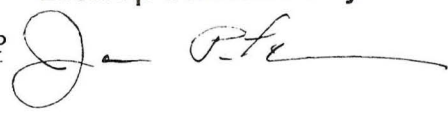


# memo *from the desk of*

Bishop James P. Lyke

March 17, 1980  
St. Patrick at St. Patrick, WP  
10:00 a.m.



## Introduction

- A. Overwhelming Irish Spirit
  - 1. First Grader

## Body

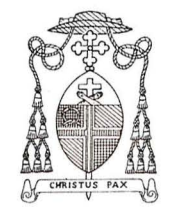
- A. Today - all Irish
- B. In context: trouble on every continent  
                  issue: human rights
- C. At home: inflation      health, education  
                  family                    poverty
- D. the reality of St. Patrick's Day

sense of human solidarity  
mystic propensity towards the ideal

St. Patrick:	CHRIST SHIELD ME THIS DAY
Christ with me	Christ when I lie down
Christ before me	Christ when I rise
Christ behind me	Christ in the heart of
Christ in me	every person who thinks
Christ beneath me	of me.
Christ above me	Christ in the mouth of
Christ on my right	every person who speaks
Christ on my left	of me.

---

Before I formed you in the womb  
I knew you, before you were born  
I dedicated you. A prophet to  
the nations I appointed you.  
The things which you have heard from me through many witnesses  
you must hand on to trustworthy men and women who will be able  
to teach others.



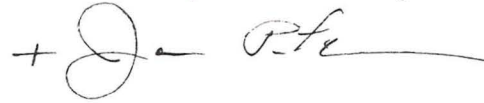
# memo *from the desk of*

St. Patrick Day

3/17/8.

St. Patrick, Bridge

Bishop James P. Lyke

+ 

Breastplate of St. Pat

-- rhythm & poetry

-- message and movement

- a. not just a prayer, but a statement and reflection
- b. experience of Christ can be frightening
- c. gift of St. Patrick to Ireland, and thru Irish men  
and women to the Church Universal: obsession with  
Christ

Christ shield me this day.

Christ with me, Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ in me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I ARISE,

Christ in the heart of every person who thinks of me, Chi

Christ in the mouth of every person who speaks of me,

Christ in the eye that sees me,

Christ in the ear that hears me.

gospel: fruit of the missionary who works w faith  
in the power of Christ

"put your gifts at the service of one another,  
each in the measure he has received

what distinguishes Patrick is the durability  
of his efforts

initial state of Ireland

all of Ireland

fruit of his works



# memo from the desk of

Bishop James P. Lyke

September 28, 1980

Our Lady of Lourdes

Feast of ST. Wenceslaus

+ J. P. Lyke

Remarks after Mass:

1. Appreciative and congratulatory

- a. Fr. Andel
- b. other pastors
- c. homilist
- d. parishioners

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
Czech ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

2. song, "Good King Wenceslaus" - added meaning  
incarnate Christian principles in a world filled  
with political unrest

900

our involvement in social change and politics

3. a new face to the social order

1) O.L.C. — Fr. John Andel  
" Dennis Tomczak  
" Joe Ungorsky

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2) St. Wenceslaus — Msgr. Heraday

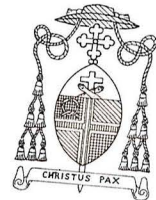
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3) St. Procop — Fr. James Vesely

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4) Holy Family — Fr. George Vitij

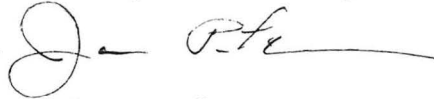
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# memo *from the desk of*

Bishop James P. Lyke

St. Patrick on Bridge  
Installation, 10-26-80

+ 

"Two men went up to the temple to pray."

Introduction: "Apply your whole self to the text;  
apply the whole text to yourself."

- I. Something very obvious about this parable - prayer
  - a. no person who is proud can pray (righteousness from self)
  - b. no person who despises another person can pray
  - c. no person who prays to oneself can pray
  
- II. A meaning far deeper - human intentionality in our our doing:
  - a. why, really, do I do the things I do? My real motivation? What, or who, really impels me to action - and to act this way or that? # 1
  - b. What I do does not justify me - bring salvation

pharisee - did all the right things, but was not saved;  
tax-coll. - did all the wrong things, but was saved

caricature of the charismatic and social activists -  
in it for themselves! They're doing all the right things!

III. Our human intentionality is so rooted in Jesus,  
that he is the reason for our being and doing -  
in Him we live, move and have our being

IV. Pastoral leadership - key function: to keep us  
rooted in Christ:

"But the Lord stood by my side and gave me strength,  
so that through me the preaching task might be completed  
and all the nations might hear the Gospel." (Timothy)

"The Lord is a God of justice, who knows no favourites."  
Sirach





# memo *from the desk of*

St. John Cathedral  
Holy Family/ 12-27-80  
Latin Liturgy

Bishop James P. Lyke

+ *J. P. Lyke*

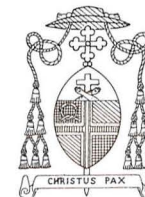
Introduction - two recent news items

1. 50% U.S. families separated/divorced - statistically "normal"
2. positive = new sense of shared responsibility

## Body

Whatever the future of marriage and family depends upon our response to the biblical message today. Three aspects to God's plan of salvation in the family salvation history of our lives.

