming empty forms." 48

48. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

Paul R. Martin says:

"Francis was not an originator in the matter of reform, but he did adopt a methodology which was best fitted to cope with the situation as he found it. It was the power of example that would serve best to awaken the people of all classes to a realization of their faults.... What is most important is that the whole of Francis' teaching was strictly in accord with the mind of the Church, for, the soul of the Church remained pure even when wicked men had corrupted her body." 49

49. Martin, Paul, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

That one of the chief aims of Francis was to restore peace is also noted in his own words. When his disciples were about to go on their mission of charity and preaching, Francis gave them the following instructions:

"'Go two and two together,' he said, 'announce peace to all men and preach penance for the remission of sins.... Keep these words in your hearts. Be patient in tribulations, fervent in prayer, industrious in work. Be modest in speech, serious in manner, grateful to those who do good to you. Answer all who ask you questions, and give thanks to those who per-

secute you.'" 50

50. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., pp. 93-94.

The message of "Peace be with you" and the absence of all condemnation in the teaching of St. Francis had an appealing and effective influence upon the people. Peace through peaceful means seems to have been practically unthought of, but the people responded. Dr. Mandell Creighton of London says of St. Francis:

"He opposed nobody, he rebuked nobody, he was in no sense antagonistic to anything. He did not denounce sin, he spoke only of joy and righteousness; the teaching of Francis was in every way absolutely positive, the embodiment in his words and actions of the joy and peace of the believing soul that is at one with God. On that ground only did his appeal come home to the hearts of men. He soon kindled their imagination. A man of the people, speaking their own tongue by the wayside and wherever he found them he appealed to the popular fancy as a representative of the life of Christ." 51

51. Creighton, Mandell, op. cit., p. 91.

In a book entitled Makers of Freedom the co-authors consider St. Francis one of the world's eight men and women deserving of the title. By them St.

Francis is revealed as the liberator from materialism. But in regard to his influence towards peace they say:

"Concerning war and peace Francis was not so much a teacher as an active maker of peace. His only weapons were love and humility. A citizen of Bologna tells us as an eye-witness of his preaching of peace there. 'I, Thomas, citizen of Spalato, and archdeacon of the cathedral church of the same city, studying at Bologna in the year 1220, saw St. Francis preach in the square before the little palace, where nearly the whole town was assembled.... His discourse resembled one of those harangues that are made by popular orators. At the conclusion, he spoke only of the extinction of hatred, and the urgency of concluding treaties of peace and compacts of union.... He converted even men of rank whose unrestrained fury and cruelty had bathed the country in blood. Many who were enemies were reconciled.'" 52

52. Eddy, Sherwood and Page, Kirby, Makers of Freedom, pp. 81-82.

A reference to a conclusion of a treaty of peace is recorded by Father Cuthbert as follows:

"But in all his sermons Francis never failed to urge upon the citizens the blessing of peace and mutual love nor to denounce with pleading earnestness the spirit of hatred and envy which kept the commune in perpetual ferment, and the ambition for power which made the higher classes, whether nobles or burghers, bitterly hated by the lower class of citizens.and when he preached the Christian glory of service and mutual subjection, the citizens knew that his mind's eye was upon the civic

feud.... On November 9, the citizens met in council and signed a treaty of concord amongst themselves." 53

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53. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 118-119.
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Of the absence of all hatred, agitation, and denouncement in the preaching of St. Francis, Father Cuthbert also says:

"After this first day of his mission he went frequently into the city on the same errand. He preached no set discourse; he merely stopped the citizens as he met them, with his greeting of peace and his soulful pleas: and soon men began to expect him and wait upon his words But Francis was different from most lay-evangelists. He neither denounced the magistrates nor the clergy; he did not pour out vials of wrath on the sinner's head, nor did he show any contempt for the weaknesses of men. He spoke as one looking intently upon a vision of beauty, and asserting its claim upon men's lives, and sorrowing for the blindness which made a man unseeing; or as one who wishes to share with another the treasure he himself has found. And he was so manifestly happy in himself and in his message; and in this too he was unlike most other reformers. But with his change of garment he seemed to have put on that indefinable quality which marks a man for moral leadership, which belongs to men who are possessed by faith and who besides have a certain imperative need to share their faith with others." 54

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54. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
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The fact that Francis did not denounce rulers,

heretics, the clergy does not mean that he tolerated their abuses. He also opposed the misuse of wealth and material goods. His teaching and method of reform were however mostly positive. He taught society to appreciate the temporal and eternal values of the practice of virtue and its consequences - peace, justice, and charity. He denounced only sin and vice, not persons or objects. This method was very acceptable to the people and possessed a great force for social reform. Mr. Martin says:

"But it cannot be found that St. Francis ever agitated the common people against the wealthy and governing classes, nor did he ever preach the over-throw of the existing social order.... This did not, however, restrain him from condemning the overvaluation of wealth, or from castigating greed and avarice in all who by their own arrogance and selfishness wronged or dishonored the poor." 55

55. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 163.

In speaking to those in authority Francis emphasized the duties and obligations of their office rather than the dignity and honor connected with it. But by word and example to all, but especially to the common people, he preached respect and obedience to authority. Father Cuthbert says: "Francis' idea of authority was that of leadership in the harder paths of the vocation and of service and solicitude for the

needs of those who depended upon him: and this was the idea he impressed upon the brethren." 56.

56. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 129.

Again he quotes St. Francis, explaining obedience and authority:

"We must hold in hatred our bodies with their vices and sins, because our Lord says in the gospel: All vices and sins go forth from the heart. We must love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. We must observe the precepts and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must also deny ourselves and put our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord. And no man shall be bound by obedience to obey any one in that where a sin or fault is committed".

"But he to whom authority is entrusted and who is held to be the greater, let him be as the lesser and as the servant of the other brothers, and to each of his brothers let him show and have mercy which he would wish to be shown to himself were he in a like case. Nor let him be angry with the brother because of the brother's faults, but with all patience and humility let him kindly teach and encourage him." 57

57. Ibid., p. 329.

Francis had such great respect for authority and social order that he did not use his absolute right to preach in respect for the authority of bishops and priests. Francis and his friars had obtained the permission from the Pope to preach

anywhere. But Francis insisted and made it a rule never to preach in any church or parish without the consent of the bishop or the priest in whose locality they were to preach. If their consent was not obtained, the friars were not to preach. Abbe Le Monnier quotes St. Francis in his directions to his brethren:

"'Make yourselves small and humble to everyone,' Francis used to say to them, 'but above all make yourselves small and humble to priests. The care of souls has been entrusted to them, We are only auxiliaries whose mission it is to supply what they cannot do. Therefore we must maintain the respectful and submissive attitude that befits auxiliaries; this is the price we must pay for concord between them and us, and concord amongst clerics is the great means of gaining souls to the Lord.' This, then, was their line of conduct. They would never enter upon any field of labour without the invitation or at least the consent, of him to whom it had been entrusted; and when they had been admitted to work there, they never took the liberty of acting as though they were masters.. .. Bishops and priests had no misgivings in seeking their assistance;... 58

58. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 179.

By his word and example Francis thus restored the respect for priests and bishops which was so sadly lacking in his time. He preserved many people from heresy and from siding with the Emperors in their conflict against the Pope. A Protestant

writer says:

"The work of Francis was providential in helping to preserve the popular devotion to the Roman Church. The secular clergy were not to be greatly relied on; or, to be more exact, they themselves were responsible for making difficulties for the Church, either by their way of life, which provoked murmurs and reprobation among the faithful, or because they were at that time too prone to a spirit of independence and alliance with the civil power, to the detriment of the obedience due to the curia.... What was wanted was a positive propaganda which should encourage and intensify the sacramental piety of the people by leading them in crowds to the feet of the priests, and make them realize for themselves that the Church was still the guardian of the sacraments and the refuge of the apostolic virtues. The pious activity and apostolic poverty of the Franciscan Order were a triumphant reply to the widely spread scandal of clerical worldliness, the prevalent sarcasms on the wealth and pomp of the clergy, and the contemptuous comparisons of their lives with those of Christ and the apostles." 59

59. Salvatorelli, Luigi, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

We may well conclude this treatment of restoration of peace to society by St. Francis with his greatest and most unprejudiced of Protestant admirers, Dr. Little, who says:

"What we need to remember, then is this, that St. Francis under the providence of God, was one of these greatest of 'forces of restoration;' I am not at all sure that justice has been fully done to the extent of the force that he exercised, morally, socially, spiritually; and I am quite sure that we can never, even approximately, realize how great that force was,

unless we, in some measure, understand the ruins with which it had to deal." 60.

60. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 68.

Social Democracy

The spirit of poverty, the practices of charity, especially to the poor, the restoration of respect for authority were all powerful forces that led to ideas of social democracy. They acted as "golden threads of union" and levelers of the various classes of society. They aroused in the clergy and rulers, as well as in the people, their sense of responsibilities and bridged over the chasm of differences. How the influence of St. Francis led to social democracy is well stated by Father Cuthbert as follows:

"So far the Franciscan social ideal is that of a perfect democracy.... But where the Franciscan democracy differs from the ordinary democracy is, in the first place, that with the Franciscan, equality is generated in voluntary assumption of common duties and responsibilities and not in the assertion of individual rights. The Franciscan begins at the other end from that generally taken by the political democrat. He starts practically from the idea that he owes a duty to his neighbor rather than that his neighbor owes a duty to him; he is more concerned to curb his own arrogance and selfishness than to curb that of others; he is more willing to submit to the will of another than to claim another's submission to his will." 61

61. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 65.

The Third Order of St. Francis was the strongest force through which St. Francis brought about democracy. This was especially true in Italy where the Third Order was most wide-spread and where feudalism received its death blow. All members of the Third Order were forbidden to take oaths or to carry arms. This will be more fully treated in later chapters. But the decline of feudalism and the impetus given to works of charity did a great deal to bring about a social democracy. Father Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M., says:

"All historians, for instance, admit that the beginnings of democracy in Italy must be traced to St. Francis. Similarly in England, it was the Franciscans who openly espoused the rights of the lower classes, and who were the first to formulate in clear, definite, and correct terms those principles of civil liberty which in time led to the constitutional monarchy of England. The many infirmaries and foundling-hospitals which they had founded and maintained during the Middle Ages testify to their zeal for the relief of suffering humanity." 62

62. Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., Glories of the Franciscan Order, p. 23.

That the three Orders of St. Francis were instrumental in creating a social democracy is also stated by Paul R. Martin:

"The life and works of St. Francis.... reveal that this medieval reformer constantly cherished the ideals of justice, charity, and

peace. By adopting poverty as his ideal - a literal and rigid poverty, in the case of the First and Second Orders, a spiritual poverty in the case of the Third - he set forth a principle of social democracy which the world, in its ambitions for exalted position and its struggle for wealth, has all but forgotten." 63

63. Op. cit., p. 163.

His Concept Of Education

There has been a great deal of controversy in the past centuries regarding St. Francis' concept of learning. Francis has been considered by some as an enemy to all forms of learning; by others, to only certain types of learning; and by others, as one not at all opposed to learning. There is no question of a great misunderstanding in the attitude of St. Francis. There is no doubt that St. Francis was more emphatic and more outspoken in his views against learning than he was in statements in favor of it. His statements of opposition to learning must, however, be interpreted in the sense and meaning of the word learning in the time of St. Francis. Learning for learning's sake, or for the sake of satisfying one's curiosity, was as repulsive to Francis as eating for the sake of eating. It was an indication of selfishness which Francis detested. But Francis had high regard for truth, for the written

word that related of truth, of any form of learning that made one a better Christian and of greater service to others. The many expressions of St. Francis in opposition to learning were most probably made because he knew the evil results of education for the sake of learning would far outweigh the possibilities for good. It would bring upon the individual and upon his Order in general a great deal of harm. His words of condemnation were, therefore, words of warning that have preserved for the Franciscans the proper objective of education and made them fearless in the search of truth. They have kept the ideal purpose of study before their minds that has made of them leaders in every field of learning. It is very evident from history that many close followers of St. Francis understood that he was not opposed to learning. Among the followers of learning we have Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Anthony of Padua, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and many others. Their judgment is worthy of consideration. But it is also evident that many only saw evil in the pursuit of studies and condemned it. The two opposite ideas have not entirely disappeared in our day. The following quotations will illustrate the two trends of thought. Father Robert Hammer, O.F.M., says:

"Under the present heading we cannot avoid mentioning Francis' opposition to learning. He had a suspicion of learning and would have none of it. The reason is not far to seek. The merest glance at conditions existing in the beginning of the thirteenth century suffices. To pursue a course of studies was an impossibility for the son of a peasant or simple citizen unless such a one studied for the Church, in which case a bright future from a material point of view was open to him. He might become a prelate or bishop and thus become lord over others who would then serve him almost as slaves. Hence learning threatened holy humility, and simplicity, and these formed the bulwark of the great Franciscan ideal - most high poverty. Francis held with St. Paul that 'science puffeth up.' Practically all authors, with the exception of Fedler, agree that nothing caused Francis greater doubt or misgiving regarding the future of the Order than to see it enter upon the way of learning. The sources are full of instances which will bear no other interpretation. The unflinching idealism of Francis is never more evident than in his use of preventive measures to protect his ideal - Poverty." 64

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64. Hammer, Robert, O.F.M., "St. Francis of Assisi as an Educator," op. cit., p. 22.
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Father Cuthbert takes the other view. Referring to the Testament, he says:

"We know from St. Francis's own words how greatly he revered 'theologians and those who minister to us the divine word.'

"In other words, he was maintaining the principle that knowledge must be subservient to moral and spiritual living. This principle is of the very essence of personality spiritually conceived. Once you admit that a man's supreme achievement is to be the realization of his spiritual self, it follows that the acquisition of any knowledge which does not stimulate his spiritual life or tend to strengthen him in the loyalties which belong to

his proper calling, is so much wasted effort; and not merely wasted effort but a positive distraction from the things which vitally concern him." 65

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65. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Romanticism of St. Francis, pp. 75-76.
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In the Life of St. Francis of Assisi, Father Cuthbert goes into greater detail in defending the favorable attitude of St. Francis toward learning.

He says:

"To state the truth of the matter at once, Francis did not anathematize academic study and book-learning as an evil in itself, but he valued as a supreme treasure of his vocation that heart-knowledge which is gained in the battle of life when men are wholly intent upon the achievement of the cause to which they are consecrated.

"Now he was convinced that the demand for books and schools which had arisen amongst the brethren had no relationship with the vocation to which they were dedicated but to purposes apart: in great measure this was but too true. Had it been otherwise the bitter controversies which now arose, would never have arisen; for Francis, far from being indifferent to mental culture, had a native feeling for it. He gave peculiar reverence to men whose judgments were weighted with solid learning, and especially to theologians of the right sort who spoke of religion with understanding and wisdom: these he declared were lords amongst men and deserving of homage. It is to be noted, that he was accustomed to fill the more responsible offices in the fraternity with learned brethren. Thus he appointed Peter Cathani, a doctor of law, to be his first Vicar-General; he sent Pacifico, the poet-laureate, as minister to France;....

"But where Francis fell foul of many of the schoolmen who entered the fraternity, was in his plain disregard for what we call the theory of 'learning for learning's sake.' He held that knowledge is to be valued only in relation to character and action. He would say: 'As much knowledge has a man, as he does deeds: and a religious prays well only inasmuch as he works well: for the doer is known by his fruits.' And again he would say that 'they who rely upon book-learning in the day of sorrow and battle, will find their hands empty;' since it is not learning but the fulfilment of one's duty which makes a man spiritually strong." 66

66. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 347-349.

Referring to the contemporary biographer of St. Francis, Thomas Celano (II p. 112), Father Cuthbert shows the method St. Francis himself pursued in his study. That he did not only read but studied what he read and that he had great respect for all written material is shown by what Father Cuthbert says:

"This intense reverence for the written word showed itself also in his method of reading; for whenever he came upon a passage which stimulated his thought, he would read no further, but closed the book and pondered upon what he had read that he might not lose ought of a good thing. And that was how he would have the brethren read. One good book read thus, he said was better than a thousand treatises hurriedly skimmed over." 67

67. Ibid., p. 350.

Father Berard in his paper on "The Origin and Development of the Franciscan School" states that Francis approved of the creation of houses of study. He says:

"Soon, however, as the numbers and activities of the Friars expanded, it became apparent that a more thorough educational equipment was required to meet the problems of the day. Trained preachers, well-versed in the science of theology, were needed to meet the attacks of the heretics then threatening the Western Church, and to enlighten the faithful concerning the true Christian doctrine. Houses of study in which this thorough training might be acquired, were therefore founded, St. Francis himself appointing St. Anthony of Padua as first Lector of Theology at Bologna." 68

68. Vogt, Berard, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 5.

In the Discussion of Father Robert's statement quoted above, several very enlightening thoughts were brought out that clarify the concept of St. Francis on education. The discussion also leads to an understanding of the cause of the conflict of ideas and to the interpretation most Franciscans hold today. Father Anscar Zawart, O.M.Cap., says in criticism of Father Robert's statements:

"The influence of St. Francis on education has been well described by Father Robert. What must, however, strike one as strange is, how Francis' pedagogical method may at all be appraised by divorcing him from, or placing him

in opposition to, learning. It should not be so difficult on the basis of the 'sources' to conceive Francis as in perfect sympathy with science and with men of learning without doing violence either to his idealism or to history. Hilarin Fedler is not alone in his defense of Francis in that position. We find the same attitude taken by Ehrle, Holzappel; in the splendid lives of St. Francis by Christen, Joergensen, Schnuerer, Cuthbert; by such scholars as Goerres, Robinson, Hilaire de Barenton and P. Gratien." 69

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69. Zawart, Anscar, O.M.Cap., Discussion of Paper: "St. Francis of Assisi as an Educator," by Father Robert Hammer, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 28-29.
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Father Anscar then concludes in the same discussion:

"Francis' attitude, then, resolves itself into this: whatever learning, whether it went under the name of theology or worldly science, was conducive to turning the mind of God or increasing the love of God, Francis advocated; whatever distracted souls and turned them away from the spirit of holy prayer and devotion he stamped as 'modus studendi venus et curiosus.' Hence not science as such was the object of Francis' solicitude or alarm, but the good or bad use that was made of learning. Of this the 'sources' give unmistakable evidence." 70

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70. Ibid., p. 30.
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In his Discussion of the same report Father Theodosius Foley, O.M.Cap., explains the source of the misunderstanding about this attitude and concludes

the interpretation of St. Francis' concept of learning as most Franciscans hold today. Father Theodosius says:

"I am very glad that the question as to the attitude of St. Francis towards learning has been touched upon. There seems to be quite some misunderstanding about this attitude. The writings of St. Francis, if read without their historical background or without attention to facts in the life of the Saint himself or ignoring his passionate attachment to, and obedience towards, Holy Church, seems to convey the impression that their author is opposed to learning as a field of activity in his Order.

"Any ordinary student of history, however, will be able to grasp what, in the light of contemporary conditions, kind of learning St. Francis was adverse to. He did not favor empty dialectics, or bombastic rhetoric, or idle hair-splitting of the schools. He forbade learning as such for the lay-brothers. For the clerics, however, he himself appointed St. Anthony as first lector of the Order, realizing that the priesthood demands study as a duty of its state in life, just as the brotherhood requires manual labor. Sentire cum ecclesia was the keynote of St. Francis' character and as such we can easily picture St. Francis today, if he were alive, vying with the first in obedience to Holy Church in the matter of learning for his clerics. The history of the Order from St. Bonaventure down to the present day vouches for the fact that sacred learning in the service of the Church is as legitimate a field of labor for the Friars as preaching or missionary work."⁷¹

71. Foley, Theodosius, O.M.Cap., Discussion of Paper: "St. Francis of Assisi as an Educator" by Fr. Robert Hammer, O.F.M., op. cit. p. 27.

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that St. Francis did not oppose learning that would be an aid to man in living a more purposeful life and make him more fit to be of service to man. Father Anscar summarizes the contributions of St. Francis to science or to sound Christian education as follows:

- "1. Francis loved science and greatly honored learned men.
2. Francis did not love science to the extent of idolizing it, for he clearly detected the danger inherent in a false and frivolous science.
3. Francis loved and advocated science when used as a means to lead both teachers and students to God.
4. The pedagogy taught by St. Francis was put into practice during the thirteenth century by his foremost sons, and produced marvelous fruits." 72

72. Zawart, Anscar, O.M.Cap., op. cit. p. 34.

THE MENDICANT ORDER IN SOCIAL REFORM

Origin And Purpose Of The Order

St. Francis was not long to remain alone in his unique work of preaching the lessons of truth to all and in serving the poor. Never had Assisi seen such a complete change in any individual. Never had they heard of anyone leading a life so in conformity with the Gospel of Christ. Was he a mad-man, or did he have a message to give to his people? Some ridiculed him; others treated him as a fool. His former friends did not know what to make of him. It was not long, however, before many were won over by his teaching. As a social leader, St. Francis was very unique. Unlike most reformers he was very happy in himself and in his work of charity. He had no bitter words against the rich, the magistrates or the clergy. His message was a message of peace to all - peace through justice, charity, and penance. Francis had no intention of establishing a religious order when he first began to preach. Neither did he aim to organize a program of social reform. But God chose him for both. When he saw in God's plan that others were eager to imitate his example and desired to aid him in his work, he

accepted their offer with great joy. "Thus," says Father Cuthbert, "within a few months from the day he changed his habit, did Francis find himself the leader of a small group of disciples. They had come to him without his seeking, drawn by a kinship of spirit. But as each came it was to him a new joy; for he saw in their coming the beginning of a world regained to the Lord Christ and the Lady Poverty." 1

1. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 71.

The first disciples of St. Francis were not men of fanatical enthusiasm nor the poor who were without a means of livelihood. They were men of all classes and were all expected to do the work of Francis. Dr. Little says: "Men of all ranks entered the Franciscan Order. In the First Order, there were especially men of culture, of considerable means when in the world, and of noble birth; no matter who they were, he (St. Francis) insisted on their dwelling in the leper hospitals, and attending upon the suffers." 2

2. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., 102.

Paul R. Martin more explicitly says:

"The Franciscans came from every class of society and went to every class of society. The first companion of Francis was Bernardo, one of the rich men of Assisi; his second companion (Peter) was a canon of the Church; another, Brother Pacificus, was a professional poet and laureate troubador of Frederick II; Brother Angelo Tancredi was a knight; Brother Giovanni, a farmer, etc. Their field of action also included all society - they visited not only farmers and townspeople, but also clergy and the lords. Like the troubadors, they went to the castles, into the very halls where the Lords and his guests were rejoicing amidst all the bright lights, rich ornaments, sumptuous furniture." 3

Martin, Paul, op. cit., p. 61.