- a. universal language of love (e.g., Latin)
  - 1) Paul's principles of interrelationships
  - 2) cite expressions of love
- b. dignity of the human person
  - 1) all in Xst
  - 2) son/daughter no less child of God that m or f  
all command respect by the very power and presence of the divine life and divine call
- c. place of honor and authority
  - 1) office of...
  - 2) describe changing roles
3. Tension - Gospel: Mary, Joseph, Christ
  - a. n consultation by Christ but he remained obedient
  - b. worry, bewilderment on part of Mary & Joseph
4. Today's goal: reclaim the family for Christ  
"restaurare omnia in Christo"
5. Eucharist



From - the most perfect imitation  
of God - Leo XIII

1985

"Once you know all these things,  
what will you do if you put them  
into practice."

- Reverse character &
- Show his love

### I MEANING

- A. Dispute - who is the greater? - Luke
- B. UNSUCCESS + UNCLEAN ROAD

In.  
Jim  
Harold

II. "From in a point you can take around the  
world... There is something about From  
that all religions respect - his authority."  
- Inst. Comm. on Penn - Assisi:

### III From:

- A. Identification in universe - Control
- B. Radicalism - extreme steps to  
transform society - BEC AM
- C. Love of God & pain of man in today  
is sufficient
- © Jesus love in heart

### IV Prayer

I love the Land  
I'll hand my cry +  
+ pretend so my game  
Long as I live  
and + neither rise  
I'll be better to his than



August 10, 1980  
Sunday  
Feast of St. Lawrence  
St. Lawrence Church

### Introduction

1. Social scientists - 3% of population can change a nation; 8% can cause a revolution
  2. Such was the case with the early Church -
    - a. small band of people changed the known world;
    - b. St. Lawrence - one of our proudest examples:
      - 1) d. 258
      - 2) put to death after Pope St. Sixtus II
      - 3) in charge of material goods for the Church and ministry to the poor
      - 4) anticipating arrest, gave the Church funds to the poor
  3. Faith of early Church in F-S-HS, faith in Xst, Way, Truth, Life, that caused a social upheaval in society of the times (persecuted by civil authorities)
  4. St. Lawrence impels us to look again at the depth of our faith and the way our faith changes us personally and the way that faith operates in us so that we change the world.
- I. Our Christian Faith contradicts the mentality of the modern world
- A. Hebrews: "Faith is a confident assurance..."  
B. Modern world: "Faith is a confident INSurance..."
1. certain and secure about the future
  2. world of guarantees and warrantees; stocks and bonds; patents and copyrights; indemnities and securities;
  3. we tend to transfer this mentality to our self-understanding as a person; our sense of wholeness and spiritual well-being;
  4. we insure our house and all that is in it;
- C. Christian Faith - ASSURANCE
1. Abraham - called by God to leave the security of his homeland; to sacrifice his son, Issaac
  2. Sarah - to believe that she would have a son in her old age;
  3. Israelites - to believe that God would deliver them from bondage;
  4. Gospel - to give up the security of material possessions - to have a spirit of detachment:

"Sell what you have and give alms. Get purses for yourselves that never wear out, a never-failing treasure with the Lord which not thief comes near nor any moth destroys. Wherever your treasure lies, there your hearts will be."
- D. Faith is not -
1. assent to a theological formulation or creed (explain)
  2. a belief in organized religion (intended to serve faith)
  3. an escape from the world (a stronger presence in the world)

St. Lawrence was not killed for any of these reasons



III. "Faith is a confident assurance of what we hope for, and a conviction about the things we do not see."

A. Faith is born out of the insecurity of my own being - life without God has no meaning; life without Christ does not make sense;

"Our hearts are restless until they rest in God."

B. The inexplicability of all creation - the universe, the human body and spirit and mind;

C. Faith is the gift from God to the one question, searches and explores, and who exclaims, "Lord, that I may see!"

D. Faith is born from the Word of God -

e.g., "No one has ever seen God,  
but if we love one another,  
God lives in us and we in him."

Faith is active, energetic, dynamic; faith impels us to reach out and touch and share our lives and possessions;

E. Faith helps us understand life and death; being young and growing older;  
Faith enables us to understand and even embrace human suffering - like Christ, to suffer for others;

F. Faith is trust and confidence in God, so that life has meaning and purpose;

G. Faith enables us to understand the other half of that beautiful story about St. Lawrence:

"These are the treasures of the Church -  
the blind, the lame, lepers, maimed, widows, orphans, the poor!"

IV. Our Eucharist...

THE TRANSITUS  
October 3, 1981  
St. John Cathedral  
800th Anniversary of the  
Birth of St. Francis

"But if I washed your feet  
- I who am Teacher and Lord -  
then you must wash each other's feet. . .  
Once you know all these things,  
blest will be he  
if you put them into practice."

John 13:14,17

Bishop Pilla, my brothers and sisters of St. Francis, Friends and  
Guests.

Pax et Bonum - Peace be with you, and all that is good.

It is the inauguration of the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of our Holy  
Father, St. Francis. What a grand privilege for me, the first Franciscan  
bishop in the history of the Diocese of Cleveland, to join with you in ini-  
tiating the yearlong sacred commemorations that will bring so much joy and  
hope to the Diocese of Cleveland and the Church throughout the world, and  
renew all of us in that seraphic spirit that is the hallmark of our Franciscan  
Communities.