When Francis perceived that many desired to follow him, he decided to draw up a rule of life for his little community. The first Rule has been lost, but historians say that it was short and very simple. It was a collection of counsels of our Lord taken from the Gospel. The Gospel was the underlying basis of the rule. The counsels were those that dealt with the renunciation of the world and its goods, obedience to legitimate authority, and chastity. His emphasis, however, was on poverty. It was to be the special characteristic of the Order, for all the older Orders possessed property - if not as individual members than as an order. It

was the wealth of the Monastic Orders that brought about their decline. Francis realized that absolute poverty would enable them to work with greater freedom at their own sanctification and by it they would free the hearts that were chained to the desires of the things of this world. By the simplicity and brevity of the Rule, Francis assured a liberty of spirit for his brethren. He avoided entangling them in detailed obligations but limited himself to what was necessary for uniformity in achieving the main objectives of their existence.

Cf. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., pp. 99-100.

The simplicity and brevity of the Rule as well as the work of the early Friars is well brought out by the two authors of Makers of Freedom. They say:

"Three simple passages became the guide of the early disciples: 'Sell that thou hast;' 'I take nothing for your journey;' 'follow me;' but the true rule was Francis himself.... In poverty, in joy, in song; working with the peasants in the fields, sleeping in hay-lofts or leper asylums or porches, these men went forth to the people until out of the sodden materialism of the time all Italy began to turn to them.... Men began to hear again the good news that had sounded along the shores of Galilee, as these little brothers of the poor came preaching penitence and peace." 4

4. Eddy, Sherwood and Page Kirby, op. cit., p. 70.

When the Rule was ready, Francis, with his twelve companions, went to Rome for the Pope's approval of their work. Dr. Little says of the Rule:

"His rule, even though in a sketchy condition, was well before his mind, and, in view of the difficulties which he clearly foresaw, he determined to gain all the strength for it in his power. He desired, therefore, to have the direct approbation of the Holy See. This was not necessary. (Tres Socii and St. Bonaventure) Earlier Orders had not sought it or received it, but in the then state of Christendom in which the Pope, and especially a great Pope like Innocent III, played so important a part, it was of the highest moment that an Order so young, so peculiar, so unknown, should, if possible, have his approbation." 5

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5. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 124. Also LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 100.
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Thus in the words of Father Francis Borgia, O.F.M. was the humble origin of the First Order:

"The birthday of the Order is April 16. On that day, in 1209, Francis Bernardone, the son of a wealthy and worldly-minded merchant of Assisi, in Italy knelt with his twelve companions at the feet of Pope Innocent III and received from him a verbal approbation of the Order that was destined for the next seven centuries to extend its wholesome influence to every part of the globe and to achieve wonderful things for the Church of God and for the welfare of humanity." 6

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6. Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., Glories of the Franciscan Order, p. 5.
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The secret of success of the work the Order achieved was because of its spirit of charity and detachment from the things of this world. St. Francis required of each member of the Order that he dispose of all his goods to the poor. Thus the Friars were to preach by example more so than by word. "To save society Francis came in direct collision with society, as his Master had done before," says Dr. Little. 7

7. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 29.

Francis and his brethren lived the life of the poor in the service of the rich and the poor - not in isolated monasteries but in the newly risen towns and cities. St. Francis and his brethren put into practice the great principle of social work as formulated by Frederic Ozanam: "The knowledge of social well-being and of reform is to be learned not from books, nor from the public platform, but in climbing the stairs of the poor man's garret, sitting by his bed side, feeling the same cold that pierces him, sharing the secrets of his lonely heart and troubled mind." 8

8. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 73.

For an Order to possess no property was the original idea of St. Francis. Why St. Francis chose poverty has been considered in the preceding chapter. Whatever the Order had was for use only and no property or money was to be considered its own. Luigi Salvatorelli says:

"The Father laid down, with authority and precision, the way of life for the new communities. If some kindly soul could be found, in whatever city it might be, to give the necessary land for their dwelling-place for the Fathers, then before proceeding further, they were to go before the bishop, the father and master of souls, and ask for his blessing and approval.... When the bishop's permission was obtained, the land was accepted for use alone, it need hardly be said, and not in ownership.... The church must be small and plain, and adapted solely to the use of the Brothers, not for the accommodation of the surrounding population; It was desirable that the Brothers should use other churches in which to preach.... The virtue of example, the act rather than the word, was one of Francis' fundamental principles; and the more the Order increased, the more he himself thought to govern it by the example of his life rather than by words and commands." 9

9. Salvatorelli, Luigi, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197.

Of the use of money and property Father

Euthbert says:

"They were, however, on no account to receive money, even if it were freely offered to them.... Only in rare cases when the sick were in sore need, and in no other way could be relieved, did he allow the brethren to accept money at all; and even that exception he made reluctantly. For to his mind money was the symbol of that world from which poverty had set the

brethren free.... It was not that he had any theories against the right of private property: in fact he accepted that right so far as it concerned others who were not of his fraternity: But he grieved over the abuse of the right; and in his dealings with men of the world who sought his counsel, he always insisted that their property was a trust put into their hands by the providence of God, not for their own benefit alone but for the benefit of all who were in need. But for himself and the brethren he held that God has set them free from this trust in order that they might more convincingly by word and example warn the world against the dangers and lust of wealth.

"....his protest was against the greed and avarice which he saw festering in the whole body politic of his day: and of that greed and avarice, money, in his eyes, was the token. In those times money was not the general means of barter for common daily needs, as it has become since. In the simpler arrangement of society a labourer's wages were more generally paid in food and the ordinary necessities of life: money represented not so much his present need as his future store; in a large measure it was the expression of a superfluity." 10

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10. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 134-136.
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The effect this example of poverty of the Franciscan Order had upon the people is well stated by Father Victor Mills, O.F.M. He says:

"Certainly it was the Friar's voluntary poverty which made the deepest impression on the great masses of the people. They had become Minors by choice and could, therefore, be expected to have a proper understanding of the problems besetting that class. Little wonder, then, that a bond of fellow-feeling

existed between the poorer inhabitants of growing cities and the Friars - a bond which the Friars strengthened by their disinterested solicitude." 11

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11. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., "Social Activities in the Franciscan Order," Report of the Sixteenth Annual, The Franciscan Educational Conference, p. 4.
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Mendicancy And Monasticism

Considerable discussion has been given in a preceding chapter on the decline of monasticism in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. By accepting absolute poverty St. Francis removed the one great danger of decline from his Order. There were several other outstanding characteristics in which The Mendicant Orders differed from the monastic orders. St. Francis desired that religion be brought to the people. Many had drifted far away from the influence of monasticism. The monks had nobly served the people when the people lived around their monasteries. But in this period of transition and of religious decline there was a great need of a new type of social, and of religious influence. A Franciscan writer says of the work of his order:

"Living isolated within the monastery -

walls is foreign to our calling. A Franciscan is not intended to lead a life of solitude and prayer only; the Holy Rule prescribes a life contemplative and active, neither should take up all his time. The active apostolate combined with contemplation is the mark distinguishing the Rule of St. Francis from the rules of the earlier monasticism. Activity, then, is an essential part of everyday life of a true follower of St. Francis. Of course, it should not extinguish the spirit of prayer, which must come before all things." 12

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12. Sutherland, Anaclete, O.F.M., Discussion of Paper: "The Friars in Print and on the Radio", by Father Boniface McConville, O.F.M., Report of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1933), p. 145.
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A contrast between the apostolic work of the Franciscans and the earlier religious orders is made by Father Cyprian, O.F.M. He also states why monks had not undertaken the apostolic work. He says:

"We of the present day, perhaps, find little extraordinary in this distinction. But for the contemporaries of Francis it was unprecedented that the founder of a religious order should dedicate himself and his followers to the apostolate. The ancient monks, no doubt, also regarded their vocation as an apostolic one. They, however, merely wished to express thereby that the monk, as a follower of the Apostles, was bound, not only to the observance of the commandments, but also to the observance of the evangelical counsels. That he was bound, like the Apostles, to labor at large and to exercise the apostolate in the proper sense of the term, never occurred to them. More than this, Canon Law of former centuries flatly denied the monks the right to preach, and as late as the second half of the eleventh century Alexander II

(1061-1073) decreed: 'In conformity with the regulation of St. Benedict, we command that the monks remain within their monastery; we forbid them to journey through villages, hamlets, and towns, and demand that they in no wise preach to the people.'" 13

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13. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Social Action", The Catholic Charities Review, (May, 1927), pp. 173-174.
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Father Hilarin Fedler says of St. Francis: "Indeed it may be said without exaggeration, that since the days of the apostles he was the first herald of faith to emblazon on his banner the conversion of the whole world in literal observance of the words of Christ: 'Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'" 14

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14. Fedler, Hilarin, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 136-137.
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Father Agostino Gemelli states how St. Francis made use of the good characteristics of the old monastic Orders and added to them the needs of society in his own day as follows:

"The religious movement started by St. Francis and guided by him into the channels of his three different Orders answered the two great needs of his age: a return to Gospel standards of life and a Christian revaluation of action.

"In his own life St. Francis experienced all the different conflicting influences of his age, blending together in his own personality different types of piety. So, too, in his great achievement did he unite and mould together the various characteristics of the earlier religious Orders. To these he added, though, a contribution entirely his own: the sanctification of action." 15

15. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 43.

The Franciscan attitude toward labor is contrasted with the Benedictine attitude by Paul R. Martin. He says:

"The Benedictines, insisted that labor should form an important part of the religious life. There was, however, a difference between this labor and that performed by the Franciscans. The monks labored on their own land and for the sake of income, while the friars, owning no temporal goods of any kind, whether land, buildings, or personal effects were forced to seek work outside their own humble friaries." 16

16. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 42.

One of the great difference between the Mendicant Order and the Monastic Orders was the scope of and variety of the work. A Benedictine monk fulfilled his obligations as a monk by prayer, work, and study. This he performed in a peaceful solitude at his monastery. The Franciscan had no

permanent abode. His primary aim was also perfection of self in penance, prayer, and meditation, but he was obliged to leave his solitude the greater part of the day in order to preach and to bring peace and comfort to distressed souls. The Franciscan field of activity was the entire world - their program of social welfare unlimited. Father Victor Mills says:

"The Order has never enunciated a special programme of social welfare or work, but has everywhere left it to the individual Friar to carry out to the best of his ability and according to the social needs he encounters the Gospel precept, 'Whatsoever ye do to the least of my brethren, ye do to Me.' This accounts for the leper colonies, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, schools and institutions of various kinds in every corner of the globe established and maintained by Franciscan Friars of all branches. "17

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17. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., "Social Activities of the Franciscan Order", op. cit., p. 8.
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But Francis did not consider his Order a superior order. Indeed he was solicitous that worldliness should not creep into his Order. He did not condemn any Order in its purpose. He was convinced that his work was different from theirs and therefore he compiled a rule fitting their purpose of his institute. St. Francis once said to his brethren:

"!The Lord has called me by the way of simplicity and humility, and this way hath He pointed out

to me in truth for myself and for them who are willing to believe me and to imitate me. Wherefore I will not that you name to me any other Rule, neither of St. Benedict, nor of St. Augustine, nor of St. Bernard, nor any other way or manner of living besides that which the Lord in His mercy hath shown and given to me." 18

18. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 270.

Francis, therefore, did not stop to analyze other Orders but followed his goal. Father Cuthbert says:

"Francis had no condemnation for other religious men: the prudence of the world is good in its own place; and these other religious men were the keepers of their own conscience: God did not lead all men in the same way. But the way of the Friars Minor was to live and work as Jesus Christ Himself lived and worked on earth, in humility and meekness and poverty, using only spiritual means and not relying upon any secular influence. If the brethren would convert men they must be willing to suffer and not shield themselves with letters of protectionthey must preach the Gospel in its simplicity and not with a proud assumption of secular learning." 19

19. Ibid., pp. 264-265.

Another Franciscan writer says:

"It would not be easy to express so many things more succinctly; natural and supernatural motives for work, respect for every individual taste and bent, the way to work, the mingling of the active and the contemplative life, the identification of work with poverty. These two last points constitute the most original contribution of Franciscan thought on work since the days of St. Benedict.... St. Francis brought

this mixed life outside the cloister into the midst of the world,...." 20

20. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 35.

Franciscan Preaching

In the manner of preaching the Friars were also quite different from the monks and clergy of their day. Francis, like the Good Shepherd, sought out the poor, the depressed, the forsaken. To them he must speak their language in all simplicity. Father Agostino Gemelli says:

"With sure instinct and a true understanding of the practical needs of men he introduced a reform into the preaching of Mediaeval days. Whereas the parish priests were accustomed then to explain the Gospel.... in a Latinised form of speech, and professional preachers were in the habit of taking the subjects of their sermons from the homilies of the Fathers of the Church, whilst the more learned drew fine distinctions on points of dogma. St. Francis brought the Gospel into close contact with real life by striving to bring Christ nearer to the hearts of his hearers....

"The substance of his sermons was always very simple.... He did not use subtle or learned arguments....his words sank deep into the hearts of even those who....were least inclined to pay attention to an unlettered layman." 21

21. Ibid., p. 32.

Father Victor Mills, describes the Franciscan way

of preaching and its value to a social reform as follows:

"But there is also evidence that the sermon style of the day had deteriorated so that in spite of much preaching, hearts remained untouched. St. Francis saw the crying need of bringing home to the people in a simple, direct manner the fundamental truths of the Gospel. His admonition to the preachers of his Order cannot be read in the light of what history has to say of the social consequences of the Franciscan movement without recognizing that admonition as one of Francis' most important contributions to social reform: 'I admonish and exhort my Friars that in the preaching they do, their discourse be chaste and examined for the utility and edification of the people, announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity of speech.' By reason of the peculiar organization given to the Order, the Friars, unlike the members of then existing monastic bodies, were not bound to one monastery or city, but could wander about from place to place as the apostolic spirit moved them. Furthermore, by reason of special papal privileges they were permitted to preach not only in churches, as the general law prescribed, but in the street, in open fields, in market places or wherever they could get a hearing. Thus they had access to all classes of persons and at practically all times." 22

22. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 2. Father Victor quotes St. Francis in his Rule, Chapter IX.

The subject matter of the sermons of the early Franciscans dealt almost exclusively with practical topics on moral obligations or virtues. Mysticism or dogma was seldom preached unless before heretics or students of theology and philosophy. In their

preaching of the virtues of a good Christian life the Friars were to be the living examples. Abbe L. Le Monnier says of Francis:

"He desired that masters and preachers should be something more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. His extreme sense of justice revolted at the idea of a man's recommending the truth and not following it. 'I wish,' he said, 'that my brethren should be true sons of the Gospel, and should advance in perfect simplicity while they are growing in the knowledge of the truth.' These words reveal to us the hidden principle of his mind; a contradiction between a man's words and his life seemed to him a disloyal and horrible thing; he had the sentiment of Christian honor in the highest degree." 23

23. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., p. 320.

Of this method of popular preaching so much needed in that period of history, a Franciscan writer says:

"St. Francis and his faithful followers were also in this work the chosen instruments in the hands of God. It was through them that the Lord recalled the faithful to a more Christian understanding of the Gospel and a more serious and practical acceptance of the Gospel as a norm of daily life. And who could serve better than they to propose the Gospel to the people in words as they had already done by example." 24

24. Hoffman, Father Victorine, O.F.M., "Franciscan Preaching in the Past," op. cit., p. 137.

This method and its social effects are also stated by Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical. The Pope says of the early Franciscan preachers:

"At crossroads and in public places, without any reliance on splendid surroundings or rhetorical display, they set about encouraging the people to despise worldly interests and to think seriously of the future life. It is wonderful what great results were achieved by workmen seemingly so unfit. The eager public flocked in crowds to hear them, forthwith repenting of their misdeeds, forgetting injuries, composing their quarrels, and resuming peaceful pursuits." 25

25. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato.

A Protestant lecturer states the social and political effects of the popular preaching in the following words:

"Thus through Francis there came a great popular reform. That reform consisted first in popular preaching, and that brought about a plain intelligible Christianity. Further it wrought exactly the political work which the times required. The problem of the time was what to do with the middle classes. Francis gave the answer. The middle classes had seemed to be growing up without Christianity, but the friars carried it directly home to them again. The burgher class was recognized by Church and State alike, for Francis influenced the State through the Church, and brought much greater harmony between them than had seemed possible. His ideal was an ideal of peace and morality." 26

26. Creighton, Mandell, op. cit., p. 114.

The influence of the Mendicant Order is well expressed by a historian of the Middle Ages. He says briefly:

"By their example and their mortified lives, their poverty, both individual and corporate, their zeal in popular preaching, their uncompromising defence of the Catholic faith and support of the Holy See, their world-wide organization, their combination of the cloistered and the active life, their mission work in Asia and Africa, the profound learning of their members and their controlling position of the universities of Europe, the Mendicant Orders exercised a far-reaching influence on every class of society. Through these Orders the Middle Ages attained their loftiest and purest ideals." 27

27. Guggenberger, A., S.J., op. cit., p. 401.

By preaching and more by their example the Friars achieved great success in social and religious reform. The primary aim of this First Order, it must be remembered, was reform of self. That the Friars became social reformers was a natural consequence of their vocation, not a primary motive. Father Cuthbert says:

"His salvation did not depend upon his reforming the world but upon his reforming himself. If the Franciscans eventually become social reformers, it was as a consequence of their vocation, not as a primary motive.... But with the Franciscans the Gospel was an inner light revealing new value in all the world about them. It was one of the notable traits of the Franciscans that, wherever their influence was felt, the common things of life received a sort of religious consecration. They preached the sanctity of marriage and of human relationships, they brought the Christian ideal to bear upon politics and the social order; they gave a dignity to the poor and instilled

a sense of responsibility into the rich man's use of wealth. They did much to humanize religious art; and entered into the spirit of popular song.... They were apostles of Christian humanity. But this was because in the Franciscan ideal of life they had found a real harmony between the Gospel and men's nature." 28

28. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., "The Story of the Friars", Romanticism of St. Francis, p. 137.

A powerful supplement as a means of reform of society was the organization of the Third Order of St. Francis of which the Friars were directors. By this Third Order the teaching and the example of the Friars were adopted and put into practice by the laity. The organization and the social influence of this Third Order of St. Francis will be the subject considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS AND SOCIAL REFORM OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Origin Of The Third Order

The most practical agency that served for St. Francis as a means to carry out his social reform was his Third Order. In it the laity obliged themselves to put into practice the precepts of the Gospel which the Friars taught them by word and example. This type of an organization seems not to have been entirely an original idea of St. Francis or his Friars. Its development as a Third Order was very gradual and was, when once organized, quite different from other orders that were affiliated with religious orders. Paul Martin says:

"We have seen that in all of his aims St. Francis never attempted to invent anything not already contained in the mind of the Church, and much less, anything contrary to it. The Third Order was no exception. Such organizations, as fostered by other religious orders, had been in existence long before St. Francis began his mission. That the founder of the Minors had one of these in mind, when, in conjunction with Cardinal Hugolino, he gave concrete form to his own Third Order is beyond all question.

"Although both the Oblates of St. Benedict and the Confraternity of the White Scapular (the name then given to the Norbertine seculars) were in existence during the life of St. Francis of Assisi, it is less likely that his ideas of a Third Order, which should form a

lay branch of the Friars Minor, were derived from either of these. They seem rather to have had their origin in his observations of the Humiliati, who had come into existence some time prior to the twelfth century." 1

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1. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 68-71.
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Professor Little gives St. Francis more credit as an originator of a new type of an organization. He says: "The idea of this Order was an original idea. Nothing of the kind had ever been created before." 2

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2. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 215.
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He says of it in very enthusiastic terms that it was "the most striking development...., the most remarkable evidence of the genius and wisdom of St. Francis, and the most effective instrument for working out a great change for the good of his contemporaries." 3

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3. Ibid., p. 212.
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Father Cuthbert considers the Humiliati as the pre-Franciscan penitential movement but not a Third Order in the same sense as the Tertiaries. The

Humiliati were not affiliated with any other religious order. They were Lombard penitents who "created a religious communism. They were not religious in the ordinary use of the word." 4

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4. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 332-333.
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He contrasts the Tertiaries of St. Francis with the Humiliati as follows:

"But the Humiliati, although sanctioned by the Church, were not always above suspicion with the ecclesiastical authorities; some of them indeed went over to the heretics. And like all the earlier penitential movements, they were tainted with a gloomy puritanism. Somehow they failed to grasp the beauty and liberty of the Gospel: there was no joyous song in their religion; and for that reason they could never have captured the new spirit of the age with its thirst for life and freedom. To the end they would remain a mere provincial fraternity, or a religious sect." 5

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5. Ibid., p. 336.
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The exact time and place of the official establishment of the Third Order of Penance is still a subject of dispute. Father Cuthbert, who has made a thorough study of original documents, holds that many people who listened to the teachings of St. Francis accepted his principles and desired to put

put into practice his example of penance and the spirit of poverty. As closely as possible they tried to imitate in their own homes the lives and virtues of the Franciscans of the First and Second Orders. The first Tertiaries were consequently without any definite rule or constitution. They did, however, have a written document called the "Letter to All Christians" which St. Francis wrote before the year 1220. Father Cuthbert says:

"But if we would find the more detailed rule by which their lives were ordered, we shall undoubtedly discover it in the 'Letter to All Christians,' which Francis wrote in the early years of his apostolate. This letter was not indeed written with the intention of making a special following for the fraternity, still less was it designed as a rule of life for any particular association.... If it became in some sort the special charter of spiritual perfection for those who now gathered more closely to the fraternity, it was probably because these took it as the expression of Francis' mind and made it their rule of life." 6

6. Ibid., p. 326.

This precious document is still in existence and is very characteristic of St. Francis himself. It seems to have been written at a time when Francis was prevented from active work because of illness. The letter contains many quotations from the Gospel. In the course of the letter St. Francis emphasized

the necessity of worthy confessions and communions, exhorts the faithful to practice of the virtues of a Christian life, especially humility, penance, charity and forbearance towards fellow-men, almsgiving, reverence for the priests, detachment from earthly vanities, and assiduity in prayer. Though this letter was not a Rule in the proper sense, it was a program of life that Francis desired should be adopted by all. It needed only a legal form to become a Rule.