Though I am a bishop, an inheritor of apostolic succession, I remain,  
like you, irreversibly Franciscan in my personal make-up; my history, my  
emotional and psychological elan vital, and my dreams and vision are all  
rooted in Francis. I remain proud of the initials behind my name, and feel  
a certain inner movement when referred to as a "Franciscan" bishop. I am  
your brother.

My brothers and sisters, each year at this time I cringe at the media coverage  
of the feast of St. Francis. Typically, in our heavily Catholic cities, and  
as happened in Cleveland last night, the newscaster will announce St. Francis  
Day and proceed to report on the blessing of barking, whistling, crying,  
groaning and restless animals. Magazines will depict St. Francis with a halo  
of birds around his head, and writers will suggest how the family can best  
signify Francis's charism. "To mark the feast of St. Francis," one periodi-  
cal reported, "give bread crumbs to the birds and recall the love which this  
saint had for all of nature." Francis, at best, comes across as a grand  
knight of the Society for the Prevention against Cruelty to Animals.

This all has its place, if given its proper perspective. As relayed, however, such narrations portray an abbreviated, if not distorted and downright fallacious image of Francis of Assisi. For, Francis was not primarily a lover of animals and nature. He was a lover of God, and saw in all creation, animate and inanimate, a reflection of the beauty, wonder, and grandeur of an awe-inspiring and fascinating God. He saw the reflection of a Father who cared so much for brothers and sisters human, that he relished us with the gifts of creation, so that in and through them, we might find a way to the mystery of Father-Son-Holy Spirit, and a path to the dignity of the sons and daughters of the Father, who are the pinnacle of all creation. Too readily we speak of Francis's love for animals and nature and forget those focal lines in the Canticle of the Sun:

Most High, omnipotent, good Lord  
To You alone belong praise and glory,  
Honor and blessing.

My friends, the 800th anniversary of the birth of our Holy Father, St. Francis, provides us the moment to see for ourselves, and to help others to see, Francis in the truest light. This is a demand of truth and of honest history. More critically, in facing the richness of the life and meaning of our Holy Father Francis, we find the opportunity to analyze our own call and challenge for these troublesome times in which we live.

Well, then, who is Francis of Assisi? Most fundamentally, Francis was the man who interiorized to his innermost depths the mystery of Jesus. Aside from our Blessed Mother, the Church acknowledges no other saint in this way. The Sacred Stigmata was God's sign to his people that Francis discovered the inner core of Jesus's mind and heart. In Francis, word and deed are clearly united. Francis was radically confirmed to Christ. He patterned his life on that Jesus, who invites us, "If I who am Teacher and Lord have washed your feet, then you must wash each other's feet." My friends, once you know all these things, once you understand Francis's absolutely Christo-centric vision of life, "Blest will you be if you put these things into practice."

Christ said, "Do not worry about tomorrow." In this society of materialism and consumerism, how great is our anxiety about "tomorrow"! How overwhelming our need for security! How tension-filled our worries about the next day, the next year, the next decade. Our pension plans, insurances, medical care are now so bureaucratized and institutionalized that they themselves absorb our energies rather than the fullness of life these designs intend to insure. In this context, recall how Father Francis ordered the Brother Cook not to soak the next day's vegetables in hot water on the night before, as was the custom. In so doing, Francis wanted to comply with the Sermon on the Mount, "Take no thought for tomorrow." So, the cook never put dried peas or beans in the water until the morning itself. Do not let this seeming naivete distract us from Francis's basic intent. He wanted to create a social order and condition, in which his brothers and sisters would have confidence that the Lord would provide and tend to their needs. "Blest will you be if you put these things into practice."

Christ has said, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do unto me." What a tremendous significance the Saviour's words have in these days when the food lines at our own hunger centers have literally tripled within a year's time, and when projected budget cuts will force unprecedented numbers of our people to be without jobs and decent housing. Francis identified with the poor and the outcast. In his time, there were the "popolo grasso" and the "popolo minuto" - the big people and the little people, the have's and the have not's. Francis called his Order "friars minor" because we are called to live like the "little people," the poor. He kept the diet of the underprivileged, with black bread and water as his chief nourishment. On occasions when the rich invited him into their houses to dine, he pulled out some bread crusts he had hidden, and amiably distributed them to his embarrassed hosts. My brother and sister Franciscans, will we take this occasion of the 800th anniversary of the birth of our Father, Francis, to renew our commitment to foster dignity of the poor? Will we tithe on our time, talent, and treasure not simply to give to the poor, but, more especially, to create those conditions by which the poor can help themselves? "Once you know all these things, blest will you be, if you put them into practice."

Christ has told us, "If you live by the sword, you shall perish by the sword." How important is this mandate, as we witness the nuclear stockpiles around the world and read of our own country's intent to produce even more nuclear weapons. With passionate pleas, we have listened to Pope John Paul II and our own Ordinary, Bishop Pilla, appeal to our consciences in this savage race toward potential destruction. What a tragedy that we shall waste the valuable resources of minds and nature, technological progress and monies, to prepare for war rather than feed the starving from around the world, create gainful employment for the jobless, design remedies to eliminate the causes and effects of facism, and channel appropriate resources into our educational systems. Recall this scene from the life of our Holy Father, St. Francis.