Cf. Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 16-17.

The official organization of the Third Order, most historians agree, occurred in 1221. It was in this year that Cardinal Ugolino, later Pope Gregory IX, advised and assisted St. Francis to compile a definite rule. This first rule has been lost, but the Papal bull that approved of the Rule of 1221 still exists. It was in this year also that St. Francis officially enrolled the first members into the Third Order. The first official members were Luchesius and his wife Bonadonna. St. Francis clothed them with a distinct habit of the Third Order. Father Borgia Steck, O.F.M. says:

"That same year 1221, St. Francis came to Poggibonsi, a town near Florence. Here he met Luchesius, a friend of his boyhood days and

now a prosperous merchant. He was a man of singular virtue, and, having heard how the Saint had founded an Order for seculars at Florence, he asked to be enrolled. St. Francis gladly complied, and vested him and his wife, Bonadonna, with the habit of the Third Order. These two, therefore, are commonly regarded as the first Tertiaries. About the same time, a certain lawyer of the Roman Curia, by the name of Bartholomew, was clothed with the Tertiary habit and granted faculties to vest others, thereby becoming the first Third Order Director." 7

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7. Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 54-55.
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A revised Rule of 1228 is still in existence. Writers disagree in their estimation as to how much of the Rule was the work of Francis himself and how much Cardinal Ugolino compiled. Father Cuthbert says that the Rule was mostly the work of the Cardinal as it bears the impress of his statesmanship. But he says: "Behind the Cardinal was Francis, and his word was the fuller Rule by which they ordered their lives: and to this law the Cardinal himself bowed in affectionate reverence if not with entire conviction." 8

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8. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 339.
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Rule Of The Third Order

The primary aim of the Third Order was, and still is, the sanctification of its members. The first chapters of the Rule prescribed a life of simplicity and mortification on all its members. They were to wear humble garments. The price and quality of the material were stated in the rule, but dispensations were granted according to circumstances of individual women and local customs. All finery was to be laid aside and luxurious banquets, stage plays and dances were to be shunned. Moderation in eating and drinking were prescribed and they were to abstain from flesh-meat on certain days. Grace before and after meals was to be said in every home and certain prayers were prescribed for each day. All were to go to confession three times a year and receive Holy Communion at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. This rule, however, was the minimum, but frequent communion was urged by St. Francis. The sixth chapter required the members to pay their debts and their taxes or tithes. It forbade the carrying of arms and the taking of solemn oaths except with the approval of the Church. Each member was to encourage the members of his own family to live a Christian life. Monthly meetings were held at which, through community prayer and exhortations, the

members were encouraged in their good work. At this meeting alms were offered and the money thus collected was used for the poor and the most needy members of the Order, especially the sick. Sometimes it was used to defray burial expenses of deceased members who needed assistance. All the members were required to make their last will within three months after their profession. The aim of this was to prevent disputes which so often arise in families after the death of one who has not made a will. Other chapters of the Rule dealt with conditions regarding admission of candidates, their novitiate and profession. A year's probation was required before a novice was admitted to profession. No married woman could be received without the consent of her husband. Those who gave scandal were to be expelled from the order.

Cf. Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 13-30.

Though the original Rule had many points that would not be adaptable in our day, it was a very practical rule of life for the time in which it was written. To be appreciated it must be read with an historical point of view. With the historical background of society in mind, one must indeed conclude that such a Rule widely accepted possessed a powerful means of social reform. Briefly stated in the

ful means of social reform. Briefly stated in the words of Father Victor Mills: "This unique institution, which brought the cloister to the world, united master and servant, rich and poor, priest and people, prince and bishop, king and pope into one organization to battle against greed, pride and lust." 9

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9. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., "Social Activities in the Franciscan Order," op. cit., p. 9.
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Nature Of The Third Order

If the Rule itself was dry and formal, the spirit of St. Francis animated all Tertiaries to an enthusiasm that extended beyond the Rule. It is important to remember that his enthusiasm was directed primarily at reform of self. St. Francis never tired of emphasizing this point. The Third Order was a means by which St. Francis carried out his theory of individual reform already discussed in chapter four. It aimed for each member to keep a proper balance in his or her needs for soul and body. This self-reform was to be achieved by observing the Rule in the practice of love of God and man according to Gospel precepts. The Rule and especially the "Letter to All Christians" prescribed definitely how this aim was

to be achieved. It was precise, yet general enough to allow liberty of spirit that provided for each one to advance in perfection in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. "What, indeed, is the profession and life of a good Franciscan Tertiary?" asks Pope Pius XI. "It is not the rigor of the vows, not a life in common, not the religious life according to the letter. But it is the religious life according to the spirit. It is the spirit of that life and perfection carried into the family, into everyday life, the ordinary life of the world." 10

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10. Pius XI, Pope, Allocution of Pius XI: To the Tertiaries of Aracoeli, Rome, (February 26, 1923), On the Purpose and Mission of the Third Order.
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In greater detail the Pope explains the meaning of the spirit of that life as follows:

"Thus, in the life of the Tertiary, to the vow of chastity, that loftier nobility of the Christian life which consists in purity physically aspired to and more faithfully observed, corresponds the spirit of penance through mortification in his entire manner of living. To the vow of obedience corresponds the spirit of obedience which enters all his devoted and generous sacrifices in obeying the commandments of God and the laws of the Church, as well as the manifestations of authority and the exigences of his daily duty. To the vow of poverty corresponds the detachment of his heart from the goods of the world and his liberal and generous

charity toward the unfortunate and suffering. Thus the spirit of the Franciscan Tertiary is the apostolate of Christian life, Christian faith, and Christian peace carried about everywhere, to every hearth, every walk of life, every one of the various social relations." 11

11. Ibid.

The Third Order is therefore not a mere society or a confraternity. It is a religious order of the Church "because it has been declared to be a true order by the Sovereign Pontiffs; and because members thereof, devoting their lives to the Evangelical Counsels according to an approved rule and under the authority of ecclesiastical superiors, lead a life not unlike that of members of religious orders properly so-called." 12

12. Gruen, Ferdinand, O.F.M., Catechism of the Third Order, pp. 14-15.

Social Influence Of The Third Order

Every social reform has its foundation in the religious reform of the individual. Peace, justice, and charity are meaningless to any one who worships himself and his own selfish interests. There is no

earthly motive, purely material or social, that will supply a motive lofty enough to draw any human being to self-forgetfulness and consideration of others. Without a religious motive man seeks his own temporal welfare in material comforts and ease in which he neglects his better self and departs from the attainment of his true purpose in life. Neither will he have the consideration of his neighbor that he would have as a good Christian. Thus the religious and social influence of any program of social reform cannot be separated. The social evils of the thirteenth century were remedied in proportion as individuals reformed. This aim of St. Francis is expressed by Paul R. Martin. Mr. Martin says:

"From the beginning, luxury and avarice and greed had been the targets at which St. Francis aimed his shafts of reform, and all this was in complete accord with the social ideal of the Church, as is evidenced by the fact that the same luxury is the first thing which the members of the Order of Penance are admonished to avoid by the Hugoline-Franciscan Rule of 1221." 13

13. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 81.

Again he says of the "Letter to All Christians": "In it, religion and the social ideal go hand in hand, fully in accord with the social mind of the Church, as that social mindedness was reflected by St. Francis!" 14

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14. Ibid., p. 89.
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The social influence of the Tertiaries is well stated by a Protestant writer who in his writings fails to fully appreciate the religious motives and Catholic ideals. But in his treatises on The World's Epoch-Makers he recognizes the social effects of the Tertiary Organizations. The author says:

"The rise of the middle classes helped to remove the gulf between the rich and the poor, but to the Franciscan movement, and, as part of it, to the establishment of the Tertiaries, is to be attributed the more humane feeling which existed between all ranks of society. The poor felt that they were not outcast from society, when there were men to heed them, aiding and pitying them; the rich felt that they were brothers of the poor, when they recognized a duty to them, and did it. The plebeian crowd of the city, spurned by the nobles, despised by the artisans, poorer and meaner than the feudal serfs, learned through Francis that Christianity could bring the fortunate to the unfortunate, could consecrate the strong to the service of the weak. Francis especially, but Dominic too, was a savior of society in bringing the classes together through sympathy and uniting them through duty. Civilization progressed as men ceased to strive for domination one over another, and learned that the one blood of which God made them was the symbol of their unity."15

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15. Herkless, John, D.D., Francis and Dominic and the Mendicant Orders, pp. 50-51.
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Pope Leo XIII says of the social influence of the Tertiaries on European Civilization as follows:

"Keeping in view the virtues and precepts of

their Founder, the members did their utmost to resuscitate in society the glorious fruits of Christian morality. The fact is, by their influence and example, they often either laid or modified feuds; they snatched weapons from the hands of infuriated partisans; they removed the sources of strife and contention; they brought relief to the needy and desolate; they chastised luxury, that ravener of fortunes and pander to vices. Domestic peace and public tranquility, integrity of life and kindliness, the right use and management of property, - the best foundations of civilization and security, - spring from the Third Order of St. Francis as from their root, and it is to Francis that Europe is largely indebted for the preservation of these blessings." 16

16. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato.

Our present Pontiff, Pius XI, also speaks very enthusiastically of the glorious revival of society in the thirteenth century. He also emphasizes the fact that persons of social and political influence living in the days of St. Francis were active members of the Third Order. Who could speak with greater enthusiasm? He says:

"Thus a most wholesome change in society began to take shape, the new order founded by Francis spreading far and wide among the peoples of Christendom and gaining in numbers, while moral purity followed in the wake of the practice of penance. Not only popes, cardinals and bishops, but also kings and royal personages, some of whom flourished in the glory of sanctity, enthusiastically donned the habit of the Third Order and drank in the wisdom of the Gospel with the spirit of St. Francis. There was a beautifully glorious revival of the choicest virtues in civil life. In fine, the

face of the earth was renewed. " 17

17. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis.

Other writers speak of its social influence in no less praiseworthy terms. Dr. Little says:

"This Order went far to revive and support the life of godliness among the mass of the people, and to give them that strength and encouragement in serving God, which depend so much on sympathy and united effort.... It was an effort towards unworldliness and piety, which might in some respects be compared to the effort of the Puritans in England or the Piagnoni in Florence centuries after, with this important difference, that there was in it nothing of the hard spirit of these, but it was warmed and illumined by the loving and tender spirit of St. Francis. To a people, like the poorer classes in Italy, ground by feudalism and neglected by a worldly hierarchy and careless priests, it must have been indeed as refreshing dew 'on the thirsty ground,' reviving in them the hope and joy of a better world." 18

18. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

Father J. Elliot Ross says:

"The effect was stupendous. Many who never realized the crime of luxury were brought to see the tremendous injustice of their ways; many more who had previously wished to oppose the prevailing styles, but were too weak, were now bouyed up by numbers and organization to make a stand. What they were ashamed to do through real economy and individual judgment, they could now do because it was part of the

rule of the society they had joined." 19

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19. Ross, J. Elliot, C.S.P., Sanctity and Social Service, p. 56.
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Third Order And Social Work

The Third Order gave rise to extensive social work. This the reader will have realized from preceding quotations. The revival of the Christian social ideal of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man was its natural consequence. The members of the Order were called Brothers and Sisters of Penance. The words Brother and Sister were to remind them of fraternal charity, and Penance was to be the antidote to selfishness. Men and women of all classes of society united in works of charity. Though the Order had no special social welfare program, it gave rise to various kinds of institutions, such as leper colonies, hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the aged. Mr. Martin says:

"Thus, example after example could be cited of the charitable works undertaken by those sons and daughters of St. Francis who have worn the livery of the Third Order Secular, and carried out in keeping with the ideal of ~~their~~ founder. It all tends to prove that while the principle aim of the Third Order is the sanctification of its members, the realization of this aim leads to the performance of the corporal works of mercy." 20

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20. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 115.
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The provision in the rule of a common fund to which all members contributed, each according to his means or generosity, was used for those in need. Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., says of the Third Order and social work:

"It never has been, and never can be, a school of social science, any more than the Gospel itself, or the Catholic Church is such, or can be such.... Nevertheless just as the Gospel, though not a social system, contains the germ of every true social reform, so also the rule and life proposed to Tertiaries, which purports to revive promotion of social work" 21

21. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., pp. 70-71.

That the Third Order is not a sociological institute but that social work should always be a natural consequence of the Tertiaries and not its primary aim is also expressed by Pope Pius X.

"....as the proof of love is showing the fruit of good deeds, their rule binds them to exercise the spirit of charity toward members and non-members from a common fund, in a word to practice all these so-called works of mercy.

.....
 "But care must be taken that the Third Order itself do not invade the field of such societies and make its own the aim peculiar to them" 22

22. Pius X, Pope, Tertium Franciscanum, Letter on the Corporate Activity of the Third Order, September 8, 1912.

The Third Order And Family Life

The Rule does not prescribe any special obligations for married people except that a married woman must have the consent of her husband before she can be accepted as a member of the Order.

Cf. Chapter I, Rule 2. - See Appendix.

But the sanctification of the home, which is primary the obligation of parents, is expressed in several rules and in the spirit of the entire rule in general. Chapter II, section eight, reads: "In their daily life let them strive to lead others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications which are a menace to the virtue to be brought into their homes or to be read by those under their care." The same Chapter, rule three, prescribes devout grace before and after meals. The social influence on happiness in a home derived from prayers said in common can hardly be estimated. The spirit of moderation or penance required of all members is also a great asset towards peace in the family. In like manner the general spirit of the rule is most conducive for a happy and peaceful home. A faithful Tertiary will always be a worthy member of home life. In An Explanation of the Rule of the Third Order the author

says how the Tertiary values the home. He says:

"In the work of sanctifying the home the Tertiary should do rather than speak. Example is like preaching a sermon without saying a word. This wordless sermon should consist in exactness in all household duties and religious practices and customs of the family; in patience in bearing up with the trials, disappointments, lack of appreciation, petty jealousies, misunderstandings, that are part of one's daily life; in gentleness and meekness that will show itself in restraining the angry word and the cutting remark; in kindness and charity that will cover faults rather than disclose them, while constantly striving for peace and harmony in the family." 23

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23. MCGee, J. Forest, O.F.M., St. Francis in the World, An Explanation of the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis, pp. 32-33.
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Father Cuthbert says of the influence of the Friars upon family life:

"The influence of the friars upon the popular conception of marriage and family life also deserves attention.... But it was not only the heretical sectaries who took a low view of marriage. The romantic literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had frequently tended to exalt free love over conjugal love. But the Franciscan took the saner Catholic view. His teaching concerning the dignity of marriage was closely allied with his devotion to the Blessed Virgin which was so notably a feature in his life and preaching....the friars came to be regarded as the advocates and friends to true lovers. In this light Chaucer represents them in his satirical description of the friar in the Canterbury Tales; Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet; Manxori in I Promessi Sposi" 24

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24. Cuthbert, Father O.S.F.C., "The Story of the Friars," The Romanticism of St. Francis, pp. 179-180.
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Political Influence Of The Third Order

The world was in political turmoil in the thirteenth century. There were constant wars and feuds. One of the outstanding conflicts was the struggle between the Church and the Secular Powers. Against this as well as against the social evils that resulted from the decline of religion St. Francis was indeed the pillar that supported the tottering Church. One of the outstanding teachings of St. Francis by word and example was respect for clergy. (See Chapter IV) In the "Letter to All Christians" Francis wrote: "We must too visit churches frequently and reverence the clergy, not so much because of themselves if they are sinners but because of their ministering of the most holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar and receive and administer to others." 25

25. Cuthbert, Father, O.S.F.C., Saint Francis of Assisi, p. 329.

The first provision of his Rule for Tertiaries requires that only those may be received as members who are "above all of tried fidelity in the practice of the Catholic Faith and in loyalty to the Roman

Church and the Apostolic See." By the revival of a religious spirit in the clergy and laity, especially through the Third Order, the Emperors received less support from them. Father Cyprian says:

"By its establishment Francis created a Christian camp in the very midst of the hostile world. The new fraternity spread rapidly. All, the lord and the serf, the prince and the peasant, the rich and the poor, the mighty and the lowly, the ecclesiastic and the layman, the husband and the wife, the married and unmarried, hastened with burning eagerness and with the greatest enthusiasm to join this branch of Franciscans. Within a few years the penitents had become a social force to be reckoned with by the secular power." 26

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26. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Social Action", op. cit., p. 175.
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Dr. Little says:

"It has been said, truly enough, that had that struggle come a little sooner, the event might have been very different. Had it come when there was a worldly episcopate, a careless priesthood, and a neglected people, when the most earnest were the Cathari or Albigenses and other holders of fantastic heresies, there would have been no force sufficient to turn the scale and defeat so able and inveterate an enemy of Christianity as Frederic. It was different now. The Christlike spirit of Francis had permeated Italy.... It was the Franciscans and especially the Tertiaries, whom Frederic feared and abhorred more than any other enemy. It was a true insight into the future which taught Innocent III to recognise that the dream of was a real presentiment and that the tottering Church would be upheld by Francis." 27

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27. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 231.
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Another historian writer says at length:

"Ugolino saw more clearly than any other the importance, and even the necessity, of Franciscan help for the Church. He was perfectly well acquainted with the situation both within and without and he kept his eyes fixed on future developments. He knew that the Church was threatened by three dangers: the ferment of heresy, the spirit of independence and absolutism among the communes, which expressed itself in a tax on Church property and privileges; and the rivalry of the empire.... The struggle was inevitable. A born fighter, Ugolino in no way shrank from it, and the anti-imperial party had found in him its leader at the court of Honorius. But he intended to prepare for it with the greatest care. The struggle would be won by the Church on one condition: that its prestige among the masses of the people remained intact. Heretics, communes, and empire might fight as they would so long as they fought separately; but if they were united in a popular revolt against Rome, that would mean ruin, the abomination of desolation, the reign of Antichrist." 28

28. Salvatorelli, Luigi, op. cit., pp. 218-220.

Paul R. Martin says: "The civil authorities did not accept with any good grace the position which the Tertiaries had come to occupy. They rebelled at the idea of a vast army of laymen drawing themselves part from those activities which were the outgrowth of their own lust for power." 29

29. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 88.

Pope Benedict XV, who reigned during the World War, also styled St. Francis as the pillar of the Church in the Third Order. He says of it: "The Third Order came as a climax to the illustrious and immortal services which Francis rendered Christianity and for which he was justly styled a pillar of strength given the Church by God at a critical moment." 30

30. Benedict XV, Pope, Sacra Provediem, Encyclical on the Seventh Centenary of the Third Order, (January 6, 1921).

The Third Order And Feudalism

That the Third Order was the weapon that gave the deathblow to feudalism is the common opinion of many writers. St. Francis most probably did not intend it to be so, but the provisions in the Rule which forbade its members to carry arms and take oaths brought this about. Feudalism was on the decline for some time. As an institution it was not adaptable to the new social and political and economic conditions that were developing in society. The maladjustment created in consequence gave rise to injustice and strife. Against these evils

St. Francis organized the Third Order. That many joined the Third Order for protection against these injustices and the trials of war is most probably true and neither surprising nor disedifying. Abbe Le Monnier explains this situation very fittingly in the following words:

"We doubt whether the sole desire of leading a higher life would have been sufficiently powerful to attract a whole country into new paths.... But the holy Founder knew that these interests (of the world) are intimately connected with the moral life, and he did not neglect them. The Third Order may be said to be one of the greatest efforts wever attempted for introducing more justice amongst men. This point of view requires some explanation.

"In the Rule there are three articles expressed as follows: - Chapter VII. The brethren must carry no offensive weapons, except in defence of the Church and the faith of Jesus Christ, or in defence of their country, or with the permission of the superiors. Chapter XII. The brethren must abstain from solemn oaths, unless they are constrained by necessity and keep within the limit of the cases excepted by the Holy See. Chapter XIII. Each brother will give a farthing of current money to the reasurer, who will collect this money and distribute it suitably, according to the advice of the ministers, to the brethren and sister who are destitute."

... .. In the Middle Ages they were a stroke of genius. They contained the germ of a beneficent revolution of a kind that has not often been brought about in the history of the world.

"They changed the then existing social order, in favour of the weak and humble. As was to be expected, they could not be put into practice without difficulty... The struggle broke out at Faenza, less than three months after the foundation of the Third Order. The inhabitants of Faenza were passionate Guelphs.... In 1221 they soon saw the advantages they could gain from the new institution. They enrolled themselves in it in great numbers, and, setting up the Rule against

feudatories, who, probably, were mostly Ghiberlines, they declared that they were forbidden to follow them in war.... So new and singular a declaration must have astonished and even frightened the nobles....therefore they employed every means....to stifle it in the bud. The Tertiaries....appealed to the Bishop of Rimini....and he referred the question to the Court of Rome. The opinion of Honorius was formed in his conversation with Cardinal Ugolino, and he was not long in giving his answer. On the 16th of December he wrote, that the lords and authorities must be the enemies of all virtue if they constrained to military service men who, having renounced all glory in this world, aspired to nothing but to lead a Christian life, and to practice works of penance. He ordered the Bishop to grant the request of those who had addressed him, and to employ all the power of the Holy See, even if need were by an excommunication, to destroy the pretensions of their adversaries." 31

31. LeMonnier, Abbe L., op. cit., pp. 288-290.

The Third Order did not dispense its members of any just obligation they owed their feudal lords, if any dues and tolls had to be paid. The same author says:

"No more military service from the multitude, no more oaths of fealty. Feudalism felt itself struck in its most vital part. Nothing remained to it except the dues and tolls, and these were mostly redeemable; and, in fact, the Tertiaries had begun to redeem them. They possessed considerable sums of money.... The ministers did not hesitate to draw upon this treasury for the enfranchisement of those who were still in the hands of the feudal lords" 32

32. Ibid., p. 291.

The Popes have always been the defenders of the oppressed. Each successive Pope took up the cause of the Tertiaries against the abuses of the feudal lords. When they realized that the Rule of the Third Order was in need of adjustments, regulations were made accordingly. A recent writer says:

"The Church felt it her duty to defend them, (the Tertiaires)....declaring them free - as did Honorius III - from military service, dispensing them as did Gregory IX - from the duty of holding public office,.... Soon, however, the historical evolution of society began to redress the balance. Gregory IX declared that Tertiaries might take oaths as peace-makers, or for the maintenance of the Faith, or in self-defense, or as witnesses in courts of law. Nicholas IV added that it was permissible for them to carry arms in defense of the Church, or their own country, or for any other reason which their Ministers approved of. Notwithstanding these modifications the Third Order retained a very definitely religious character, which placed it on a higher plane than other lay confraternities." 33

33. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 74.