The bishop of Assisi said to Francis: "Your life seems hard to me; it must be burdensome not to have any earthly possessions." Francis responded: "My Lord, if we wanted to possess anything, then we would also need arms to defend ourselves. That is how all the quarrels and conflicts get started, and they are obstacles to love. For this reason we wish to possess nothing." My friends, "Once you know all these things, blest will you be, if you put them into practice."

Christ has told us, "I have come not to be served but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for the many." How difficult to follow this command of the Lord in a society which beckons us to superiority, domination, and power, and to the use of persons towards materialistic goals. Note how Francis calls us to superiority - in humility, in generosity, in service. Every class distinction among the Friars Minor, even between laymen and ordained priests, was prohibited. A periodic rotation of superiors and subordinates was unconditionally required. All posts in the Order were to be viewed as modes of service. Hence, no one was called "Lord" or "superior," but servant, protector, and guardian.



My brothers and sisters of St. Francis, Francis's appeal is universal: everybody loves Francis of Assisi. At once a simple and a complex person, "he touched almost every field of human endeavor and every human aspiration" (Fr. Roy Gasnick, O.S.V., anniversary issue). There was Francis, the mystic, the naturalist, the personalist, the reformer; Francis, the activist, the peacemaker, the poverello (the little poor man), the poet and the troubadour (cf. Roy Gasnick).

We are all proud of Francis of Assisi. For eight hundred years the impact of his life and death has been inerascibly penned in the annals of human history. Let us make St. Francis proud of us. Let us begin to respond now to the Word of God, "for up to now we have made little or no progress" (St. Francis).

Once we know all these things - about Christ and St. Francis -- blest will we be, if we put them into practice.

St. Procop Church  
Polka Mass  
Saturday, November 21, 1981  
5:30 p.m.  
The Feast of Christ the King

Father Vesely, my brother clergy, religious brothers and Sisters, dear Parishioners of St. Procop, and Friends:

In the midsts of the happiness and beauty of this Polka Mass, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. Surely, this music lifts our hearts and minds to our Heavenly Father, in honor of his Son, Christ the King, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Surely, we are blessed that this rich expression of culture is a sure means to know, understand, and experience the joy, unity, brother-and-sisterhood, and Christian love which we celebrate this evening in the Sacred Liturgy.

My friends, what is the specific biblical message of the powerful and inspiring Scriptures of this evening's Liturgy?

1. Christ is King, but a different kind of king; Christ is ruler, but a different kind of ruler; Christ is leader, but a different kind of leader.

His throne is a cross; his crown, a wreath of thorns; his royal garb, a blood-stained cloth; his scepter, a shepherd's staff.

Our King has no trappings of power; on the cross he is a powerless victim of inhumanity. Our King is one who knows suffering, betrayal, rejection, and poverty.

Our King is a shepherd, who tenderly cares for his flock and lays down his life for them. As we heard from the Book of the Prophet Ezechiel:

I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God. The lost I will seek out, the strayed

I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick  
I will heal.... Ez. 34: 15ff

,paradoxically,  
Our King/is one who triumphs through humility and weakness,  
through the power of the cross and resurrection, so that, in the words  
of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "having destroyed every sovereignty,  
authority, and power, he will hand over the kingdom to God our Father,"  
(1st Cor. 15: 20ff).

My friends, is there any wonder, then, that this kind  
of king, ruler, and leader would emphasize a different set of concerns  
and have a different agenda for his Church? Are we surprised to hear  
him say, "As often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones,  
you neglected to do it to me"? Are we stunned to note that our King  
and leader identifies with, is one with, and has a particular option  
for the poor? Do we not see in this powerful Last Judgement scene  
a clear specification of that great commandment, "You should love  
your neighbor as yourself"?

My brothers and sisters, there are thousands of poor  
people in the City of Cleveland. Half of us are poor, half of us  
face problems of unemployment, welfare, crime, inadequate health  
care, education, terrible housing, and astronomically high utility  
bills. Half of us come face to face with creeping hopelessness.  
Do we see Christ our King in solidarity with the poor of our city?  
"As often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones,  
you neglected to do it to me."

My friends, 2000 jobs a year are lost in the City of  
Cleveland; unemployment among black youth is as high as 60%; 25%

25% of our Hispanic brothers and sisters are on welfare and 34% of those who can find work receive wages below the poverty level; the typical senior citizen in our city has either been mugged or robbed, or knows someone who has been mugged or robbed. My friends, do we see Christ our King in solidarity with the poor of our city, and shall we give him our hearts and minds, our song and prayers, our time, talent, and treasure, so that through us Christ our King may, like the Good Shepherd, seek out the lost, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured, heal the sick, feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit the imprisoned, and welcome the stranger? "As often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it to me."

My friends, the poor are the treasures of the Church because they are Christ, the living Christ, the suffering Christ, in the here and now of the Body of Christ in today's world. The poor - wherever they may be - in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, in Africa, in the Orient - wherever they may be the poor are Christ, like each one of us, they are Christ. In Christ, they are our brothers and sisters; they are our people.

By their baptismal immersion in Christ, by the command of evangelization ("Go, teach all nations"), by the mystery of the Incarnation, for Christ suffered, dies and rose for all; by the verification of the Paul the Apostle, "There is no longer slave or free, Jew or Gentile, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." By the judgement of Christ, "These will go off to eternal punishment and the just to eternal life."