Another provision in the Rule that weakened feudal power and promoted social peace and justice was the requirement of every member of the Order to make his will. Father Cyprian, O.F.M., says:

"Another right that was often used and abused by the feudal lord was that of seizing the goods of the serfs who died intestate. Hence, it happened that the lords became such extensive landowners. St. Francis commanded the members of the Third Order to make their

wills within three months after their admission into the order. Thus was broken the domination of the lords, and the serf and poor gradually acquired the social and political rights of citizenship." 34

34. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 175.

It may be of interest to know Dr. Little's Attitude regarding St. Francis and the Third Order. He says very respectfully:

"But, in some respects, the most interesting point in relation to the Third Order was this: it gave the death-blow to the feudal system in Italy. St. Francis, is sometimes spoken of as a simple man who had no plans, no wide-reaching undertakings. In this there is truth and there is not.... But his very simplicity and unworldliness; with so rich an inheritance of 'wisdom which cometh from above,' gave him a marvellous insight into the needs of the time, and the methods most effective for meeting them.... Had it been otherwise, he never could have carried out the religious and social revolution which, as a matter of fact, was effected by him." 35

35. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 217.

Influence Of The Third Order On Succeeding Centuries To Modern Times

The social regeneration begun by St. Francis continued after his death. A few outstanding achievements are worthy of brief consideration. The First Order grew and spread to almost all nations. The

Third Order was as widespread as the First for the Friars Minor were the directors of the Tertiaries.

Professor Martin says:

"Citing the official records of the Order of Friars Minor, Oderic - Marie Jouve, O.F.M., points out that by the end of the thirteenth centuries there was not a country in Europe into which the Third Order had not been introduced. "In America during the period of the 'great discoveries,' the Franciscan missionaries had enrolled 120,000 Tertiaries from among their converts by 1680. At that time, in fact, the total members of Tertiaries under the direction of the First Order was 1,521,400 in all parts of the world." 36

36. Martin, Paul, R., op. cit., p. 117.

The authors of Makers of Freedom say that at the time of the death of St. Francis some 5,000 had joined the First Order.

Cf. Eddy, Sherwood and Page Kirby, op. cit., p. 31.

Members of the Third Order have been of every class in society. Not only peasants and serfs who were protected from abuse but many of royal families and nobles, men and women of every station in life. A distinctive trait of the Third Order is the variety of good works undertaken by the Tertiaries and of the numerous types of interests its members represented. Each in his vocation or calling in life was the better for being a Tertiary. This also shows the wonderful adaptability of the Rule. Examples of a

few outstanding Tertiaries whose names history will ever recall are Roger Bacon - the scientist, Christopher Columbus the explorer, Dante - the poet, Giotto - the artist, St. Ignatius Loyola - the founder of the Jesuit Order, Louis of France - a king, Gregory IX - a Pope, Frederick Ozanam - the social worker, St. Joan of Arc - the liberator of France, De Palestrina Giovanni Pierluigi - the musician, Sir Thomas More - a chancellor and writer, St. John Baptist de la Salle - father of modern pedagogy, St. Elizabeth of Hungary - the queen, St. Margaret of Cortona - a penitent, St. Ives of Kumartin - a lawyer, St. Benedict Joseph Labre - a beggar, Blessed John Baptist Vianney - a priest, St. Margaret Mary Aloccoque - a religious, John Henry Newman - a Cardinal, William E. Ketteler - Bishop and Sociologist.

Cf. Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 62-68.

Many others could be listed who are not on the pages of secular history. Each one aimed at his own individual reform and secondly at service to mankind. If they could have achieved this aim without having neen enrolled in the Third Order, they achieved a higher goal for being in it. But the chief point of importance is that the Third Order is all-embracing and does not hinder anyone from achieving in the

most perfect manner one's purpose in life.

The Third Order Regular

The Third Order Regular is a product of the late fourteenth century and originated from the Third Order Secular or Tertiaries. It comprises the various Franciscan Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods who lived in communities and adopted the Third Order Rule. Bl. Angelina of Marsciano is considered the foundress of the Sisterhood of the Third Order Regular. In 1521 Pope Leo X drew up a uniform Rule for the Third Order Regular which provided for religious vows. In the nineteenth century more than one-hundred new Franciscan Sisterhoods were founded. Their work is for the welfare of humanity in schools, hospitals, orphanages, and foreign missions.

Cf. Ibid., pp. 69-72.

Paul R. Martin says of these religious communities that the "social work which these congregations have done may be attributed, indirectly at least, to the Third Order of St. Francis." 37

37. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 119.

The Third Order And Peace

The Third Order members continued to promote world peace. History records of the formation of a Crusade of Peace started shortly after the death of St. Francis. Father Bede Jarret says:

"The feeling against war blazed out at times into Crusades of Peace, such as that started by Giovanni de Vicenza in the summer of 1233, strange medley of idealism and wildness that ended in disaster.... To these thus gathered together, Giovanni, a preaching friar, held forth on the evils of war, its un-Christian character when waged between Christian men and the blessings of peace. Gregory IX sent a special letter to the assembly, and this too was read, and the ceremony ended in the formation of a League of Peace to which all these Lombard cities subscribed." 38

38. Social Theories of the Middle Ages, pp. 186-187.

In regard to the conflict between the Emperor Frederick II and the Pope, Father Guggenberger says of St. Louis IX, patron of the Third Order:

"In the struggle between the Church and Frederick II the policy of St. Louis was expectant and conciliatory rather than aggressive, but when Frederick made preparations to attack Innocent IV at Lyons, St. Louis stood ready to defend the Holy Father with all the resources of the kingdom and Frederick gave up the design. The king showed extraordinary favor to the Mendicant Orders." 39

39. Guggenberger, A., S.J., op. cit., p. 386.

The Third Order And Credit Unions

Under the guidance of the Friars the Tertiaries organized the first financial relief system to check the injustices of usury of money-lenders. These new loan institutions were called Montes Pietatis. The funds for their operation were made up partly of sums contributed by the municipality, partly by parishes and mostly by voluntary contributions of wealthy persons. The idea originated with Friar Barnabas of Terni and was enthusiastically promoted in Italy by Blessed Bernardine of Monte Felto. Local conditions everywhere were taken into consideration and individual Montes were suited to the needs of the community. The result of the Montes was the failure of many banks. During the social upheavals of Reformation their spread declined. "Modern writers see in the Montes of the Middle Ages a distinct social accomplishment not only because they were a godsend to the poor but also because they enabled impoverished members of the middle class to maintain their status during a crisis," says Father Victor Mills.

Cf. Mills, Victor, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 7-8.
Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 23.

The Third Order And The Popes

One of the best assurance of the power for good in the Third Order of St. Francis is the fact that so many Popes have sponsored it in almost every century. Father Francis Borgia says:

"On no lay organization in the Church have ecclesiastical dignitaries of past and present times lavished such unstinted praise as on the Third Order of St. Francis.... By word and example they have urged the faithful to embrace the Third Order Rule, to become followers of the Seraphic Saint both for their own sanctification and for the social betterment of the world around them. More than thirty different Popes are known to have written special letters defending the Order against calumny and oppression and commending it as a valuable means of salvation." 40

40. Steck, Francis Borgia, O.F.M., op. cit., pp. 60-61.

Paul Martin relates of Pope Nicholas IV, who was a member of the Friars Minor that he solemnly approved of the Third Order in 1289 and advised that its visitors be members of the First Order. Pope Clement V (1311) stood in their defense and cleared them of all charges brought against them. In 1319 Pope John XXII by a similar bull declared the Third Order to be thoroughly Catholic. Two Ecumenical Councils, one in 1311 and the other in 1512, both approved and highly recommended the Order. In a bull, Pope Benedict XII reaffirmed the position of the Third Order as a true religious order of the Church,

Order as a true religious order of the Church, granted it precedence over all lay associations and declared: "The Third Order of Penance....at all times bestowed and still bestows the richest fruits of zeal and wisdom upon the Church." Pope Pius IX in a letter to the compilers of The Franciscan Annals struck the first social keynote by saying that "for all the evils which harass society, the Third Order will prove a fit remedy."

Cf. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 128-29.

The influence of the Tertiaries seems to have declined by the later half of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries. This was no doubt the result of the Protestant Revolt, the Kulture Kamp, and the French Revolution. Then a new era of Franciscan influence started again. During the Protestant Revolution, says Father Agostino Gemelli, "Luther honored the Franciscans with his personal hatred." He wrote blasphemous books about them which were published widely and from which Protestants, Rationalists, Encyclopediest and the entire anti-Catholic world, from Rabelais to Voltaire, derived the most unfavourable notions concerning the Franciscans.

Cf. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 120.

Of the eighteenth century Father Agostino Gemelli says: "Of all the centuries the eighteenth has been the one which has understood and loved St. Francis least of all." Then he asks: "What then remained of the Franciscan movement at the end of the eighteenth century? He answers: "There still remained the Franciscans. They were few indeed in number, but more deeply imbued with the Franciscan spirit than before.... Free - enjoying the only true freedom that is, which is the privilege of the poor in spirit, they set forth to meet the 'new era'" 41

41. Ibid., pp. 196-197.

In the succeeding chapters the Third Order will be considered in relation to modern social problems. Are our modern social problems unsurmountable? Is our age very much different from the age of St. Francis? Human nature has not changed. The fundamental principles do not change either. What was wrong and antisocial in the Middle Ages is still as wrong as today. Avarice, oppression of the poor (or of labor), selfishness, class hatred are as anti-social today as they ever were. Peace, justice, and charity are as much loved and desired by all people as they were enjoyed by the early Christians. With Pope Pius XI the conclusion is the need of a return to the

fundamental remedy. He says: "As in all the stormy periods of the history of the Church, the fundamental remedy today lies in a sincere renewal of private and public life according to the principles of the Gospel." 42

42. Divini Redemptoris, Encyclical on Atheistic Communism, (March 19, 1937).

The Third Order is a salutary means for this "renewal of private and public life of today."

CHAPTER VII

DISTURBED SOCIETY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Material Civilization And Man's Purpose In Life

Was there ever a time in the history of the world when people enjoyed such a variety of things - essentials, conveniences, comforts, luxuries - as they do today? Yet there have been periods in world history when civilized people were less weary, less worried, more satisfied and more at peace with self and with others than they are in this twentieth century. After all, should not progress in material civilization naturally bring about a greater contentment and more happiness? At least these should not decrease or remain stationary. Father Joseph Husslein, S.J. says:

"Machinery, indeed has done many and wonderful things, but to say it has increased the measure of true human happiness in the world over that possessed in the Gild Age, when machinery was as yet unknown, would be indeed a hazardous assertion.

"It is in no sense my wish to stay the onward march of progress,.... or to recall the economic conditions of the past. But I would profoundly warn against a wrong evaluation of mere material progress and the delusive hopes based upon it. Materially we have gained much in many ways, and shall have much more to gain. We have increased human comforts, augmented scientific knowledge, and through medical investigation and discoveries have lengthened the very span of the average life of man in comparison with that of a generation ago. Yet nothing in all this progress has substantially

altered man's condition here below." 1

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1. Husslein, Joseph, S.J. The Christian Social Manifesto, pp. 122-123.
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Material goods, the secrets of nature, the inventions of man are god-given for man to use. As man needs them or can make good use of them, the Author and Creator of all things unfolds His secrets to the needs of His creatures. Man is often obliged to use them if they promote his purpose in life of that of his neighbor. And to the extent that man promotes his final purpose in life and that of his fellowmen, only to that extent will he enjoy peace and contentment. Man must first recognize his purpose in life and then aim at its attainment. This he achieves by making a rightful use of all the means at his disposal that lead him to his goal. The underlying cause of all social, political and economic disturbance is that many are seeking happiness where it cannot be found--the result of which is a maladjustment in the social order because man's life had become unbalanced. As man fails to recognize his purpose in life, he fails to make a proper evaluation of the goods of this world. Their value must be measured only on the basis of promoting his purpose in life. If a material good does not pro-

note his final end he must deny himself the use of it. This is not always easily done for man's nature often craves for things not to his advantage. Therefore, not realizing one's purpose in life, seeking for things that do not promote his final end man becomes unhappy. He lacks adjustment.

Man's Purpose In Life And Moral Law

How is man to recognize his purpose in life? He must first admit that there is a God who is the First Cause of creation. The world and its creatures could not begin of themselves. Then he must recognize that the Creator is the Author of all laws of nature and that He has made laws according to which man must live. He must recognize God as the Father of all mankind - Who desires that man live as his Creator ordained. To each person God makes Himself known and He gives to each a conscience - the use of reason by which he can know God, know his purpose in life, and know how to attain it. This truth is well expressed by The Most Reverend Joseph F. Busch in The Art of Living With God as follows:

"But, over and above man's physical, mental, moral, and social culture, is the development of the religious element of his nature; for, by the light of his reason and the voice of his conscience, man knows there is a God who rewards the good and punishes the evil, and this is sufficient to form the basis of a natural religion." 2

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2. Busch, Joseph, F., D.D., The Art of Living With God, p. 152.
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God has given man a free will whereby he can conduct his life so as to fulfill the purpose for which he was created; or, he can follow a self-formed purpose which is opposed to his welfare. God created man without his consent, but man must cooperate in achieving his end. Man is therefore obliged to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him in order to be eternally happy. This law stated in other words is to love God above all creatures and his neighbor as himself. This is the law of God, the Creator, and in it lies man's purpose of life. In Christ man has seen this law fulfilled. In the Gospel man is told in detail how to carry it out. The Christian Social Theory, which proceeds from the Gospel precepts has the solution to all social problems. All social and economic problems are the result of violation of moral laws - of thoughts, words, and deeds opposed to the love of God and of one's neighbor. Pope Pius XI has said: "No leader in public economy, no power of organization will ever be able to bring social conditions to a peaceful solution, unless first, in the very field of economics, there triumphs moral law based on God and conscience." 3

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3. Quoted by Fr. Sylvester Brielmaier, O.M.Cap., "Moral Theology and Sociology", Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1934), p. 59.
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Father Sylvester continues:

"The conviction that a solution of the present chaotic situation is largely ethical is not restricted to Catholic Authorities. In one of a series of articles published in Scribner's Magazine, a few years ago, Charles A. Beard makes the following pointed statement: 'What is the root of our trouble? It lies in our philosophy of life or rather the absence of it, if that is not a paradox..... The supreme cause of our confusion is our contemptuous dismissal of ethics. Disgusted with the frauds committed in its name, our best thinkers have turned their backs upon it. Economics and science openly boast that they have nothing to do with it. They are busy with money getting and compound analysis. What ought to be, given our situation, what is just, fair, right, supremely gratifying, and beautiful is thrust aside. The grand conceptions which have inspired millions are swept into the discard by economists as futile if not foolish and, by the communists, as bourgeois prejudices.'" 4

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4. Ibid.,
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It is evident that man has a nobler purpose in life than to satisfy his bodily appetites. Riches, pleasures, luxuries, bodily comforts are not going to satisfy him. He will find himself still restless - seeking for something he often does not know what. Why? Because man is more than a mere animal. He

is a rational animal. He has a reason - spiritual faculties of the soul that aim at higher things than his animal nature craves. His spiritual appetites need to be satisfied. There must be a proper balance between his bodily needs and his spiritual needs. Man's animal nature often asserts itself over his rational nature and the latter suffers. Man must be master of his animal nature. But one may ask - has not man made great advancement in the satisfaction of the spiritual faculties of the soul? In the various fields of study man's reason and intellect have been enjoying great satisfaction in unfolding the secrets of nature. When some scientists first made great discoveries, they felt so elated that they almost forgot the Author of nature or tried to dispose of Him to formulate their own purpose of life. Now that scientists are learning still more and making greater discoveries, they are coming closer to the Creator; and the theory that science and religion are opposed to each other has nearly been discarded. Great scientists are ready to acknowledge God and the more they learn to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him, the greater scientists they become. But advancement in the intellectual field combined with the material satisfactions will still not satisfy man. Man was made for happiness

and happiness does not consist in intellectual and material advancement. Man's heart is sorely neglected in our twentieth century. Man's spiritual nature craves for love - the love of God and of his neighbor.

Evaluation Of Material Goods

In religion man really finds his proper relationship with God and his fellowman. He must love God above all things - above all material goods - and his neighbor as himself. This law is in man's heart and conscience. Only when he abides by it, is he fulfilling his purpose in life. In conformity with this law man must make his evaluation of all the material and spiritual goods of this world. Reverend Theodore Mary Hemelt says of the importance of rightly determining the value of earthly goods and of human actions:

"Values are essential because of the intrinsic nature of the thing or object itself, and secondly, because that object, as far as finite objects are concerned, may have a utility for something else. It follows that morality is necessarily connected with the idea of value, because morality is an appreciation of conduct as advancing or hindering man in the attainment of his last end--possession of God by the use or abuse of the thing or object that has value. Moreover, sociological writers themselves seem to see some essential relationship between social activities and their influence upon man.

"Sociology cannot help being moral, even though the 'newer scientific' spirit disclaims any such concern. This proposition is based upon the fact that the wellsprings of man's conduct are at the same time the matter of

sociological investigation, because all activity of man resulting in social realities flows from these sources." 5

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5. Hemelt, Theodore M., Final Moral Values in Sociology, pp. 23-24.
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If man can serve God better by the use of material goods, he must make use of them. If he can promote his own welfare and that of his neighbor, he must also use them and praise God for them. When individuals in society will maintain a proper balance in meeting the needs of their spiritual nature as well as their animal nature, social unrest will cease. In maintaining the balance they will have evaluated material and spiritual goods of this world in the light of the advancement of their purpose in life.

There are two general principles by which individuals can guide their lives in the proper evaluation and use of earthly and intellectual goods: First, it is lawful to acquire earthly goods by honest means and to use them in promoting God's honor, the welfare of one's neighbor and one's own good. According to this principle man may acquire a certain amount of influence in the world. Those exert the greater influence who are people of culture and means and who occupy prominent positions. For this reason it is lawful to acquire in a

legitimate manner such things that will enable one to be influential and thereby promote God's honor and be of greater service to others. The second principle is that earthly goods must not be loved for their own sake. To love earthly goods for their own sake leads to an over-evaluation of them to the detriment of man's nobler purpose. Man becomes too eager for them and uses all effort to acquire more. He becomes over-anxious, is so greatly concerned how he is going to satisfy himself that he loses sight of God and of his neighbor. A proper evaluation of earthly goods leads him to a peaceful confidence in divine providence.

Cf. Jaegen, Hieronymus, Catholic Life and Action, pp. 304-305.

To acquire the proper attitude towards material and intellectual goods man must in other words, accept the spirit of poverty taught by Christ, written for man in the Gospels, and exemplified again in the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

Man must learn to sacrifice material wants if they hinder his spiritual progress. St. Francis, like his Master, taught the nations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the social value of detachment from the goods of this world to promote

the higher nature of man. He found all his theories and principles of social reform in the Gospel of Christ. He insisted on individual reform through the spirit of poverty and penance. By these alone man would be led to love God above all things and his neighbor as himself. This same thought is expressed by Archbishop Francis J. Beckman in his recent Lenten Letter:

"To reform the world, reform yourself. Reform of self is conformity to Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Conformity to Christ is the reform and salvation of the world. Not in any economic formula, but in Christ consists the salvation of the country and the world. Nothing is clearer than that the depression is altogether moral and not monetary nor material at all. Every keen and capable analyst whatever his religion or lack of it says as much. The dreadful disorder of the world is but the result of the dreadful disorder in the heart of man." 6

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6. Beckman, Francis J., The Catholic Tribune, Dubuque, Iowa, Editorial, (February 12, 1937).
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Social Maladjustment

The stupendous progress of civilization from the material and intellectual point of view has failed to satisfy the society of the twentieth century. Man's physical and intellectual needs have been marvelously well satisfied, but the heart of man has been forgotten. The result is a social maladjustment. Material and intellectual advancements have failed

Material and intellectual advancements have failed to satisfy the needs of man's heart. They have not promoted love of God and his neighbor because man has abused material and intellectual goods. He has used them selfishly to promote his own bodily comforts, but the spiritual needs of his soul he has forgotten. No amount of wealth, of bodily comfort, of honor or of political power, of pleasure - no degree of pure intellectual progress is ever going to satisfy man's heart. Man was created for a nobler purpose.

Representative William M. Citron struck this note when he wrote to His Eminence George Cardinal Mundelein very recently on the social and political situation in Germany. He said: "It is a sad commentary on our twentieth century civilization to observe such a condition of affairs in a cultured nation like Germany. While it only goes to prove that education, learning and science do not always enoble the heart of man and make him kinder to his neighbor."⁷

7. Citron, William, M., Catholic Daily Tribune, Dubuque, Iowa, (May 27, 1937).

The result is that society is maladjusted, restless, dissatisfied and on a verge of a revolution. For several decades public education has not taught its

people of the spiritual needs of man. It has over-emphasized material and intellectual progress and deceived society with the idea that in these happiness will be found. Public education has failed to teach the true purpose of man's life on earth. It has created for them a false goal in which they realize only too late that it reaches to dissatisfaction. It has created a nation of selfish individuals with no love of God in their hearts and a total disregard of the dignity of their fellowman. It is but natural that man be over-joyed and infatuated with the things that satisfy his sensual appetites. His fallen nature has blinded him to spiritual values and has made his life a struggle. But man has a reason and a will power whereby he can know, govern, and control his animal nature and make it subject to his spiritual nature - his better self. The great progress in material civilization and in intellectual achievements make this struggle more difficult. In this progress individuals easily become too infatuated with materialism. Society needs to make an equally great advancement in the moral and religious aspects or properly so-called cultural advancement. There must be a balance between man's material civilization and

cultural civilization. The lack of this balance creates a social maladjustment which results in political, economic and social disturbances of every kind.

Government And Social Adjustment

Each individual can make this adjustment by governing his life according to Christian principles. He, however, needs the aid of other agencies in order to make this adjustment permanent and stable. The purpose of State Government is to promote the welfare of society. Its function is to guide and protect the rights of individuals in the attainment of their purpose in life. In its duty of promoting the welfare of society, Government has legislative, judicial and executive powers of rights which it must exercise. Its rights, however, are limited to actions that promote social welfare. It must be vigilant in this duty. When through economic or material progress new legislation or protection is necessary, Government must supply such in accordance with Christian principles of social justice. The laissez faire idea has done a great deal of harm to society in that the Government did not function in its duty. Material civilization progressed while

legislation and protection stayed far behind. Intellectual progress has made great progress but only in knowledge concerning man's physical welfare. Society has not been taught the proper attitude towards life and earthly goods. Thus again cultural civilization is lagging behind material civilization"so that we are not so much going through a revolution now, as trying to catch up with the revolution that has already happened." 8

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8. Tschippert, Clarence, O.M.Cap., "The Necessity of a New Orientation", Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1934), p. 18.
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The manner in which government fulfills its obligation to promote the welfare of society must be a constant concern of individuals that make up society. Father Marion Habig, states the Christian principles that should guide society. He says:

"It has been repeatedly pointed out that certain conditions, such as those which prevail today, demand that the government's regulating power be increased. Now, is not the danger at hand, that the government will arrogate to itself more power than the need calls for? The thought that comes to my mind is this: while all thinking and sincere men admit that present conditions are such that the government must interfere and make regulations for the business world, still we must keep a watchful eye on legislation, lest it go beyond the need. Poper Pius XI in Quad

ragesimo Anno: 'We feel bound to add that to Our knowledge there are some who fear that the state.... is substituting itself in the place of private initiative, instead of limiting itself to the necessary and sufficient help and assistance.' The need of increased government control in the economic world is apparent; but the need of watching the work of our legislators remains. 'Eternal vigilance on the part of citizens will always be the price of good government.'" 9

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9. Habig, Marion, O.F.M., Discussion of Paper: "Industrial Cooperation" by Father Peter Duffee, O.F.M., Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1934), p. 133.
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Change Of Attitude Essential

To remedy this social maladjustment a change of attitude is required of society in general and of each individual in particular. Politicians, Economists, Sociologists will not find a solution to social problems of today except in so far as they remove the fundamental cause of the social unrest. Each individual in society must be given the opportunity to promote his purpose in life. He must be able to exercise the fundamental law laid down by his Creator - to love God above all creatures and his neighbor as himself. The exercise of this obligation will require a proper attitude towards God, his neighbor, and the material goods this world

has to offer him. It will require of him the ability to evaluate everything in the light of his purpose. Christian social thought will guide him in this purpose which Christ has shown by His example, and still teaches in the Gospel precepts and which St. Francis has demonstrated to the world. With Father Clarence this same idea can be stated as follows:

"We do need a new orientation, a change of objective, a change of economic philosophy, a wider social outlook, a change of laws to meet the new facts, a changed legal attitude, - we need all this, but what we need still more is a change of heart. We need an injection of spirituality into our materialistic-minded age. We need to go back to the spirit of Christ: a spirit of justice and charity among all men, a spirit of brotherliness, that recognizes as a moral duty the respect for the rights of our fellows. We must learn all over again and apply to our economic and social life the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherliness of all men in Him." 10

10. Tschippert, Clarence, O.M.Cap., op. cit., p. 22.

Dr. Little expressed the same thought with St. Francis in his mind:

"We have learned to feel, as men more and more have felt in our days, that there are two important orders of God's working for his creatures here - civilization and religion. They have been sometimes opposed. They ought to be at one. They have interlaced, and then again

parted as the one from the other. Both are great and valuable as coming from God, but not indeed of equal value." 11

11. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 21.

Modern Heresies In Social Thought

Practically all the "isms" of modern times are as detrimental to society as were the heresies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. From the laissez faire individualism to our present day communism, false principles have been influential in guiding social thought. Volumes of books have been compiled by Sociologists and Economists on various social theories since the Christian Social Thought has been shelved by them. What has been the result? Nothing but a conflict in social thought to the detriment of real social progress along principles that take into consideration man's spiritual as well as his physical needs. Most writers of the modern social theories disregard religion and moral law. They deny the Christian social order and create a pure material social order. Some of them may perhaps recognize certain Christian principles and disregard others. But all advocate wrong ideas and false principles

that create rather than adjust social unrest. Father Mark Stier, O.M.Cap., explains the situation very aptly. He says:

"It was precisely because the application of moral principles did not keep pace with the growth of industry that a clash between Capital and Labor was inevitable. A general moral deterioration ensued, the most serious of all the obstacles to social peace. Ethics and Sociology were separated from religion and lay-morality resulted. Without God and His law no true social order can be set up. Christ and His principles must be recognized. It is a case of 'Christ - or Chaos.'

"If society is to regain its vitality, it must once more turn toward religion, and realize that religion is not a matter of individual, personal feeling, but the very marrow of our social life. Disregard of the moral law, of the distinction between right and wrong is one of the causes of social evils. It is the Church's right and duty to speak authoritatively on economic problems--insofar as they refer to moral issues. If a man is denied his natural rights, the Church must condemn it as an injustice.

"The sociologist has also to deal with political evils - in government affairs, and economic evils in the production and consumption of wealth. Of course, simply enforcing moral principles will not cure all ills. Political and economic evils must be cured by their particular remedies, - but always in accord with sound moral principles. This will remove the danger of neglecting man's ultimate end." 12

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12. Stier, Mark, O.M.Cap., Discussion of Paper: "Moral Theology and Sociology", by Father Sylvester Brielmaier, O, M.Cap., op. cit., p. 65.
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The purpose of this thesis will not necessitate a full discussion of contemporary theories of social

thought, most of them are outgrowths of materialism advocated by Karl Marx. Father Joseph Husslein, S.J. says:

"Modern scientific Socialism was given full-fledged to the world in the Communist Manifesto. This document of the revolutionary year 1848 owed its origin to the joint authorship of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. But it was the former, in reality, who alone must be held ultimately responsible for the philosophy of Socialism embodied in it, and variously known as Historic Materialism, the Materialistic Conception of History, or Economic Determinism. All these names, it will be noticed, stress the fundamental materialism which from the very first underlay this entire system of thought. It was a materialism which sprang from the philosophy of Liberalism, or godless Capitalism, that had preceded it." 13

13. Husslein, Joseph, S.J., op. cit., p. 57.

Of all it can be said what Pope Pius XI said of atheistic communism which he states is the outgrowth of the materialism of Marx. According to their doctrine, says Pius XI,

"....there is in the world only one reality, matter, the blind forces of which evolve into plant, animal and man. Even human society is nothing but a phenomenon and form of matter, evolving in the same way. By a law of inexorable necessity and through a perpetual conflict of forces, matter moves toward the final synthesis of a classless society. In such a doctrine, as is evident, there is no room for the idea of God; there is no difference between matter and spirit, between soul and body; there is neither survival of the soul after death nor any hope in a future life." 14

14. Pius XI., Pope, Divini Redemptoris.

Thus modern heretics in social thought have lost sight of Christian principles. Father Oswald, O.S.F.C., says of them:

"The majority of dechristianized social reformers, we know, are in hopes of effecting a radical change for the better solely by dint of progressive legislation, whilst the extreme sections see no other remedy for the existing ills of society but force, upheaval, revolution. But none of the measures proposed by these would be reformers goes to the root of the evil or holds out the promise of a radical cure. The only kind of reform which will be able to bring about a lasting amelioration in social conditions must be one that takes into account the bedrock facts of human nature and the organic structure of human society. It must begin the remedial process at the roots both of human nature and of human society." 15

15. Oswald, Father, O.S.F.C., op. cit., p. 69.

Again he says of the fallacy of their doctrines:

"....no society can be reformed unless its individual members are reformed, so that every genuine reformation must start with reformation of individuals. The doctrinaires of advanced Socialism invert the relative positions of the individual and of society. They refuse to look upon a human being as a person; but regard him as a cog-wheel in the mighty machine called society. They declare that a man's life and activity is wholly determined by his environment. The Gospel, on the contrary, initiates

the work of social regeneration by reforming the individual, and thus begins at the right end. Our Lord recognizes the worth and dignity of human personality. He seeks to awaken the sense of personal responsibility in his hearers, and enjoins on each the perfect fulfilment of his obligations towards God, his neighbour and himself." 16

16. Ibid.

The heresies of evolutionary materialism destroy in man the idea of his responsibility and obligation to attain his purpose of life by observance of the moral law - the law of love of God and one's neighbor. Father Sebastian Erbacher, O.F.M., explains its fallacy briefly:

"In saturated or diluted form of various degrees this philosophy has been poured into the textbooks of psychology. It colors modern literature and it is the stock-in-trade of the popularizer of science. Behaviorism is concerned with the prediction and the control of human behavior, which is said to be at the mercy of inheritance and environment. As a philosophy, it is deterministic. It makes physiological conditions of the human organism the complete cause of human acts, takes no account of liberty of will, destroys the notion of responsibility, moral obligation, merit, sin, reward and punishment in the Christian sense. The manner in which a scientific method of approach has become a philosophy in the theory and practice of those metaphysically disinclined, would be amusing if it were not so tragic." 17

17. Erbacher, Sebastian, O.F.M., Discussion of Paper: Modern Philosophy and Social Life," by Father Conrad O'Leary, O.F.M., Report of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November 1933), p. 11.

Neither is capitalism free from heresy and injustice. It is permeated with doctrines of historic materialism that have multiplied abuses. Capitalists have sought only their own temporal and material advantages. They do not use their wealth in promoting their purpose in life. If capitalism were permeated with Christian principles, social justice and charity would remedy the disturbances between labor and capital. Again the fundamental cause of all disturbances is violation of moral law. Father Emil Brum, O.F.M., says:

"The causes which men assign for conditions existing in the world today are always economic, financial, political or industrial; the fact is, that the nature of the cause is moral. The remedies offered by statemen are usually certain changes in the system of production, distribution, and consumption of material goods. The Church insists that the moral remedies must be used to cure moral evils. Hence she proposes Christ's word and example, the traditional teachings of Christianity as the one and only source of remedy." 18

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18. Brum, Emil, O.F.M., "The Church and Capitalism", Report of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (November, 1934), p. 88.
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All these modern social theories with their fallacies will not remedy social ills. The remedy is in the old Christian Social Theory, as Father Victor Green, O.M.Cap., says:

"....it is not so much a question of elaborating a new social philosophy as of giving vogue and application to one which has been in existence for a long time.... What we are witnessing today is its culmination, the crisis upon which depends to a great extent the direction which will be taken by the gradually aroused forces of dissatisfaction with what has gone before. The new philosophy was formulated essentially by Pope Leo XIII in his Rerum Novarum over forty years ago, and it was restated and brought up to date by our present Pontiff, Pius XI, in his Quadragesimo Anno." 19

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19. Green, Victor, O.M.Cap., Discussion of Paper: "The Necessity of a New Orientation", by Father Clarence Tschippert, O.M.Cap., op. cit., pp. 22-23.
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A Perfect Social Order

The principles of Christian social thought will not create a perfect social order. Society will never be perfect because it is made up of the fallen nature of man for whom this world will never be a paradise. But the social order can be improved by the application of truly scientific principles and methods of social reform. It is natural for man to seek advancement and happiness. But man must know how to find it. In this, human nature has not changed since the time of St. Francis. Social unrest has its roots in the same source. Dr. Bradford says:

"Modern society, all human society, is com-

posed of a few people who have a great deal, and who incidentally always want more than they have, and a vast number who violently, passionately want what belongs to, or, at any rate, is in the possession of the others. If you could once thoroughly eradicate the fatal wanting, all the economic problems would be settled." 20

20. Bradford, Gamaliel, op. cit., p. 43.

Father Emil Brum, O.F.M., reporting on the Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI on the modern economic world and social reconstruction says of the teachings of the two Popes:

"Having reviewed the state of the modern economic world Pius declares that he has 'found it suffering from the greatest evils.' He says that 'a profound renewal of the Christian spirit' is necessary for the longed for social reconstruction. The following words of Leo are quoted: 'And if society is to be healed now, in no way can it be healed save by a return to Christian life and Christian institutions.' Christianity alone, the Popes assure us, can draw men from worldly affairs to the celestial. Ever most deeply concerned for the salvation of souls he asks: 'For what will it profit men that a more prudent distribution and use of riches make it possible for them to gain even the whole world, if thereby they suffer the loss of their own souls? What will it profit to teach them sound principles in economics, if they permit themselves to be swept away by selfishness, by unbridled and sordid greed, that hearing the Commandments of the Lord, they do all things contrary?'" 21

21. Brum, Emil, O.F.M., "The Church and Capitalism", op. cit., p. 101.

A fitting conclusion to this consideration of disturbed society of the twentieth century may well be stated in the words of Horace Grimley: "...wherever within or on the outskirts of modern civilization the wolf of poverty and squalor and fierce discontent and grim disease is raging, there is need for a new Saint Francis to come with his soothing healing, and transforming ministrations." 22

22. Grimley, Horace, op. cit. , p. 268.

The poor and diseased are, however, not the only ones who need a new St. Francis. The rich and the discontented middle classes need him as well. They need to be reminded of where happiness is to be found as St. Francis reminded the people of the thirteenth century. Father Antony says:

"He reminded the rich man of the fundamental fact that the Invisible Creator is the one and only infinite and satisfying possession; and that His visible gifts are blessings fraught with real danger. The rich man saw no God above him. He saw only himself, and in created things, only the means of self-gratification. The poor man, likewise, failed to see the Creator. He, too, saw only himself; and in poverty the one obstacle to happiness."23

23. Linneweber, Antony, O.F.M., "The Asceticism and Mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi", op. cit., p. 47.

This is indeed the picture of social unrest today. How the social theories, principles and methods of St. Francis could alleviate these disturbances will be considered in the succeeding chapters. Christian principles alone can renew civilization today. Christianity still possesses the dynamic social force which it exercised in the time of Christ and of St. Francis. Its principles must permeate every social, economic, and political institutions in order to raise society to a higher plane than it occupies today. Society needs to be renewed in the spirit of St. Francis.

CHAPTER VIII

THE THIRD ORDER AND CATHOLIC ACTION OF TODAY

St. Francis The Patron Of Catholic Action

Pope Pius XI has called all Christians to Catholic Action in order to save the world from self-destruction in materialism and class hatred. By Catholic Action the Holy Father does not mean that Catholics should denounce the world, its rulers, its politicians, its capitalists, its communists, and its program of social reform. He does not ask Christians to denounce the world for its progress in material and intellectual civilization. By Catholic Action the Pope asks each Christian to first reform himself by living a Catholic life - a life in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel. He asks each Christian to apply the principles of Christ to every phase of his daily life. Archbishop Francis Beckman defines Catholic Action very briefly as follows:

"Catholic Action means to live truly Catholic lives ourselves, according to the gospel, to apply the principles of Christ to our every phase of life in our homes, in public, in business, in politics, socially. To know these we must realize them, practice them, we must make them the main spring of our conduct. We must regulate our personal life accordingly, ever having before us the admonition: For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world,

and suffer the loss of his own soul?" 1

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1. Beckman, Archbishop Francis, Catholic Daily Tribune, Dubuque, Iowa, Editorial, (June 18, 1937).
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Christian social principles will solve our social problems only to the extent that they are put into practice in the daily lives of individuals. If all Catholics would accept them their influence would soon permeate the whole social order. Archbishop Samuel A. Stritch of Milwaukee explained the meaning of Catholic Action too when he said:

"The primary reason for our failure to impress our times is that we do not lead convincing Christian lives. Our daily lives are too similar to the lives of those among whom we live. Instead of changing our social environment by raising the general spiritual tone of life around us, we succumb too readily to its worldliness and end by sacrificing our Christian principles. We will never succeed in convincing our generation of the need of Christianity as the solvent of our many social problems until we become better, more practical Christians than we are at present, Christians in more than name and profession." 2

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2. Stritch, Archbishop, Samuel A., Catholic Daily Tribune, Editorial, (June 10, 1937).
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Is not the Catholic Action program precisely the program of reform that St. Francis launched in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? It was also

a program of Catholic Action--a reform of the individual in his daily life. Pope Benedict XV realized this when he appointed St. Francis the patron of Catholic Action. His successor Pope Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic Action, also realized this when he confirmed the appointment of St. Francis saying:

"As he has been appointed by Our predecessor as heavenly patron of the so-called Catholic Action, being a man destined by God for the reformation not only of his own turbulent age but of Christian society in all times, it is only proper that those of Our children who are laboring in this field according to Our instructions should make common cause with the numerous progeny of Francis in recalling and setting off his life, his virtues, and his spirit,...." 3

3. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis.

After re-appointing St. Francis as Patron of Catholic Action Pope Pius appeals to the Tertiaries to teach Christian people by their exemplary lives in the ways of St. Francis. Pope Pius XI says:

"We appeal to the Tertiaries, both regular or secular, to hasten also by the efforts of their apostolate the spiritual progress of our Christian people. If in the day of their origin their apostolate won for them from Gregory IX the title of 'Soldiers of Christ' and 'the new Machabees', it has today the opportunity to be just as valuable for the general welfare, if only they distinguish themselves by virtuous and blameless lives, putting on the likeness of Francis as they have increased in numbers all

over the world." 4

4. Ibid.

St. Francis has shown by word and by example - in his theories and principles - how the Gospel precepts can be applied to every day life. The Third Order is his efficacious means through which society is to study these principles and apply them. St. Francis, therefore, is most deserving of the title and honor as patron of Catholic Action.

Catholic Action And Social ILLs

In the programs of Catholic Action we find an intensive study of Christian social thought. Leaders in the field of Catholic Action are everywhere engaged in affecting an understanding of social problems for every Christian. To overcome evils of society there must first be an understanding of them. Through the press, radio talks, lectures, study clubs, conferences, debates, and various other means Catholics are being enlightened of dangers that are threatening society. With courage and wisdom the Popes have definitely guided the Christians in the knowledge and application of Christians principles whenever any danger threatened any fundamental institution of society. No Christian needs to

be ignorant of or in doubt about what is right or wrong in regard to social problems pertaining to the family, to education, to the struggle between labor and capital, and to the evils of communism. Christian Sociology has an answer to all. Thus says Archbishop Francis Beckman:

"We are going through a great crisis in history, a crisis that presents a great opportunity to the Church to save and regenerate society as it has done so in the past. We must no longer hide behind that inferiority complex. As a minority we must stand up for Christian principles whenever and wherever they are attacked, scorned, ridiculed, cast aside.

"Give the good example and equip yourselves mentally and spiritually to give the Catholic answer on all occasions. Study the great encyclicals of Pope Pius XI. Oppose modern atheistic and materialistic doctrines by Christian doctrines. You find all the weapons you need in the great encyclicals of Pope Pius XI. Study them, individually and in groups, in your homes and in your clubs." 5

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5. Beckman, Archbishop Francis, Catholic Daily Tribune, Editorial, (June 20, 1937).
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Having a knowledge of social problems, of the principles of a Christian life, and applying those principles in daily life, Catholics will possess a great power of social reform through their example and leadership. Society still wants truth and justice but has lost sight of them.

The papal encyclicals dealing with the Third

Order of St. Francis and its power for social reform also possess excellent information for study to all interested in Catholic Action. The three outstanding encyclicals are Auspicato by Pope Leo XIII, Sacra Propendiem by Pope Benedict XV and Rite Expiatis by Pope Pius XI. Father Cyprian, O.F.M., says briefly of these and other papal encyclicals and letters pertaining to the Third Order that they

"....have a message for all who are interested in social action. They tell us that the ultimate goal of social effort can be attained only by returning to the Gospel teachings, that St. Francis is the living example of the applicability of the Gospel to actual needs, and that the Third Order of St. Francis is the school wherein men are to learn the spirit of St. Francis." 6

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6. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Recent Papal Encyclicals", The Catholic Charities Review, (December, 1926), p. 376.
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Materialistic Sociology And Catholic Action

In the preceding chapter considerable thought was devoted to materialism with all the other "isms" as the fundamental cause of most of the disturbances in the society of the twentieth century, What solution does materialistic sociology offer? What solution does Christian sociology offer? Materialists and behaviorists, stripping society of all moral re-

sponsibilities, must resort to plain material and intellectual methods of solution. Discarding a man's conscience with a will power to choose the right and avoid the wrong, what has society left with which to defend itself against the uncontrolled animal nature in man? Materialism diagnoses causes of social disturbances in such terms as overproduction, overpopulation, unequal distribution, underconsumption, and technological developments. For solution it proposes legislation, decreasing of production, birthcontrol, government ownership, and class struggle that terminates in the survival of the non-existing fittest. There may be something salutary or palliative in one or the other of its proposals, but not any will restore social order; most of them will add evil to evil because they are based on false principles. Christian principles must permeate any program of social regeneration and these principles must be lived in the every day life of individuals who make up society. Mr. Martin says:

"The Church does not criticize even the modernistic or materialistic schools of sociology merely because they are attempting to confer a temporary boon on society. In fact, she^{has} adopted certain of their methods to her own use.

"But the Catholic Church does declare that social work must not stop with relief, with alleviation, with mere temporalities; that it is fulfilling its Christ-like mission only when it aims at cure. The means of this cure is set

forth among the first principles of Catholic Social Action. The individual must be reformed if society is to be reformed.... This was the very keystone of that tremendous reform effected by St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century. It is the primary, the sole purpose of that Third Order Secular which the patriarch of Assisi founded for the laity, in order that his influence and the potency of his teaching might be enhanced." 7

7. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 175-176.

Christian sociology utilizes the God-given qualities of man in his animal and rational nature. It admits of the fact that man has an unescapable conscience that bothers him when he does not avoid evil and commends him when he does right. Christian social thought is convinced that man can choose the right or avoid the wrong. It recognizes man's purpose in life and consequently formulates its program to promote the welfare of each individual in particular and of society in general. Father Sylvester defines Christian sociology saying: "Briefly one might say that Christian sociology is nothing less than 'the science of charity and social justice'." 8

8. Brielmaier, Sylvester, O.M.Cap., "Moral Theology and Sociology", op. cit., p. 61. Father Sylvester quotes this definition of Father Joseph Huslein, S.J., in his "The Catholic's Work in the World", p. 260.

This definition includes all that can be said of man's relation to his Creator, to his fellowman, and to his environment in general. Christian sociology recognizes all the temporal relations and needs of man which the materialistic and atheistic sociologists overemphasize, but it evaluates all these in the light of man's nobler purpose in life than the needs of his present physical existence. Materialists and atheists have gone back to pagan ideas whether they admit it or not. The consequence of their philosophy is the same as of old paganism. What Father Emil Brum, O.F.M., said of old paganism can be applied exactly to them:

"The pagans of old, not guided by Christian teachings, regarded temporal advantages and material prosperity as the highest good to which they could aspire. The belief in the continued existence after life was either lacking altogether or the future life presented nothing certain. Quite logically, then, they sought the goods of this life and bodily gratification as the final end of all their efforts.