My brothers and sisters, you and I shall come to this Eucharistic table because we are hungry and thirsty for Christ. Without Christ we have a far worse and more pervasive poverty - a poverty of mind, of heart, of being; a poverty of soul. Through this Eucharist may Christ rule over our minds and hearts, and, as we share the one bread and one cup, may he make us one in him and with each other.

NCCB: November 1983

By Bishop James P. Lyke, O.F.M.

Liturgy for November 17

Thursday of the 33rd Week Ordinary Time:

Commemoration of St. Elizabeth of Hungary

1 Macc. 2:15-19

Luke 19: 41-44

Brothers: The saint we commemorate today speaks to our hearts: Elizabeth of Hungary was born a daughter of a king and died shortly before her twenty-fourth birthday, in 1231. Even though she has been dead for seven hundred and fifty-two years, she speaks to us today. A young woman of power, privilege and prestige, she chose to dedicate her life in committed service to Christ among the poor, and showed such intense love in her short life that she has been honored as the Patroness of Catholic Charities and the Secular Order--the so-called--"Third Order"-- of Franciscans.

But Elizabeth is not a Saint because she did good things for poor people. Like her beloved Saint Francis who was led by the Spirit to embrace the wounds of Christ in the lepers of Assisi, this holy lady was schooled by the very poor she served with such sensitive love. The poor taught her Christ, and in her sufferings--her tragic widowhood, the bitter rejection of her family, the loss of all her worldly power--the poor were her teachers and she their eager student, joyfully learning Christ.

Saint Jerome taught that ignorance of the Scripture was ignorance of Christ. To ignore and neglect the poor is equally to ignore and neglect Christ, for the same sacred Word teaches "When I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat..."

[Matt. 26:42].

No man is a teacher unless he is first a student. And how are we bishops "teachers of all" unless we are "students of all"? Is it any accident, then, that our confreres at Puebla call us, and the entire Church, to "a preferential option for the poor"? [Puebla 1134] The poor are ours not so much for what we can do for them--though our obligation is great in justice, as we well know. But the poor and oppressed are our own and their causes our gravest concerns, because in them we see the sacred humanity of Jesus our Lord. The poor of the world shed the tears of Christ. In them the wounds of Christ speak to the world and to us. This, fundamentally, is why Francis embraced the lepers.

Like Elizabeth of Hungary, we bishops of the United States are to a certain extent people of privilege, power, and prestige. We are called to a conversion of heart, as really as she once was, to commit our lives and our office to the service of Christ in the poor and oppressed. But all the greater is our obligation to be students of Christ, for how great is our office and responsibility to teach Christ in the Church and in the world!

We see the tears of Christ in today's Gospel, and like Mattathias of old, shall we not find strength to stand up for justice even against the king and his power? We have rightly condemned the intrinsic evil of directly killing innocent human life even from the earliest and most defenseless moment of existence within the womb. Rightly, too, we condemn

the intrinsic evil of the greatest sin of omission of our day: neglect of the poor.

Indeed, our war in behalf of the poor is reflected seventeen times in our pastoral on peace. Our struggle in behalf of the poor is also evidenced in our Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Relief Services, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Near East Relief Services, the American Board of Catholic Missions, the Latin American Collection, the Negro and Indian Mission Collection, and the host of ministries and services represented by them. We are justly proud. Still, deep in our hearts we know we are called to be more and to do more, so that we shall "study war no more," so that Christ shall weep no more, so that, in the words of the poet:

I dream a world where man  
No other will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn,  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head,  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attend the needs of all mankind,  
Of such I dream--  
Our world!



In this Sacred Eucharist, my brothers, the kingly Christ, is transformed into the poverty of humble signs of bread and wine, that we might become rich in the power, prestige and privilege of the truth of the Gospel: mercy, justice, peace, and love. As we approach the Table of that Lord who gives himself equally to all and all to each, and who had "no place to lay his head", let us remember the words of the ancient Father of the Church, St. Augustine:

Believers come to know the body of Christ  
if they do not neglect the body of Christ.  
The Apostle Paul tells us there is one bread  
and we, though many, are one body. If we would  
truly be alive, we are shown where life is from  
and where life is destined. We must not shrink  
from our part in the structure, not be cut off  
from the body as rotted members, nor be a  
source of embarrassment as deformed members. But  
we are to be attractive, strong and healthy  
members which blend into the body, living for  
God, through the power of God, at work here on  
earth, and some day at peace in heaven.

--Commentary on Joh's Gospel  
Tractdate 26.13

The Vincentian Sisters of Charity  
The Solemnity of Saint Vincent de Paul  
Bedford, Ohio  
September 29, 1984

Dear Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul:

A woman who took great pride in her beautiful green lawn one year found herself with a large crop of dandelions. After trying every method she knew to get rid of them, she wrote the Department of Agriculture, told them what she had tried and asked, "What should I do now?" In time the answer came back, "We suggest you learn to love them!"

Sisters, sometimes we treat the poor as dandelions, as bothersome and distasteful weeds in an otherwise lovely crop of humanity. Today, in the person of Saint Vincent de Paul, and through the charism of your community, the Lord repeats to the world, "I suggest that you love them!"

Because the poor are many, does not mean they do not have intrinsic worth.

Because they are scattered across the lawns of humanity, does not mean they have no dignity.

Because the poor distract the "proper people" from the manicured sensibilities and amenities of polite society, does not mean they are unloveable.