"Lacking belief in the immortality of the soul, the pagans did not understand the true dignity of man and the purpose of the things of this earth. In the Rerum Novarum Leo says: 'Exclude the idea of futurity, and the very notion of what is good and right would perish; nay, the whole system of the universe would become a dark and unfathomable mystery.' By her doctrine on the life to come, the Church unites capital and labor. Unlike the old pagan thinkers, the Church does not teach that men are essentially unequal, namely, that some are born to be free and some to be slaves. Labor was the lot of the latter, and hence the free considered it disgraceful to work with one's hands....

These pagan ideas on the philosophy of society govern the actions of men to a great extent in our own day. We find signs of paganism in life, in literature, the theatre, the press, art, education, and the so-called refinement of the age." 9

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9. Brum, Emil, O.F.M., "The Church and Capitalism" op. cit., pp. 86-88.
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In the Catholic Action program intensive studies are made of this science of Christian sociology. In their daily lives Christians must aim to carry ^{it} out if charity and social justice are to be restored. This is not a simple or easy task. Ecclesiastical authorities are at constant work analyzing, developing, and defining principles that are to guide the conduct of Christians in dealing with the complicated problems of this present age. Father Sylvester says:

"Progress has been slow but continuous, and we now have many problems worked out systematically and in detail, so that Catholics now have a rule of conduct which is more definite and better ascertained than the world possessed at any previous period. However, the work is far from complete. The interpretation of the natural law and its application to the intricacies of modern complicated social economics is a task which will require the best efforts of the human intellect to attain a proper solution." 10

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10. Brielmaier, Sylvester, O.M.Cap., "Moral Theology and Sociology", op. cit., p. 62.
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Society can look with greatest confidence to the power for peace and justice in the Christian principles that guide it through the present disturbances. The Catholic Church that teaches and formulates its principles is the wisest of social agencies in existence. With twenty centuries of experience, she has lived through and guided society through many disturbances. Those of today are in essence the same as those of past centuries. Unhampered by materialism, the Church is truly philosophic and scientific. Not only does she expose the underlying cause of all social ills but with greatest wisdom advises concerning the most efficacious remedies that will bring about the reconstruction of the social order of today. These principles guide the thought and action of Christians in their daily life. Very Reverend Robert I. Gannon, S.J., president of Fordham, says that Christians can live in a "sane optimism." In addressing the graduates of Georgetown University he said that Catholics

".... know as much about real trouble as the moderns do - much more & in fact we can see through trouble to something beyond - we can hope.... Catholic optimism is not any sort of delusion that 'all's right with the world,'It is clear that Catholic optimism never has to deceive itself; never has to blink the facts....the Catholic optimist looks squarely at life and says: 'Life is bitter - of course it is: life is a warfare - but what of it -

whoever believed that this silly round of weeks and months and years, with its monotony, its meanness and its heartbreaks - whoever believed that that was the whole story?" 11

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11. Gannon, Robert I., "Commencement Thought-Provokers at a Glance," Catholic Daily Tribune, Dubuque, Iowa, (June 19, 1937).
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Through Catholic Action carried out in the spirit of St. Francis, under whose patronage its program has been placed, society can look with great hope for an effective solution of its social problems.

Catholic Social Action And Franciscan Sociology

As Catholic Action embraces all of Christian sociology, so does Franciscan sociology. St. Francis, as has been considered in a previous chapter, was not an originator of new social theories, but he had a unique way of applying the Gospel precepts to daily life. Thus Franciscan sociology, if it may be so called, is also a science of charity and social justice in which the technique of application of Christian principles is in accordance with the spirit of St. Francis. His simplicity, his joy, his liberty through poverty - in a word his whole life - lead a Christian civilization to a new concept of life. The spirit of poverty gives greater possibility to the charity and social justice of Christian sociology.

As Father Agostino Gemelli says:

"Too much cannot be said in praise of this spirit of poverty, which frees a man from all melancholy which comes of having money, from jealousy as regards his own possessions and envy as regards those of others, from softness and laziness; which sharpens the mind, builds up character, electrifies human energy and simplifies life." 12

12. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 299.

The Franciscan spirit of poverty indeed possesses a great power for social reform. In the exercise of Christian charity the spirit of St. Francis has a social significance. By becoming poor, working for the poor and with the poor, St. Francis and his followers could understand and appreciate the lot of the unfortunate. A Franciscan spirit, therefore, has a wide range of sympathetic understanding that is an essential asset to true charity in social work. Of Franciscan sympathy and action, united with the spirit of poverty, Father Gemelli says:

"Franciscan action is permeated by an innate sense of sympathy with other human beings. It starts not merely with an act of intuition, but by understanding the personality and grasping the exact psychological condition at that moment of other people. This sense of sympathy with others is in reality simply the highest expression of the Franciscan sense of reality, to which has been united a poverty of the spirit which is ready to shed its own individual personality, to sacrifice its most cherished feel-

ings, so as to understand fully the feelings of others before leading them to the peace of Christ." 13

13. Ibid., p. 318.

Another aspect of Franciscan social thought that is worthy of consideration is happiness. By the spirit of poverty and fraternal charity, selfishness is eliminated to the extent that material goods receive their evaluation in the light of one's purpose in life and in consideration of one's neighbor. With St. Francis in perfect liberty of spirit, in free detachment to earthly goods, material civilization is given a new concept of life. "Happiness," says Father Gemelli, "is the outward expression of the Franciscan concept of life" as follows:

"Franciscan happiness derives its strength from drawing on all the different springs of human and Christian contentment; one of the most outstanding amongst human sources is a sense of beauty,.... Another is artistic taste and particularly a love for music,.... As he grows conscious of this sense of harmony he forgets himself,.... as his soul soars upward from admiration of the creatures of this earth to a feeling of gratitude towards their creator. "....Therefore, wherever he notices beauty, whether in a flower or in a human face,.... the Franciscan accepts it as a gift from God. For beauty is in very truth a treasure reserved for those who know how to enjoy it.... Another source of happiness is precisely the sense of littleness in comparison with the vastness of the universe.... It give him happiness to realise that he is under no illusion, that he really

knows himself, and he feels grateful to every person or circumstance which reminds him of his own littleness. Yet, however small he may feel himself to be, the Franciscan never undervalues task which it is his duty to perform, or loses the sense of his own responsibility. And so the Franciscan is able to smile at his own unimportance and at that of others. It is a smile of intelligent humility and of humble intelligence. Hence there is in his smile a touch of irony - of benevolent irony - involving frequently a keen sense of humour." 14

14. Ibid., pp. 321.-323.

One of the outstanding needs of today is true happiness. Society needs a change of attitude. It is so enslaved with material cares and wants that it fails to appreciate the higher aspects of life. It seeks contentment and happiness where it cannot be found. Christian sociology carried out in the spirit of St. Francis constitutes the solution to social order. In the words of Pope Leo XIII can be said:

"It is plain, therefore, that untold benefits accrue to Church and State from this one man. But because his spirit, thoroughly and eminently Christian as it is, meets the requirements of all times and climes, it cannot be doubted that the Franciscan movement will be of great benefit in our own age, the more so as the circumstances of our time in so many ways resemble those of his day." 15

15. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato.

Franciscan sociology, we may thus conclude, is Christian sociology with the Gospel precepts as its "nucleus of social reform," applied to everyday life in the spirit of St. Francis. That it would possess a power of social reform has been the thought of many outstanding sociologists. Father Agostino Gemelli says:

"Other Catholic sociologists, retracing the steps of mankind throughout the avenue of past centuries in an attempt to discover if the precepts of the Gospel had ever been put into practice in the economic field, had encountered the figure of St. Francis. Mgr. Ketteler, for instance, the great Archbishop of Mayence, the champion of the Church against the new despotism of the Protestant German Empire, against the Kultur Kampf, Socialism and Freemasonry, the defender of the rights of working-class people, had drawn inspiration from the example of St. Francis. 'I feel most intensely,' he said, 'the attraction of the social doctrines preached by St. Francis during the Middle Ages.' Of the same opinion, too, were the other Catholic sociologists of that generation - Ozanam, Donoso, Cortes, Kopling, Windhorst, Manning, Mermillod, LaTour du Pin, Lorin and Toniolo. But the man of genius who best defined and, owing to his high position, was able to give official sanction to the social thought of St. Francis, was Leo XIII." 16

16. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 215.

Franciscan sociology places emphasis on individual reform. This is, again, in perfect conformity with the program of Catholic Action. Franciscans of all three Orders should be in the front line of

Catholic Action. They have the message of peace and happiness the world needs. The result of individual reformation insisted upon by St. Francis would bring about a religious revolution that would greatly accelerate the cultural civilization that is lagging behind the material civilization. Society has gone through an industrial revolution and still needs to go through a religious revolution in order to remove its maladjustment. President Roosevelt recognized the need of a religious revolution when he said:

"We of the United States are slow to learn from the experiences of other countries where religious indifferentism refused to remain static but developed first into irreligion and then into radicalism of the most destructive type. They who know of none but material values always drift to the extreme; they either try to seize all power or wealth, or to wrest from others both their property and their rights In the light of history nothing is more to be deplored than indifferentism. We are going through that period now, and for its cure there is only one remedy, namely, a country-wide re-emphasis of the fundamentals of Christian faith." 17

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17. Quoted by Fr. Emil Brum, O.F.M., "The Church and Capitalism", op. cit., p. 103.
Quotation taken from The Denver Register, (April 22, 1934.)
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In his greetings to Archbishop Beckman, on the Centennial of the establishment of the Diocese of Dubuque, President Roosevelt wrote:

"A democratic form of government rests largely upon the informed conscience and spiritual idealism of the citizenry. One of the first obligations of a democratic government is to insure freedom of worship and freedom of education without which there can be no real freedom Democracy will be safe wherever men in free religious worship turn their hearts and minds to God." 18

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18. Roosevelt, Franklin D., Catholic Daily Tribune, Dubuque, Iowa, (July 25, 1937), p. 1
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Paul R. Martin says: "A vital principle of Catholic Social Action holds that if society is to be reformed, then that reform must be effected through the reformation of the individual." 18

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19. Martin, Paul R. op. cit., p. 161.
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This is also the primary purpose of each of the Franciscan Orders. No organization would be more suited to bring about a social regeneration than the Third Order of St. Francis. It is truly Catholic Action carried out more perfectly, more effectively, more whole-heartedly with a joyous and generous spirit of self sacrifice and love. A most complete summary of the fitness of the Third Order for social reform is stated by the Most Reverend Joseph R. Crimont, S.J., Bishop of Alaska who said with great

enthusiasm:

"The Third Order! How grand its mission and its power, precisely because so open and accessible are the ways of its tasks and the tenor of its life. They lie in the very heart of common everyday life, among the multitudinous vocations and stations of lay folks in the shops, in the business offices, in the streets and market places.

"Fill all these with men and women imbued with the spirit of Francis, not raising a material barrier between themselves and the earth, but viewing the earth and all it holds out as transformed by the light of the Crucified; not renouncing all enjoyment, but sanctifying it; not putting aside the obligations of domestic life or the burdens of social service, but consecrating them with prayer and the exercise of Christian virtue; shunning needless comforts and luxurious habits of goods and dress and the pleasures savoring of sin; devoutly discharging the ordinary duties of religion; serving, as Knights of the Savior, the cause of justice and charity; seeking peace and contentedness in restraining immoderate desires; and finding in love the inspiration of their life, its fruitfulness and sweetness.... Through the admission of the poor and rich, of high and low into the family of St. Francis, the social classes will be brought together in the bond of benevolent understanding and of mutual love; and therefore be ushered into our modern world, as a blessed, practical scheme of life, the era of the world-wide fraternity, which is the unrealizable Utopia of the Socialist reformers." 20

20. Ibid., p. 182.

Another recent writer and enthusiastic advocate of the Third Order of St. Francis in its relation to Catholic Action is Canfield Hall. Mr. Hall says:

"I am convinced that there will be little genuine Catholic Action or arrival of a new social order until the Third Order emerges from

obscurity and openly and ostentatiously applies Franciscan principles of living; because these principles are no Franciscan monopoly, but are basic to genuine Christian reform." 21

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21. Hall, Canfield, "The Third Order And The New Social Order," The Cowl, Vol. I, no. 7, (July, 1937), p. 148.
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Dr. James J. Walsh considers the Third Order of St. Francis a powerful means of social reform in this century. He says of the influence of St. Francis today:

"He is just coming into a further precious heritage of uplift for the men of our time, that is surprising for those who are so buried in the merely material that they fail to realize how much the ideal still rules the minds of thinking men, but that seems only natural and inevitable to those who appreciate all the attractiveness there is in a simple life lived without the bootless hurry, the unattaining bustle and the over-strained excitement of the strenuous existence." 22

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22. Walsh, James J., op. cit., p. 266.
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Ecclesiastical Advocates Of The Third Order And Social Reform

Throughout the preceding chapters many noteworthy personages have been quoted who recognize the potentiality of social reform in the Third Order of St. Francis. Among them are leading sociologists,

statesman, professors and other noteworthy authorities on social reform. Frederick Ozanam, Bishop Ketteler, Pope Leo XIII, Pope Pius XI among others are indeed most out-standing. Their recommendations are worthy of consideration. For this reason this separate section is devoted to a greater consideration of their words than that of others not already quoted. That the last five popes have not only written letters and encyclicals advocating the Third Order of St. Francis as a means of social reform but have also themselves been Tertiaries is very significant. No authority can speak on social problems with a greater understanding than the Church that has twenty centuries of experience in dealing with them. Pope Leo XIII, the Pope of the laboring class, saw our modern social problems take root in 1880, the century of laissez faire supremacy, of Marxism, and of materialism. In 1882 he wrote Auspicato, the "Encyclical Concerning St. Francis and the Third Order." The Pope says of the Third Order:

"Amid distressful conditions so manifold and so serious, you Venerable Brethren, will readily understand that no small hope of relief could be placed in the rule of St. Francis, were it but restored to its former importance. With it would flourish faith and piety and all that is glorious in Christianity; the lawless craving for earth's perishable goods would be broken and - what is frequently regarded as the greatest and most hateful of burdens - people

would no longer dread to put the bridle of virtue on their passions. Bound together by the ties of genuine brotherhood, people would love one another and manifest toward the needy and afflicted the reverence due them as representatives of Christ. Further more, once men are thoroughly imbued with the Christian religion, they feel the conviction that it is a matter of conscience to obey lawfully constituted authority, and that no one may be molested in any of his rights. Now, nothing will serve better than this conviction to root out the evils of that order, such as violence, disregard of rights, sedition, class hatred, all of which evils are at once the mainsprings and the weapons of socialism. Finally, - a point over which economists are at such pains, the relation between rich and poor will be successfully regulated. The conviction will gain ground that poverty is not without a dignity of its own; that, while the rich man is bound to be compassionate and bountiful, the poor man must be content with his lot and with the fruits of his labor; that, as neither of them is born to live for the passing goods of this world, the one must find his way to heaven by the road of patience, the other by the path of liberality." 23

23. Leo XIII, Pope, Auspicato.

Speaking of the need of the Third Order to a delegation of Tertiaries in 1879, Pope Leo XIII said: "We are fully convinced that in our age there is no more efficacious remedy for checking the prevailing evils, no better way and means of saving the world and leading it back to a true observance of the Gospel, than the Third Order." These and similar passages of the Pontiff on social reform have been coined by writers into a sort of a papal slogan,

"My social reform is this Third Order of St. Francis." It is doubtful whether Pope Leo XIII expressed himself in those few words. But there is no question that he did intend to use the Third Order as the means of social reform, for in the year 1883 he revised the Tertiary Rule of 1289 to adapt it to modern times and customs. The modification of the Rule, however, did not change its nature. Pope Leo XIII states this definitely: "Let it not be thought, however, that thereby the nature of the order has been altered; for we wish it to remain altogether unchanged and intact." 24

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24. Leo XIII, Pope, Misericors Dei Filius, Revising the Rule of the Third Order Secular, (May 30, 1883), See the appendix for a copy of the Revised Rule.
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Of Pope Pius X, Paul Martin says:

"He struck the social note in a letter sent to the Tertiary Congress at Vicenza on March 12, 1910, when he wrote: 'What more can we desire than to witness the growth and prosperity of an institute which possesses the latent power to instill into modern society a spirit of wisdom and Christian discipline?The Third Order in these days is wonderfully adapted to modern needs; hence, whenever efforts are made to promote its growth one can certainly expect fruits of sanctification.'" 25

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25. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 138.
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Speaking of another quotation of Pope Pius X, Mr.

Martin says:

"At another time Pope Pius X aimed a shaft at materialism, citing as its antidote, the Third Order Secular. 'Enroll yourselves in the Third Order,' he declared, 'and at the very time that materialism inundates us with an invasion of barbarism, the imitation of Christ will deliver us from its slavery, while the blasphemies of men all but threaten us with the anger of heaven, the prayers of the humble and penitent will avert the storm. While families are destroyed and society is being poisoned by corrupt morals, the purity of Tertiaries will contribute largely to save them in an admirable manner'" 26

26. Ibid., p. 139.

On September 8, 1912 Pius X wrote Tertium Franciscanum, a "Letter on the Corporate Activity of the Third Order." He urged its members to cleave to its true purpose of "fraternal harmony among themselves and the practice of penance." He therefore renewed his "approval of this union of forces." He reminded the Tertiaries of the primary purpose of the Order as self-sanctification and the secondary purpose - the apostolate. He warns them against making of the Third Order a purely sociological institution.

Pope Pius X says:

"....it is clear from what has been said that the Third Order is an institution wherein the members shall learn to put into everyday practice the principles of Gospel perfection and serve as models of Christian life for the imitation of others. Consequently, Tertiaries as such must in no way meddle with political or

merely economic questions." 27

27. Pius X, Pope, Tertium Franciscanum.

Pope Benedict XV, the war-time Pope who anxiously pleaded for peace, appointed St. Francis patron of Catholic Action and refers to his Third Order as "the greatest boon to human society." He says in his encyclical, Sacra Propediem:

"....above all things Francis wished Tertiaries to be distinguished, as by a special badge, by brotherly love, such as is keenly solicitous of peace and harmony. Knowing this to be the particular precept of Jesus Christ, containing itself the fulfilment of the Christian law, he was most anxious to conform to it the minds of his followers. By that very fact he succeeded in rendering the Third Order the greatest boon to human society." 28

28. Benedict XV, Pope, Sacra Propediem.

In speaking of the need of the Third Order today for the preservation of world peace the Pope writes enthusiastically:

"It is desirable, therefore, that every town and village and hamlet should have many members of the order - not indeed slack members, content with the mere name of Tertiaries, but active and eager for their own and their neighbor's salvation. Why should not the numerous and various associations of young people, of workmen, of women, existing everywhere throughout the Catholic world, join the Third Order, and inspired with St. Francis' zeal for peace and

charity devote themselves persistently to the glory of Christ and the prosperity of the Church? Mankind needs not the sort of peace that is built up on the laborious deliberations of worldly prudence, but that peace which was brought to us by Christ when he declared, 'My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, do I give unto you.' A man-made treaty, whether of states or of classes among themselves, can neither endure nor have at all the value of real peace, unless it rests upon a peaceful disposition; but the latter can exist only where duty, as it were, puts the bridle on the passions, for it is they that give rise to discord of whatever kind. 'From whence,' he asks the Apostle, 'are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence from your concupiscences which war in your members?' Now, it is Christ who avails to harmonize all that is in man, making him, not serve, but command his desires, obedient and submissive always to the will of God; and this harmony is the foundation of all peace." 29

29. Ibid.

Like a prophecy his words have come true in regard to the peace treaties drawn up between nations and of peace in general.

Our present Pontiff is most devoted to the Third Order. In February 1923, speaking to a group of Tertiaries of Aracoeli, Rome he said: "....among the religious orders we Tertiaries (We say we because we recall that we are one of the oldest Franciscan Tertiaries) hold the Franciscan order especially dear." 30

30. Pius XI, Pope, Allocution.

In his Encyclical, Rite Expiatis, he says of
St. Francis:

"We must not be surprised....to find that, in the lapse of the past seven hundred years, the memory of the great blessings derived from Francis was never at any time or place forgotten or obliterated. Yes, his life and work, which, as Dante wrote, is worthier of heavenly than human song, seems to have won admiring and reverent notice and plaudits of age upon age;" 31

31. Pius XI, Pope, Rite Expiatis.

Referring to the social conditions of today the Pontiff says:

"You may hear it said that Christianity today is in need of another Francis to reform it. But granted that in the wake of this revived enthusiasm mankind will allow Francis to teach it the ways of piety and sanctity; granted that all men will follow and turn to account in their own lives the example which he, 'the mirror of virtue, the path of righteousness, and the rule of conduct,' has left us, would that not avail to heal and exorcise the corruption of the times?" 32

32. Ibid.

Of the Encyclical, Rite Expiatis, Mr. Martin says:

"It is true that this encyclical was not intended by the Pope as social document or as a specific treatment of the Third Order Secular, It dealt in a broader way with St. Francis himself - as a man, as saint, as reformer. But so thoroughly has the spirit of St. Francis been infused into the Third Order, and so outstanding is this order among the results effected by the

Franciscan reform, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other." 33

33. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 143.