Because they are common, does not mean they do not share in the inherent quality of that which is truly beautiful.

Indeed, because the poor are "always with us," because they are indestructible, they are a sign that God demands that we give them attention, so that we may perceive how like them we really are in the eyes of God - and how like them God in Christ Jesus really is.

Sisters, those whom the world sees as the dandelions of creation, Saint Vincent embraced with Christlike affection: the foolish, the weak, the common, the contemptible -- these who are nothing God has chosen to show up those who are everything! (Saint Paul)

Listen to your founder and ponder profoundly his words:

Even though the poor are often rough and unrefined, we must not judge them from external appearances nor from <sup>the</sup> mental gifts they seem to have received.

On the contrary, if you consider the poor in the light of faith, then you will observe that they are taking the place of the Son of God who chose to be poor.

If we are poor in spirit, my friends, we shall find our poverty in the midst of the poor.

If we would strive for consistent gentleness, we would be challenged by the gracelessness of the poor.

If we would find comfort in the midst of tears, we shall look upon the example of the poor.

If we shall await God's mercy, to the poor we must show mercy.

If our eyes shall enjoy the vision of God, then our hearts must reach out to the poor because of who they are and not because of the good feelings we may have or the affirmation we may receive in helping them.

If daughters of God we shall be called, then we shall make peace in behalf of the poor, even if it disturbs the consciences of our benefactors.

If the kingdom of God would be ours, then right not might our cause must be.

If profound inner peace would stir in our hearts, if true joy and gladness of conscience is our desire, then, like the poor, abuse, persecution, and calumny our lot will be.

Listen again to the wisdom of your founder:

Although in his passion Christ almost lost the appearance of a man and was considered a fool by the Gentiles and a stumbling block by the Jews, he showed them that his mission was to preach to the poor....

We also ought to have this same spirit and imitate Christ's actions, that is, we must take care of the poor, console them, support their cause.

If in the spirit of Isaiah we shall be bearers of good news, heralds of peace, inspirators of happiness, proclamators of salvation, then charity our all-consuming virtue and single-minded purpose must be. Again, the wisdom of your founder:

Charity is certainly greater than any rule.

Moreover, all rules must lead to charity. Since she is a noble mistress, we must do whatever she commands.

Sisters, back in the 17th century Saint Vincent de Paul was not blessed with the scientific knowledge of the causes of poverty and the awareness of the systemic injustices that must be challenged and corrected if we are to create a just society for all. But clearly he had a sense for the dignity of each child of God, which must form the basis for the radical re-structuring of society. Surely, Vincent de Paul had an intuitive sense of the "seamless garment": he would give his energy for the poor born as well as the poor unborn, for the defenseless child as well as the defenseless adult, for those whole in mind and body as well as for those crippled in mind and body. Today, we speak of liberation theology and we speak eloquently of the Church's preferential option for the poor. But listen to the wisdom and foresight of Vincent de Paul, who spoke of the preferential option for the poor in the mid-seventeenth century:

It is our duty to prefer the service of the poor to everything else and to offer such service as quickly as possible. If a needy person requires medicine or other help during prayer time, do whatever has to be done with peace of mind. Offer the deed to God as your prayer. Do not become upset or feel guilty because you interrupted your prayer to serve the poor.... One of God's works is merely interrupted so that another can be carried out.

Sisters, in your Mission Statement you tell the Church that you are "servants of the poor" who make God's love "visible through compassion." You say that you are ready "to risk all in order that others may have life and have it more abundantly."

In the Eucharist God makes his love and compassion visible to us in our poverty of spirit and hunger for life. May this Eucharist be food for your journey of faith, hope, and love - you "whose convent is the sickroom, whose chapel is the parish church, and whose cloister is the streets of the city."

quotations taken from THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS, from a by Saint Vincent de Paul, priest, September 27, Volume IV, page 1424

Scriptures:       Isaiah 52: 7-10  
                      I Corinthians 1: 26-31, 2: 1-2  
                      Matthew 5: 1-12a



The Church of the Ascension  
The Solemnity of the Ascension  
May 31, 1984  
Evening

INTRODUCTION: Saint Francis and the mason

"What are you doing?"

"I'm working from morning til night!"

"Why are you working?"

"To earn some money!"

"What do you want money for?"

"To buy bread to live"

"All right, - and what are you living for?"

--- no response ---

I. "And what are you living for?" The response to this question becomes more focused as we reflect on the maing of your patronal feast, the Ascension of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A. Easter = conquered sin and death

B. Ascension = With the exaltation to the right hand of the Father, we have the affirmation that Christ is the Lord of history: His redeeming sacrifice becomes contemporaneous with all historical time and his glorified humanity is lifted eternally into divine life." (Eric C. Rust, MINISTER'S MANUAL, 1984)

Ascension = Our Lord has passed from the particularity of space and time to that eternal order and dimension to which all our spaces and times are open.

He is set free from the bounds of our creaturely existence to become universally available to all men and women, of all ages, and in all places. Jesus Christ is Lord and the Cosmic Head Head of the universe.

II. "What are you and I living for?" We live for the same reason that Jesus ascended into heaven!

A. Jesus is now the Lord of life and history - He is "high above every principality, power, virtue and domination, and every name that can be given in this age or the age to come." (Ephesians 1: 17-23) Exalted, "he is head of the Church, which is his body" (idem)

B. "What are you and I living for"? We are to extend the Lordship of Jesus over all the earth:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations....

Teach them to carry out everything that I have commanded you."

Matt. 18:16-20

II. "What are you and I living for"?, cont.

C. Ascension means that --

Jesus transcendence is the Church's immanence.

Jesus Ascension = the Church's expansion

Jesus mission = the Church's commission

Jesus glory = the Church's story

Jesus' teaching = the Church's reaching

Jesus on the mountain = the Church in the valley

Jesus in the clouds = the Church on the earth

Jesus high above every principality, power, virtue and domination =  
the Church in the midst of the world's strife and striving

Jesus absence bodily at a particular place, in a particular time and  
era of human history means Jesus presence through his body,  
the Church - in all places, at all times, in all eras of  
human history -- until the Lord returns again!

THIS IS WHAT YOU AND I ARE LIVING FOR!!

and inerascible

E. Jesus Ascension means that there are transcendental/impulses within the  
human mind and heart: "Our hearts are restless, O God, until they rest in  
Thee" (St. Augustine).

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up to the skies?"

It is not only our eyes that are looking up to the skies: our whole being  
is now aimed heavenward. THIS, TOO, IS WHAT YOU AND I ARE LIVING FOR!

TO KNOW GOD, TO LOVE GOD, TO SERVE GOD, SO THAT WE MIGHT BE HAPPY WITH HIM  
IN HEAVEN. THIS IS WHAT YOU AND I ARE LIVING FOR!!

CONCLUSION

The Lord's Ascension also means his presence in the mystery of our sacramental  
life. In this Eucharist eternity re-enters time; mystery is born anew on our altars;  
glory takes on the humble signs of bread and wine. And, you and I are  
nourished with the food of angels.

MEMPHIS: CALVARY CHURCH LENTEN SERIES

MARCH 7-8, 1985

TOPIC: FRANCIS SPEAKS TODAY: ARE WE A LENTEN PEOPLE?

*Troubadour*

SAINT FRANCIS SEEMS TO SPEAK TO HUMAN BEINGS OF ALL PERSUASIONS. THE BELOVED SAINT IS THE PATRON OF LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS AND THEIR PUPPIES AND TURTLES AND GOLDFISH. HE IS A FAVORITE OF SUBURBAN GARDEN CLUBS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARIES. MAHATMA GANDHI REVERED HIM AS HIS SPIRITUAL MASTER AND LENIN ONCE LONGED FOR TEN SAINT FRANCISES TO COMPLETE THE MARXIST REVOLUTION. AND THIS "VIR CATHOLICUS" WHO FOUNDED THE LARGEST RELIGIOUS ORDER TRADITION, AND A MOVEMENT OFTEN ACCREDITED WITH ENHANCING THE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY OF THE PAPACY, HAS ALSO BEEN CALLED BY NOTED SCHOLARS OF THE REFORMATION TO BE THE FIRST PROTESTANT. THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN EAST/WEST RELATIONS CALL HIM THE FIRST ECUMENIST. OTHERS CALL HIM THE FIRST PACIFIST AND INTERNATIONALIST. IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND ANYONE WHO DOES NOT LIKE HIM, OR WHO DOES NOT IN SOME WAY FIND HIM INSPIRATIONAL TO THEIR DEEPEST CONVICTIONS.

IT IS PROBABLY AS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS IN A FEW WORDS THE REAL CORE OF FRANCIS--AS IT WOULD BE TO CATALOG IN ACCURATE DETAIL HIS IMPACT UPON OUR HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS AND EVEN SECULAR TRADITIONS. IN ANY CASE, FRANCIS IS A MAN FOR ANY SEASON, WHICH SHOULD MAKE HIM EASY ENOUGH TO FIND RELEVANT TO OURS, AND PRACTICAL FOR TODAY.

SAINT FRANCIS CALLED HIS EARLY FELLOWSHIP A BROTHERHOOD OF PENANCE, WHICH SHOULD MAKE HIM A TOPIC TIMELY FOR THIS LENTEN SEASON. BUT IT WOULD BE AS INACCURATE TO SAY THAT PENANCE IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF LENT AS IT WOULD BE TO CHARACTERIZE FRANCIS HAVING PENANCE IN ITSELF AN ULTIMATE GOAL. WE ARE INDEED A LENTEN PEOPLE, CALLED TO REPENT IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE GOOD NEWS, BUT AS WITH FRANCIS, NOTHING CAN BE ULTIMATE EXCEPT OUR FINAL GOAL.

THE KEY TO FRANCIS IS NOT PENANCE IN ITSELF, THOUGH A CASUAL EXAMINATION OF HIS LIFE STYLE WOULD IMPRESS THE OBSERVER WITH AUSTERITY AND SIMPLICITY. WE IDENTIFY AUSTERITY WITH THE PENITENTIAL, AND THE PENITENTIAL WITH THE GLOOMY, WITH SACKCLOTH AND ASHES. WE MAY WELL ASSOCIATE THE DOING OF PENANCE, WITH BELT-TIGHTENING IN HARD TIMES, WITH SELF-SACRIFICE, SELF-CONTROL, COURAGE AND CHARACTER. IT IS A LITTLE MORE DIFFICULT TO SEE CAUSE FOR MUCH EXUBERANCE. BUT THE CONTAGIOUS JOY OF SAINT FRANCIS IN ALL HIS OBVIOUS AUSTERITY SUGGESTS THAT THE INVESTIGATION MUST GO BENEATH THE VENEER OF PENITENTIAL PRACTICES, HOWEVER SIGNIFICANT AND IMPORTANT THEY MIGHT BE.