A very fitting description of the spirit of St. Francis and the need of it in modern times is stated by the late Archbishop Sebastian Messmer, as follows:

"....the spirit of St. Francis, and therefore the spirit of the Franciscan Order, is the spirit of the Gospel.... It is preeminently a spirit of loyalty and reverence to divine authority, a spirit of prayer and self-denial, of poverty and humility, of simplicity and cheerfulness, of active charity and seraphic love of God. Evidently, the more this spirit is diffused among the faithful, the more fruits of solid piety and true Christian charity will appear." 34

34. Quoted by Paul Martin, op. cit., p. 179.

Referring to its power of social reform the Archbishop said:

"The conditions of society today are in many ways like those existing at the time of St. Francis. I hope that the seventh centenary of the establishment of the Third Order....will strikingly call attention of the world to his special organization....Such a truly spiritual movement will be more powerful to bring about social betterment and lasting reform than all the laws and regulations made by the would-be social reformers of today." 35

35. Ibid., p. 180.

A Benedictine advocate of the Third Order of St. Francis is the Most Reverend Vincent Wehrle, Bishop of Bismarck, North Dakota. He deeply regrets that the appeals of the Popes for the spread of the Third Order are not carried out with greater enthusiasm by laity and clergy. The reason of this failure to spread as inferred from his quotation is the worldly spirit that permeates society. Bishop Wehrle says:

"In these days when Christian faith has almost disappeared among thousands of non-Catholics, and has been weakened and grown cold among very many Catholics; in these days of unbounded desire for worldly pleasure, of selfishness and greed....it is of the highest importance that a large number of our Catholic people embrace the teachings and practice of the Third Order of St. Francis and thereby imitate in a more perfect way the hidden life of Jesus Christ in the humble house of Nazareth. The lifelong training of large numbers of the faithful in the humble, simple, God-fearing, truly supernatural life which the rule of the Third Order of St. Francis demands, is a very effective remedy against the mad race for money and pleasure and other selfish purposes which bring such disorder and suffering to the human race." 36

36. Ibid., p. 192.

Cardinal Vaughan, who was most concerned about the needs of Catholics in England, wrote: "When a knowledge of the life of St. Francis, a love for him, and a constant study of his spirit are united with the observance of the Rule, the Third Order will be indeed a living and active salt to save us from the

corruption of modern society." 37

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37. Quoted by Father Stanislaus, O.S.F.C., The Third Order of St. Francis, A Modern Need. p. 9.
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In his letter to Fr. Hughes who translated Father Agostino Gemelli's "Il Francescanesimo", The Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States writes:

"It is indeed most true that for an age like the present, in which indications of mortification of the spirit and simplicity of heart are becoming increasingly rare, the personality of St. Francis possesses a magnetic fascination.... And yet how many admirers of St. Francis never really learn to know him because they look at him through colored glasses! Dr. Gemelli's pages....bring out into bold relief the fact that Franciscanism is synonymous with the happiness which comes of peace and grace, with the generous practice of Christian virtues, even amidst the difficulties derived from suffering, that inevitable heritage of the race of man." 38

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38. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., (Preface), P. VI.
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CHAPTER IX

THE THIRD ORDER AND SOCIAL REFORM
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the preceding chapters consideration was given to the potentialities of the Third Order of St. Francis in social reform. Its Rule is as applicable to modern civilization as is Christianity itself. Atheistic materialism says Christianity is out of date, but materialism has not succeeded in proving it. No social theory or philosophy outside of the Christian social theory has succeeded in making society better. One theory after another has been proposed and discarded because only to the extent that each theory has adhered to Christian philosophy has each been acceptable and effectively applicable to society. Indeed new application of Christian principles are always necessary wherever material progress is made; but Christianity is adaptable to every advancement society can possibly make. So is also the Third Order of St. Francis whose precepts of the Gospel are as applicable to the everyday life of today as they were in the days of St. Francis. St. Francis was not opposed to the material progress made at any time. He insisted on moderation and rightful use of all earthly goods.

Indeed, he never ceased to praise God's goodness and liberality to man. It grieved him to see man unhappy, discontented and ungrateful in spite of all the material and spiritual advantages he had. In the spirit of poverty he saw a means of leading man to happiness in the moderate and legitimate use of material goods. So through his Third Order he still teaches the laity the spirit of poverty and of penance which means moderation in the use of the earthly goods. The spirit of poverty and self-denial are as essential to social welfare today as they were in the thirteenth century. Human nature has not changed. It is still inclined to selfishness and must be controlled in every-day life. No one can deny the necessity for man to practice self-control in order that his rational nature keep under control his sensual animal appetites. This, however, is impossible without the spirit of poverty and self-denial. It is true that this spirit is more difficult to practice in the twentieth century in which society, like a little child, is so infatuated with the glittering toys that material nature has to offer. But it can be done. Canfield Hall says:

"It is not going to be easy, to go against the spirit of the world, deliberately against the ideals of those around us. To live in moderate poverty, deliberately, will seem more than

queer to those - and among them, Catholics - who worship riches. But, after all, Jesus Christ, the Lord, was poor in the same deliberate way, and poor to the point of destitution." 1

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1. Hall, Canfield, "The Third Order and the New Social Order", op. cit., p. 149.
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Through the Third Order of St. Francis it can be done more easily, more effectively, and more perfectly than without it. To what extent it is done, how it is done, and the effects that follow will be considered next.

Extent Of The Third Order

The recent growth of the Third Order of St. Francis is due to the interest the Popes have had in it as a means of social reform. The greatest of the promoters was Pope Leo XIII who revised its Rule in 1883 and adapted it to modern needs. Since his day each succeeding Pope has sought the spread of the Third Order Seculars as has been noted in the preceding chapters. Statistics of the growth of the Order are indefinite and scattereed. Father Francis Borgia, O.F.M., writing in 1919, states that there were then 3,000,000 Tertiaries the world over. He cites figures of its growth by saying that in 1908 there were 2,500,00. This total number increased

by 1919 to 3,000,000. In the U.S., says the same writer, the recent growth is more striking. In 1912 there were in the U.S. 20,640 Franciscan Tertiaries. By 1919 the number increased to "not less than 75,000."

Cf. Steck, Father Francis Borgia, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

The Franciscan Herald of March, 1930 reports that the total number of Tertiaries in the world is estimated conservatively at 3,500,000. The latest statistics show that in 1935 there were in the U.S. 975 Third Order Fraternities with a membership of 93,961. The growth in the U.S. is indeed, most remarkable.

Cf. Nolan, Mark, O.M.C. "Statistical Survey of the II and III Orders of St. Francis in North America." Report of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting, The Franciscan Educational Conference, (December 1936), pp. 355-356.

Statistics of the Capuchin fraternities of the Third Order also show the high rate of increase in the past year. The Seraphic Chronicle of May 1936 reports a total of 10,218 fraternities with 1,199,753 Tertiaries. This is a gain of 233 fraternities and 11,595 tertiaries over the previous year in the Capuchin provinces of the world.

Cf. Seraphic Chronicle, (May, 1936).

The Tertiaries In Every-Day Life

Since social reform can come only through the reform of the individual it may be best to consider the influence of the Third Order on the individual member in his daily life. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the primary aim of the Order--individual reform. That the realization of this aim in an individual is affected more surely by being enrolled in the Order is evident. The psychology of group action and its effects upon the individual as a member of a group organization are as applicable in the Third Order as in any other organization either for good or for evil. The difference is that the influence for good is more powerful with a religious organization than the influence for good and evil in any purely material or secular group organization. An individual's religion--influencing his conscience--constitutes a stronger force of social control than is usually admitted by materialistic psychologists and sociologists. Society would be in a much greater turmoil today were this not true. If then in his Christian religion an individual accepts an ideal and pledges himself with others to perfect himself--to live in accordance with this ideal by means of a definite rule of life--favorable results are certain

to follow. No one can deny that Christian principles, wherever and whenever they have been applied to human conduct or institutions, in every phase of life, have always enobled and divinized them. The Third Order, with its very simple but adaptable rule of life in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, acts as a most salutary stimulant to man in perfecting himself in his daily life. The Rule provides for a wide range of liberty of spirit. Some members will become better than others, each is at liberty to advance himself; yet no one will be the worse for being a member. In fact, one must be a good Christian, a loyal Catholic, before he is accepted as a member of the Third Order. Then, as a Tertiary, one is free to advance himself even to perfection. He is not free to retrograde in his moral conduct. Chapter III section four of the Rule says, "Disobedient and harmful members shall be admonished of their duty a second and third time; if they do not submit, let them be dismissed from the Order." (See the Rule in the Appendix)

What are the daily duties of Tertiaries? They are constantly reminded of the duties they have pledged themselves to perform by the obligation to wear a small scapular and a cord as prescribed by the Rule (Chap.I section 3.). After one complete

year of probation or novitiate the Tertiaries make a public profession whereby they pledge themselves to observe the Commandments of God and the Church, and to render satisfaction for failures against this profession. (Chap.I, section 4). Chapter II contains sensible guides of conduct whereby each member is better able to fulfill the obligation to which he has pledged himself. Whether the Tertiary is a day-laborer or a millionaire, a society lady or a scrub-women, each must "avoid extremes of cost and style, observing the golden mean suited to each one's station in life." In AN Explanation of the Rule of the Third Order, Father J.Forest McGee says:

"Tertiaries should be neatly clad and may safely adopt the good and becoming features of the prevailing styles. Unusual apparel, or ancient dresses or hats, will have them appear singular and old-fashioned and will be a positive hindrance to the efforts of the Third Order to enroll the youth of both sexes in its ranks. The gossip or preaching of ill-informed Tertiaries or less-informed outsiders must not supplant the Rule of the Order, nor should they be considered an official interpretation of the Rule. Americans must not be made to believe that foreign dress or style is the acme of perfect attire for Tertiaries. When in America live as Americans do; and dress as they do, avoiding all excesses.... A little common sense, guided by a love for modesty and propriety, will always tell the Tertiaries what becomes their holy profession or not." 2

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2. McGee, J.Forest, O.F.M., An Explanation of the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis, pp.17-18.
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The Tertiaries "must keep away from dances and shows which savor of license, as well as from all forms of dissipation". This does not forbid wholesome recreation and lawful pleasures. In eating and drinking they must be temperate, thereby remembering that they eat in order to live and do not live in order to eat. To remind themselves of God's providence they must "devoutly say grace before and after each meal". The world would be much better if people would more gratefully acknowledge the good things provided for them by God's providence. At least once a month Tertiaries must go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Every lay member must say daily twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glories, unless he is prevented by ill health." Amongst themselves and towards others the Tertiaries must "earnestly maintain the spirit of charity" and "strive to heal discord wherever they can." In all these Rules of conduct there is nothing extraordinary, nothing unreasonable. They do lead one on a narrow path of righteousness and penance but the penance is only reasonable moderation that enobles and strengthens the character of the individual and makes of him a better citizen of Church and State. Penance means the practice in daily life the spirit of pov-

erty that liberates an individual from an inordinate attachment to material goods and raises his aspirations to nobler things of life. Leo L. Dubois says: "A true and solid social reform, now as well as in Francis' time, must begin by the reform of the individual. The social problem is caused largely by lack of honesty and loyalty, by cupidity, passion, personal degradation." 3

3. Dubois, Leo L., op. cit., pp.213-214.

The reform of the Tertiary is always accompanied by the reform of others through his good example. St. Francis repeatedly emphasized the importance of preaching by example. His Rule for Tertiaries prescribes that "in their daily life" they "strive to lead others by good example to promote practices of piety and good works". Good example is the duty of every Christian in order to safeguard himself and to influence others to good. In Catholic Action all Catholics have been reminded of this duty as the Most Reverend Joseph F. Busch says: "The fact that the Church invites her children to participate in this lay apostolate or Catholic Action should impress the Christian with his duty toward the social world, for if he does not affect society for the good,

the world may exert upon him and upon others an influence that is harmful" 4

4. Busch, Joseph, F., D.D., op. cit. p. 193.

Thus the tertiaries become social reformers, first by self-sanctification and second by the force of their example--all in the spirit of poverty and charity.

The Tertiaries In Class Struggle

Society today is greatly in need of this spirit of poverty and charity to bring about a social reform. If all who profess Christianity would adopt this Rule of Life the result would be a marvelous renewal of the social, economic and political order. Class struggle would cease or at least be mitigated. The laborers would be more patient in their demands, employers more just in their wages, capitalists more fair in their prices, landlords more reasonable in their rents, and politicians more honest in promoting the welfare of the people in their office of trust. The spirit of poverty and charity in each Tertiary would remove the poverty that degrades society today. Professor Martin says of it:

"If we examine the poverty of our present day, that squalid poverty which it is agreed

is the cause of so many social ills, we can readily understand that it does not measure up to the Franciscan ideal in any way. Aside from the problems of unemployment, it has its origin in two sources; either in the individual himself who sinks below the poverty level because he squanders his own resources; or else in the fact that he is not given a living wage. In both of these cases poverty is degraded; in the first place by the individual himself; in the second place, by what we have called commercial selfishness....

"If the commercially selfish employer is, by the payment of an unjust wage, responsible for so much of the poverty that is rampant today, he is equally responsible for those social evils which naturally spring from poverty....

If commercial selfishness has its origin in contempt for religion, so may all of the radical causes of the world's social problems be traced to the same root." 5

5. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 171-175.

Truly the spirit of poverty and of charity in every Christian are necessary if liberty and justice are to reign in society. Disregard of these is the source of the intense class struggle society is facing today. Only in the spirit of St. Francis will social order again be restored. Like St. Francis society must regard wealth and power as a sacred trust and condemn the abuse of it. It must again learn to reverence authority as coming from God. Then it can be said of society today as it was said of the days of St. Francis,

"....when he found authority exceeding its just power, when it turned into oppression, exploiting the people in petty wars....then it was that the Apostle of Assisi brought his Tertiary Army to the front. The ultimate result was a more perfect mutual adjustment between wealth and poverty, between power and submission, and a better equalization of master and servant, of lord and vassal by the law of Christian brotherhood and charity." 6

6. Ibid., p. 164.

A wide-spread acceptance of the spirit of St. Francis would be a powerful influence in regulating the relations between labor and capital and between the various classes of society today. Father Cyprian says:

"Noble minded friends of mankind are desirous of adjustment and reconciliation. But new governments, new laws, new promises, new ordinances will not bring peace, will not restore friendliness between estranged and hostile minds and classes. The solution of the Social Question will be brought about primarily by the determined return of the people and their leaders to the eternal laws of justice and charity." 7

7. Emanuel, Cyprian, O.F.M., "The Third Order of St. Francis and Modern Social Reconstruction", The Catholic Charities Review, (September 1927) Vol. XI, p. 256.

The spirit of St. Francis would not only reform the capitalists who abuse their wealth or the employers who abuse their rights over labor or po-

litical officials who abuse the trust placed in them to govern rightly; it would soothe the lower classes who are filled with hatred and envy. They also need a change of attitude towards material things if society is to be saved from a revolution. Father J. Elliot Ross described their attitude when in speaking of the reform of St. Francis, he said:

"Never was a similar reform more needed than now. There are those who will tell you the dress of many women of today is immoral because it is immodest. But, indeed, it is far more immoral because it is stained with the life-blood of thousands. What right, has a woman to put on her back in one year what would keep twenty-five families for that time? What right has a single man to spend fifty thousand dollars on a single entertainment? Is it any wonder that Socialism (Communism) spreads when our papers advertise such items of extravagance as the spending of a hundred thousand dollars worth of flowers for the grave of one man?" 8

8. Ross, J. Elliot, C.S.P., op. cit., p. 56.

There is no doubt that the extravagance of the rich makes the lot of the poor harder to bear but the spirit of poverty and charity would do a great deal to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and stimulate the charity and liberality of the rich. Gamalied Bradford says:

"....it is difficult not to agree with him (St. Francis) that if you could get rid of that desire (for wealth), most social and

Novarum. Father Agostino Gemelli says:

"The Franciscan Encyclical foreshadowed the Rerum Novarum. For the aged but clear thinking Pontiff, whose social theories were the logical deduction from his Thomistic principles, understood perfectly that these doctrines could never be put into practice, nor his great dream of social and economic reform ever realized, unless the hearts of individual men and women were previously prepared to accept them. He attempted therefore to change the hearts of men by means of the Third Order, which he exhorted both the laity and the clergy to join, as he found deep-rooted in Franciscan spirituality a just appreciation of the value of labor, love of poverty and respect for the private property of others, a loyal and unassuming sense of brotherhood and eagerness to promote peace amongst men which all are calculated to create a spirit of harmony a cooperation between the different social classes." 10

10. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 216.

Tertiaries In The Modern Family

To appreciate the possibility of uplifting our modern home life through the Third Order it is necessary to consider the causes that disturb the peace in many homes today. Paul R. Martin speaking of the broken home says,

"Examine any number of social problems, ranging from childish misdemeanors to major crime, and authorities will be found to agree that the broken home is a startling factor to them all. Yet the broken home of itself is only the result of a deeper and more fundamental cause, which is but little taken into account by modern materialists." 11

11. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 149-150.

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11. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 149-150.
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Analyzing the causes of social problems further the same author says:

"The demand of modern people for costly raiment, for luxuries of all kinds, and their constant striving to be abreast of the latest style in everything, gives impulse to many ills....

This seemingly insatiable desire is the cause of family discord, of marital infidelity, of broken homes.... This does not mean that the Tertiaries must be dowdy, or that they must dress in bad taste or that they must deny themselves legitimate comforts and conveniences. But it does mean, that they must not set such store by worldly things as to make the accumulation of wealth their sole purpose in life." 12

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12. Ibid., p. 203.
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Thus the Rule of the Third Order protects the homes of Tertiaries from this selfish spirit of worldliness. The practice of moderation in one's daily life, in clothing, in food, and in wholesome recreation remove the causes of discontentment that so easily creep into home life. If the parents set a Christian example they need not fear losing the respect of their children. Their example as Tertiaries will remove to a great extent the danger of any evil influence on their children. In fostering the spirit of poverty of charity, of prayer in common---of an exemplary

Christian life as prescribed by the Rule, parents will remove the fundamental causes that lead to breaking up of home life. As Tertiaries they pledge themselves to foster "The spirit of charity among themselves and towards others." They must "strive to heal discord wherever they can," says their Rule (Chapter II, section 9). This spirit of charity is indeed a strong factor in promoting peace in a home life.

The spirit of poverty and charity prescribed by the Rule and cheerfully practiced by a true Tertiary has another salutary effect on family life. It fosters a consideration for others. With the elimination of selfishness, the wife will respect her husband as the head of the family and the husband will honor his wife as the heart of the home. This is the mutual regard for each other that Pope Pius XI states in his Encyclical on Marriage should exist in every Christian home. Then sacrifices in consideration for every other member in the family are accepted in the spirit of St. Francis. Sufferings and crosses that are connected with the duties of family life are accepted courageously and graciously as a necessary part of life. As Tertiaries they realize and appreciate the great dignity and purpose

of married life. Disregarding all sufferings they exercise the privilege that has been granted to them as instruments of God in the creation of immortal souls. Children are welcomed and respected as creatures of God intrusted to their care and the responsibilities of this care are accepted. This may sound idealistic in our day but there is a great need of ideals in home life in this twentieth century. The problem is how to make society realize and appreciate the ideal. Father F. Forest McGee says:

"Poets sing of the beauties of home and sweetest melodies enshrine its sacredness. The sentiment of "Home, sweet home," appeals to all, it is true; but our present-day conditions interfere seriously with the old love for home and its pleasures. Too many, particularly of the young generation, seem to look upon their homes as a place of rest and meals, a sort of a boarding house, and have hardly taken their evening meal and changed their work-day clothes when they leave that home, night after night, to find enjoyment and pleasures elsewhere." 13

13. McGee, J. Forest, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 32.

After stating that the parents are often at fault in creating this disregard for home life, the author explains that the Tertiary parent will forget his own interest in order to foster love of home life. Father J. Forest says:

"....the Tertiary seeks by example to make the home-life attractive to all the members of the household and to all others with whom he

comes in contact. He does not spend all his leisure time at home; he is not a clam hidden within the four walls of his home; no, he is eager to aid and to be of service to others. A faithful and zealous Tertiary will be down-to-date, and basing his conduct on the words of St. Paul, 'to be all things to all men, in order to gain all for Christ,' he will gladly join in every movement for the advancement of religion; he will cheerfully aid his pastor in furthering the interests of the young people, not by telling the present generation of the glories of the past, but by using the present movement to best advantage; he will quickly achieve in keeping our young people together and bringing them into closer touch with their priests, and he will gladly sacrifice his time and leisure in promoting such gatherings and in trying to insure their success.

"But the Tertiary will not forget that the best place for young and old is within the hallowed walls of the home, and he well knows that if the home-life is cultivated and borne on by the spirit of religious practices, a guard and shield is thrown around the young people that will insure their virtue and their faith. There are some people who need social clubs; there are others who are not satisfied to spend their evenings in the family circle. Mother Church fosters both institutions, but naturally gives the preference to the home." 14

14. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

The transformation of our modern family into a Christian home is absolutely necessary if society is to be saved from self-destruction. If the foundation of society is not fortified with Christian principles, there is not much hope for social reform. If the spirit of poverty, of penance, of charity, and of peace would permeate society through the spread of the Third Order there would be little need of further worry. Social regeneration would be a

further worry. Social regeneration would be a natural consequence.

The Tertiary And Youth

What has the Third Order to offer to youth of today? Through Catholic Action programs in many parishes today the young people are organized into study clubs, Catholic Youth Organizations, Vacation Schools, and similar agencies. The aim of all these is to learn and to apply Christian principles to every day life. Enemies of Church and State, of liberty and of Democracy, have combined their efforts to destroy Christian principles by means of a godless education. They realize that if any new social (or anti-social) order is to be created it can only be done through the education of youth. Whether this new social order be one of materialism and atheism or one that will restore the Christian social order, it can be formed most effectively through the rising generations. This is the program that has been used in Russia, in Mexico, and is now launched in Germany. Every device is used to ensnare youth in materialism, sensual pleasures, and religious indifference. They aim to extinguish everything that is noble in human nature and pamper the animal nature which can never be satisfied. Sensual gratifications at the

sacrifice of Christian principles leads to spiritual and moral starvation. Thus their philosophy leads to greater social unrest and to despair.

The Rule of the Third Order is adaptable for an early training of youth in the ways of St. Francis. It provides that its members have completed their fourteenth year. (Chapter I, Section 1). The Third Order also has Junior Tertiary organizations such as the Catholic Boys Brigade, the Cord-bearers of St. Francis, the Seraphic Youth Sections. Statistics are inadequate as to the extent of these organizations but Franciscan literature indicates that they are widespread and very active. Father Kilian J. Hennrich, O.M.Cap. says that "at present the largest and more important seminaries, with but few exceptions, have flourishing fraternities. The same holds true with the educational institutions conducted by sons and daughters of St. Francis and to a small extent the preparatory seminaries and diocesan high schools." 15

15. Hennrich, Kilian, O.M.Cap., "The Third Order and Youth", The Acolyte, (June 24, 1933).

Father Kilian strongly advises that the young should be encouraged to enter as soon as they are

fourteen. At that age their "youthful enthusiasm is not yet dampened by passion." He says:

"It is true, that many of those who joined at the age of fourteen will drift away, but there is much greater hope of their return, because they ceased to be practical active Tertiaries more or less unconsciously and the Franciscan spirit they imbibed in early youth, how little it may have been, will do them no harm in after life." 16

16. Ibid.

Describing the adaptability of the Third Order to the young he says very emphatically:

"Youth is courageous and often heroic. It desires the right if it sees it and it goes for it if it is told how to reach it. All anti-religious groups recruit mostly from among the young. In this case, they see the wrong as right and go for it enthusiastically. Now the Third Order will make them see the right and give them the spirit to desire it. It will prepare the young psychically and will provide them with the Franciscan enthusiasm so necessary for the realization of the great objects of the Franciscan Reform and Catholic Action, both of which are concerned about all the great moral problems confronting society today. We must not deceive ourselves. The reform of the world and the renaissance of a more beautiful Christianity will not be brought about by old wise acres but by the young still dripping with the Chrism of Confirmation. I have seen and heard what they could do. It will not last long and the Third Order will again be the greatest force in Catholic and Social life. Youth will bring this about and the time required will depend upon the zeal that is expanded in gathering and guiding them." 17

17. Ibid., p. 8.

Father Marion Habig, O.F.M. says:

"....it is particularly during the time of youth that we need those spiritual helps which the Third Order offers. Membership in the Third Order is a powerful protection against the maxims, the dangers, the self-indulgence, the allurements of the world, which threaten to ensnare the adolescent boy or girl.

"At that age growing boys and girls should already take a more serious view of life; they should begin to realize more truly the purpose of their existence....and no matter what vocation is chosen, reception into the Third Order is the best step that can be made at this period." 18

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18. Habig, Marion, O.F.M., Heart O' the Rule "A Primer for Tertiary Novices", pp. 17-18.
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An example of the influence of the Third Order on youth is expressed by the Most Rev. John Mark Gannon, Bishop of Erie as follows: "I have been a member of the Third Order of St. Francis since I was a young boy studying the classics in college and in all my experiences since then there has been no influence more valuable in my life than the lesson of humility learned in those youthful days." 19

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19. Gannon, Most. Rev. John, Mark, "Message From the Hierarchy", Franciscan Third Order Congress, Louisville, Kentucky, (October 6, 7, 8, 1936) p. 17.
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Through individual reform, through the revival of the status of the Christian home, and through the

education of youth in a true evaluation of the material goods, with an appreciation of what ennobles human nature, social disturbances would cease. Modern educators, says Mr. Martin, "have taken no pains whatever to enable the minds and hearts of the students confided to their care to instill into their minds those basic Gospel principles which must be the nucleus of all true social reform." 20

20. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 169.

Tertiaries In Social Work

The relationship of the Third Order to Social Work has been considered in Chapter Six. It is important to note again that the Tertiaries, animated with the spirit of St. Francis, are dedicated to an active apostolate. Active charity is a natural consequence of their primary aim of self-reform--a means to an end - an expression of the love of God and of neighbor. Every Tertiary must be an uplifter of himself and of others. Father Stanislaus, O.S.F.C. says:

"Any social work, therefore, is theirs to do; for the inner life they lead finds fruitful expression through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Hence it is absurd to say, as many do, that the Third Order has no value in the present condition of society, because it

does not aim at any particular social and charitable work, the truth is that any and every social and charitable work falls within the range of its activities." 21

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21. Stanislaus, Father, O.S.F.C., The Third Order of St. Francis A Modern Need, p. 19.
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The important point about the social work of the Tertiaries is not so much the variety of work that is done as the spirit in which it is done. Social work or relief work without the true spirit of charity that comes from a Christian heart and which is not accompanied by a sympathetic understanding of the problems of the needy is a torture to the poor. Charity work or social work must not only be palliative but must rehabilitate the social status of the poor. This cannot be done effectively without the application and acceptance of Christian principles by the social worker in his own private life. His client must also be taught and must accept these principles if he is to be rehabilitated. One whose life is not permeated with Christian principles cannot restore in an unfortunate client his status in society for he cannot give him a Christian outlook on life. Bitterness, hate, and envy cannot be removed from his heart without restoring in him the love of God and his neighbor; and this must be done in a Christ-like manner. Red-tape charity work that requires an

embittered heart to go through an ordeal of a humiliating questionnaire often does more harm than good. Scientific principles are indeed necessary to social work but they must sometimes be sacrificed for a time, or at least they must be tactfully and sympathetically applied. A social worker must remember that more good, more permanent results can be obtained by kind consideration and sympathetic understanding than by overemphasizing scientific details. In dealing with broken personalities more good can be done with a "spoonful of honey than a barrel of vinegar." The Franciscan spirit in social work is necessary if the status of the poor and the oppressed is to be restored. Father Agostino Gemelli explained this thought in very precise and fitting words:

"Prayer and self-denial are the foundation of all forms of Christian apostolic work. But to them the Franciscan adds....his sense of reality, which is made up of sympathy, poverty, and loyal, quick untiring activity. Instead of his hands he uses his heart and looks neither for expressions of human gratitude, nor for mystical joy, nor for comfort, honors, nor for repose." 22

22. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 320.

CHAPTER X

THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT-OUR SOCIAL HERITAGE

St. Francis As Social Reformer

An estimation of the greatness of a social reformer can be made by the heritage he has left to society. Saint Francis exercised a wide influence on society in his day and his influence has continued as the past seven centuries have gone by. Paul Martin says:

"The social reform of Francis of Assisi has been acclaimed as the outstanding glory of the thirteenth century, but it did not end when the Umbrian Poverello died in 1226. In fact, its results became even more apparent after the death of the founder. His own efforts seem to have been but the seed sowed in fertile ground, which required a period of germination before it could bring forth its full fruit."¹

1. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., p. 29.

Society is still subject to sound Christian principles. At heart people are really not irreligious. Many are ignorant of truth but crave for it and seek it with eagerness. Religion is as natural to the spiritual nature of man as food is to his animal nature. His heart craves for truth and justice and happiness. Of society today can be said what Father Antony Linneweber

said of the time of St. Francis when he accomplished his social reform. Father Antony says:

"After all, men need not so much instruction, as inspiration, and the world's ideal teacher is not the brilliant man who knows and can impart theory only, but the one who knows from experience and is able to communicate his message with the enthusiasm that always goes with conviction." 2

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2. Linneweber, Antony, O.F.M., "Asceticism and Mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi", op. cit., p. 46.
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If society could be convinced of the social values of Christian principles by enthusiastic leaders, even if they were few in number, it would discard the false principles that today create social disturbances. The more that social leaders imbibe the spirit of St. Francis--his sincerity, his simplicity, his joy, his humility, his spirit of detachment from temporal remunerations and honors, and his charity--the more effective their reform will be. "By becoming the man who was nobody Francis won the heart of the world not only for Christ but also for himself." says Father Antony Linneweber, O.F.M. 3

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3. Linneweber, Antony, O.F.M. "How St. Francis of Assisi Won the Heart of the World," op. cit., p. 100.
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An English essayist says of his reform:

"The gestures of St. Francis were too large and too significant to be confined to the narrow stage of the little Umbrian hermitage or even of the cities and villages where he preached. In an age that was arid with effete conventions, he sowed a life-seed and a new creative grave. In the mirror of himself as in the method of his teaching he showed forth the image of a human Savior in the living hues of sentiment and sympathy. For this great work he has been called 'The Fifth Evangelist,' and the truth of his gospel for mankind was Life." 4

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4. Goad, Harold, "The Dilemma of St. Francis and the Two Traditions", St. Francis of Assisi, essays in Commemoration with a Preface by Prof. Paul Sabatier, p. 162.
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Thus as an outstanding social reformer St. Francis has left society a heritage that possesses qualities worthy of consideration and of imitation--the Franciscan spirit.

Our Social Heritage

The Franciscan spirit is interpreted by writers in various ways, yet the meaning of all is essentially the same. Father Anacleto Sutherland, O.F.M. explains it by saying:

"In reading Franciscan history, we find that St. Francis and his best followers were men of activity; they did not live in a cozy monastery-corner. They were men of Catholic Action in the highest sense. They went about using every legitimate means at their disposal to tell men of God. After working and preaching

and mingling among men for the glory of heaven, they retired to some lonely spot, or convent, in order to attune again their spirits to the breathings of divine grace. In fact, all the saints of the Order down through the ages, have done the same. This is the true Franciscan spirit." 5

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5. Sutherland, Anaclete, O.F.M., Discussion of Paper: "The Friars in Print and on the Radio" by Fr. Boniface McConville, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 145.
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Father Herbert Holzapfel, O.F.M. says:

"The spirit of St. Francis, the Gospel spirit of simplicity, sincerity, and fidelity, of gentleness, joy, and magnanimity, of fervent love for Christ and of active love for the neighbor has never departed from this institute. This spirit made it possible for the Order to unfold so marvelous an activity in the Middle Ages, and this spirit has also at the present day so powerful an attraction that millions, some in the world, others in the seclusion of the cloister, gather round the banner of St. Francis and make themselves useful in the pursuits of peace." 6

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6. Quoted by Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 73.
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Doctor Little analyzes the Spirit of St. Francis as the spirit of common sense. He says:

"St. Francis may well be studied because of an invaluable heritage he has bestowed upon the Christian Church in what may be called 'Franciscan Spirit'" 7

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7. Little, W.J. Knox, op. cit., p. 10.
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Explaining this term he says:

"Like all great saints Francis had keen intelligence, ready tact, large common sense.... Their greatest gift, perhaps--certainly that of Francis--is common sense. Such a character, so exalted, so purified and effecting so mighty a work for his age, was sure to leave behind him a tone and temper as an invaluable heritage. And so he did. This is what I venture to call 'the Franciscan spirit.'

From Francis there spread among his fellow men, and then among the men of his time, a spirit at once strong and tender--tender as a loving woman, strong as an indomitable force; a spirit stern, exact, definite, playing no tricks with truth, nor emptying it of its meaning by vague generalizations; and also broad and generous and loving, with large consideration, and with tender affectionateness for all that was human, even though misguided and weak. A divine spirit! A temper, making men feel the sweetness of Christianity and the beauty of the love of God, and hence making them hate iniquity as men hate darkness and death and her daughters....

The Franciscan spirit did untold work for the saving of souls, for the advance of religion, for the progress of civilization, for the amelioration of the sad lot of sufferers in the society of the time.

If, as centuries rolled on, some Franciscans failed in their mission, and were unworthy of their calling--as all human institutions are doomed in time to some measure of failure--it was because they lost hold of the spirit of their founder, and where they have not failed, it is in proportion, to the hold they have upon that spirit, so akin to the 'mind of Christ.'" 8

8. Ibid., pp. 13-15.

Dr. James J. Walsh writes of the Spirit of St. Francis as a permanent source of inspiration. He says:

"This exquisite Franciscan spirit, as it is called, which is the very perfume of religion--this spirit at once so humble, so tender, so devout, so akin to 'the good odor of Christ' - passed out into the whole world and has become a permanent source of inspiration. A character once so exalted and so purified as St. Francis was sure to keep alive an ideal; and so he does. From this one can easily understand St. Francis' dominance among a small but earnest band of enthusiasts now pointing the world back to the reign of the spirit." 9

9. Walsh, James J., op. cit., p. 261.

Promotion Of The Franciscan Spirit

Will society of today, in its religious and moral decadence accept the spirit of St. Francis? This is not an age of faith as was the thirteenth century. Evil influences are threatening a social order that is not only infatuated with materialism but is pitifully ignorant of religion which alone teaches men the proper values of earthly good. Without religion man cannot realize his true purpose of life and therefore aims at ends that do not and cannot satisfy him. This is indeed the condition of an alarmingly large percentage of people. But there are also many wise and noble characters in the society of today. Apparently little notice is given to their lives and virtues. They may not be subjects for the public press but their influence for the good justifies hope

and optimism. Father Agostino Gemelli says very hopefully:

"When one remembers, too, how many young men and women there are today living lives of purity consecrated to the service of an ideal, one realizes that even in the world today there exist treasures of Faith and Charity equal to those of the centuries of most intense Christian life....that even in the great modern cities, which seem outwardly so pagan, there exists an abundance of supernatural life and fervent activity in works of faith and charity which permeates and transforms the social structure. The results are evident to those who know the inner life of hospitals, prisons and schools. It might be objected, it is true, that this is only the irradiation, not the central hub of Christian life. But by way of answer it is only right to add that the Central Sun of Christendom--the Catholic Apostolic, and Roman Church, with its dogmas and sacraments, its hierarchy and supernatural and historical life--not only continues the Mystical Life of Christ, its Divine Head, but has never during previous centuries exercised perhaps so widespread an influence as it does at the present time. For the words, teaching, and example of the Church, of its Earthly Head and of the Catholic clergy, are listened to by men today with less irreverence than a short while ago, nor is there the same measure of opposition against the external activity of the Church." 10

10. Gemelli, Agostino, O.F.M., op. cit., p. 267-268.

The Franciscan spirit is seemingly more impractical today than it was in the thirteenth century. Yet were it promoted more enthusiastically it would appeal just as much to this weary society. Paradoxical as it may seem in this materialistic and

sceptical age, it is most applicable to modern needs. Enthusiastically promoted, it would be as acceptable as it was in the days of St. Francis. What Dr. James J. Walsh says of the days of St. Francis is just as applicable today:

"Considering how thoroughly impractical Francis seemed to be in his life, it can scarcely help but be a source of ever increasing wonder that he succeeded in influencing his generation so widely and so thoroughly. It is evident that there were many men of the time tired of the more less strenuous life, which chained them either to their cares of business or tempted them for the sake of the bubble reputation into a military (political) career. To these St. Francis' method of life came with an especially strong appeal. The example of his neglect of worldly things and of his so thoroughly maintained resolve not to be harassed by the ordinary cares of life, and especially not to take too much thought of the future, penetrated into all classes. While it made the rich realize how much of their lives they were living merely for the sake of others, it helped the poor to be satisfied, since here was a sublime and complete recognition of the fact that an existence without cares was better than one with many cares, such as were sure to come to those who wrought ever and anon increase of the goods of this world." 11

11. Walsh, James J., op. cit., p. 262.

Father Victor Mills, O.F.M. briefly states the need of the Franciscan method of social reform in the words of a Capuchin, Louis of Besse. He quotes:

"I think I know a better remedy for the evils of our times than revolution. We must prove to pleasure -

loving souls of today that privation and sufferings are not evils. We must rehabilitate poverty in the eyes of men who are possessed by the love of wealth."¹²

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12. Mills, Victor, O.F.M. "Social Activities in the Franciscan Order", op. cit., p. 10.
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If the Franciscan spirit is to permeate society the Third Order of St. Francis must be promoted.

Professor Martin says:

"Perhaps the most vital need of the present is to make the Third Order known, to spread it as it has not been spread before. This method is strictly in accordance with the wishes of the popes, who themselves have left no stone unturned to make it better known among the people."

.....
 "It is necessary that pastors come to a realization that in urging the Third Order, the Roman Pontiffs have not been indulging in a personal whim, but have realized that in this organization the Church has a powerful means of making Catholic Social Action a real action rather than a theory.

"But the people must know the order, they must be given the opportunity to join it conveniently and the only way this can be brought about is for pastors to erect its fraternities within their own parishes." 13

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13. Martin, Paul R., op. cit., pp. 188-192.
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The regeneration of society by means of the Third Order does not necessitate that all Christians, nor even all Catholics must be Tertiaries. "Not all

are called to be Tertiaries", says Father Fulgence Meyer, O.F.M. He explains this as follows:

"Nor is this their fault. They are simply not called. God does not give them this grace, although He gives them plenty other graces, perhaps just as good, possibly better. I am mentioning this in the interest in fairness and charity. We must never be hasty in judging others and saying off-hand that as they are situated, they ought to join the Third Order and, if they do not, they are evidently trifling with, or neglecting the grace of God." 14

14. Meyer, Fulgence, O.F.M., The Seraphic Highway, p. 97.

Yet by the widespread acceptance of the spirit of St. Francis through the Third Order, society would be led to a higher and nobler aspect of life. It is true that this social order will never reach perfection in this world. But it is also true that merely external charity and legislation will not achieve any lasting reform. Society must be permeated with a spirit of Christian Charity that will recognize the dignity of human life. It must be permeated with the spirit of poverty that will lead each individual to evaluate the material goods of this world in the light on man's purpose in life. It must be permeated with the spirit of penance by which man will come to realize that suffering and self-sacrifice nobly borne, enoble and strengthen

his character and make him master of his better self. Only by prayerfully accepting and practising these virtues - the Gospel precepts - in daily life can society expect a return of social justice, of peace and contentment. The promotion of the Third Order would effect this without doubt. For, as Father Joseph Husslein, S.J. says of Tertiaries: "The dynamic social influence of a vast body of serious minded men and women, in every profession and rank, determined upon such a method of conduct, cannot be overestimated." 15

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15. Husslein, Joseph, S.J., Preface of The Gospel in Action, by Paul Martin p. IX
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The following Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi portrays very briefly the whole philosophy of the great saint and social reformer. It should be the philosophy of his followers:

"Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace!
 Where there is hatred - Let me sow love
 Where there is injury - pardon
 Where there is doubt - faith
 Where there is despair - hope
 Where there is darkness - light
 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 in pardoning - that we are pardoned

It is in dying - that we are born to eternal life."
16

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16. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, Leaflet -
printed by Foley Brothers, New York
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APPENDIX

Rule of the Third Order Secular
of St. Francis

CHAPTER I.

Reception, Novitiate and Profession.

1. Only those may be received as members who have completed their fourteenth year, and are of good character, peace-loving, and above all of tried fidelity in the practice of the Catholic Faith and in loyalty to the Roman Church and the Apostolic See.
2. Married women may not be received without the husband's knowledge and consent, unless their confessor judges otherwise.
3. The members shall wear the small scapular and the cord as prescribed; if they do not, they deprive themselves of the rights and privileges of the Order.
4. All who enter the Order must pass the first year in probation; then they shall duly make their profession upon the Rule of the Order, pledging themselves to observe the Commandments of God and of the Church, and to render satisfaction if they have failed against their profession.

CHAPTER II.

Rule of Life.

1. In all things let the members of the Third Order avoid extremes of cost and style, observing the golden mean suited to each one's station in life.
2. Let them with the utmost caution keep away from dances and shows which savor of license, as well as from all forms of dissipation.

3. Let them be temperate in eating and drinking, and devoutly say grace before and after meals.
4. They shall fast on the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception and on that of St. Francis; they are to be highly commended who, according to the original Rule of the Tertiaries, also either fast on Fridays or abstain from fleshmeat on Wednesdays.
5. They shall approach the Sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist every month.
6. Tertiaries among the clergy, since they recite the Divine Office daily, shall be under no further obligation in this regard. Lay members who recite neither the Canonical Hours, nor the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, shall say daily twelve Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glories, unless they are prevented by ill health.
7. Let those who are entitled to make a last will and testament, do so in good time.
8. In their daily life let them strive to lead others by good example and to promote practices of piety and good works. Let them not allow books or publications which are a menace to virtue, to be brought into their homes, or to be read by those under their care.
9. Let them earnestly maintain the spirit of charity among themselves and towards others. Let them strive to heal discord wherever they can.
10. Let them never take an oath except when necessary. Let them never use indecent language or vulgar jokes. Let them examine their conscience every night whether they have offended in this regard; if they have, let them repent and correct their fault.

11. Let those who can do so, attend Mass every day. Let them attend the monthly meetings called by the Prefect.

12. Let them contribute according to their means to a common fund, from which the poorer members may be aided, especially in time of sickness, or provision may be made for the dignity of Divine Worship.

13. Let the officers either personally visit a sick member, or send some one to perform the services of charity. In case of serious illness let them remind and urge the sick person to arrange in time the affairs of his soul.

14. At the funeral of a deceased member the resident and visiting Tertiaries shall assemble and say in common five decades of the Rosary for the soul of the departed. Moreover, let the priests at the Holy Sacrifice and the lay members, if possible, having received Holy Communion, pray with fervent charity for the eternal rest of the deceased.

CHAPTER III.

Offices, Visitation, and the Rule Itself.

1. The offices shall be conferred at a meeting of the members. The term of these offices shall be three years. Let no one without good reason refuse an office tendered him, and let no one discharge his office negligently.

2. The Visitor, who is charged with the supervision of the Order, shall diligently investigate whether the Rule is properly observed. Therefore it shall be his duty to visit the Fraternities every year, or oftener if need be, and hold a meeting, to which all the officers and members shall be summoned. Should the Visitor recall a member to his duty by admonition or command, or impose a salutary penance, let such member meekly accept the correction and not refuse to perform the penance.

3. The Visitors are to be chosen from the First Franciscan Order or from the Third Order Regular, and shall be appointed by the provincial or local superiors when requested. Laymen cannot hold the office of Visitor.

4. Disobedient and harmful members shall be admonished of their duty a second and a third time; if they do not submit, let them be dismissed from the Order.

5. Those who offend against any provision of this Rule, do not incur the guilt of sin unless in so doing they also transgress the Commandments of God or of the Church.

6. Should a just and serious cause prevent a member from observing any provision of the Rule, such person may be dispensed therefrom, or the regulation may be prudently commuted. For this purpose the ordinary superiors of the First and the Third Order Regular, as also the aforesaid Visitors, shall have full power.

Canticle of the Sun

"Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,
 Praise, glory and honor and benediction all, are
 Thine
 To Thee alone do they belong, most High,
 And there is no man fit to mention Thee.
 Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
 Especially to my worshipful brother sun,
 The which lights up the day, and through him dost
 Thou brightness give;
 And beautiful is he and radiant with splendor great;
 Of Thee, Most High, signification gives.
 Praised be my Lord, for sister moon and for the stars,
 In heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious
 and fair.
 Praised be my Lord for brother wind
 And for the air and clouds and fair and every kind
 of weather,
 By the which Thou givest to Thy creatures nourishment.
 Praised be my Lord for sister water,
 The which is greatly helpful and humble and precious
 and pure.
 Praised be my Lord for brother fire,
 By the which Thou lightest up the dark.
 And fair is he and gay and mighty and strong.
 Praised be my Lord for our sister, mother earth,
 The which sustains and keeps us
 And brings forth diverse fruits with grass and flowers
 bright.
 Praised be my Lord for those who for Thy love forgive
 And weakness bear and tribulation.
 Blessed those who shall in peace endure,
 For by Thee, Most High, shall they be crowned.
 Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death,
 From the which no living man can flee.
 Woe to them who die in mortal sin;
 Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy
 most holy will,
 For the second death shall do them no ill.
 Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give Him thanks,
 And be subject unto Him with great humility."

Translation of Father Paschal Robinson, O.F.M.
 Quoted by James J. Walsh, The Thirteenth, Greatest
of Centuries.

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