FRANCIS WOULD WELL HAVE APPRECIATED THE CHALLENGING STATISTICS THAT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMERS LOVE TO QUOTE. HE WOULD NOT FIND IT STRANGE THAT FOOD LOVING ITALIANS SPENT 723 MILLION DOLLARS ON PASTA IN 1975, NOR EVEN THAT AMERICA'S TEENAGE GIRLS SPENT 7.4 BILLION DOLLARS ON CLOTHING, ACCESSORIES AND FOOTWEAR. NOR WOULD HE BE VERY

PERPLEXED TO KNOW THAT THE WORLD IS SPENDING OVER 400 BILLION DOLLARS IN DEFENCE. ON A MUCH SMALLER SCALE OF COURSE, FRANCIS KNEW ALL ABOUT CONSUMERISM-- PER CAPITA, HE WOULD BE CAPABLE OF SPENDING AS MUCH ON HIS FRIENDS FOR AN EVENING OF WINE AND SONG, AND THE PRESSURES OF HIGH SELL LUXURY ITEMS IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY <sup>WENT ALONG WITH</sup> ~~WAS~~ HIS FAMILY BUSINESS. HE SAW A FEW POINTLESS MILITARY ADVENTURES, AND KNEW HOW LIVES, GOVERNMENTS AND WHOLE CIVILIZATIONS COULD BE SWEEPED UP IN AN ECONOMY OF SPIRILLING COMPETITIVE MILITANCY AND ARMAMENT.

FRANCIS SPEAKS SO ACCURATELY TO OUR AGE--NOT BECAUSE HIS EXPERIENCE WAS SO DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN, BUT BECAUSE HE WAS SO LIKE US ALL. HE KNEW THE WORLD FOR HE WAS A CHILD OF THE WORLD, WEANED ON CONSUMERISM, WHO KNEW THE POWER OF HAVING MONEY AND WHO FELT THE PRESSURES OF UPWARD MOBILITY AND THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSECURITIES THAT SPAWNED MILITARISM. HE WAS NO PROPHET WHO BEWAILED EXCESSES HE NEVER KNEW, OR GLOOMILY RESENTED PLEASURES HE NEVER TASTED, OR EXPOSED FALACIES HE NEVER SHARED.

INDEED, IT MAY WELL BE THAT THE VERY EXCESS OF WEALTH AND PRIVILEGE THAT FRANCIS KNEW IN HIS LIFE AND ALL AROUND HIM MAY HAVE BEEN THE VERY MEANS BY WHICH HE CAME TO SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT AND A LIFE OF PENANCE. WEALTH, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT FREEDOM AND JOY--WHICH SEEMED TO PROMISE SECURITY AND PEACE, DID NOT DELIVER WHAT IT PROMISED. BUT THE FUN-LOVING AND PLEASURE

SEEKING YOUNG MAN DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR FREEDOM THAT COULD NEVER BE QUENCHED! RICHES AND SOCIAL CLIMBING DID NOT QUENCH THE PASSION FOR FREEDOM, BUT RATHER IRRITATED AN ITCH IN HIS SOUL THAT FOUND NO EARTHLY RELIEF.

FRANCIS SOUGHT FREEDOM AT ANY COST, AT ALL COSTS. THIS IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING HIS WHOLE LIFE, HIS PASSION FOR GOD, HIS AUSTERE AND SIMPLE LIFE-STYLE, HIS LOVE FOR THE LEPERS AND THE POOR, HIS BEGGING AND PREACHING, HIS FRATERNITY, HIS POETRY AND HIS JOY. BEHIND IT ALL IS A RUDIMENTARY, FUNDAMENTAL, IRREDUCIBLE LOVE OF FREEDOM. HE WAS GOD'S OWN MAN, AND TO BE HUMAN FOR FRANCIS WAS TO BE FREE.

FRANCIS LIVED FOR FREEDOM, AND THIRSTED FOR IT AS A DYING MAN MIGHT GASP FOR WATER OR CHOKE FOR AIR. IT WAS THE VERY ETHER HE BREATHED AND IT WAS HIS NATURAL HIGH THAT MADE HIM THE MOST EXUBERANT AND UNFETTERED OF ALL THE SAINTS IN ANYONE'S CALANDER OR CREED. PENANCE FOR FRANCIS WAS A BOLD ACTION BY WHICH ONE CUT THE SPIRIT FREE FROM EVERY BONDAGE.

FRANCIS REFUSED TO BELONG TO ANYONE BUT GOD. THUS HE CALLED HIMSELF "VIR IDIOTA ET SIMPLEX"--SOMETIMES UNFORTUNATELY TRANSLATED AS "A FOOLISH AND SIMPLE MAN"--FOR THE WORDS HAVE MORE TO DO WITH FREEDOM THAN TOMFOOLERY. THE "MAJORES" OR "BIG PEOPLE" BELONGED TO INSTITUTIONS OF POWER, THE "LITTERATI" (OR PEOPLE WHO COULD READ AND WRITE) BELONGED TO COMMERCE, TO INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING OR GOVERNING, TO CASTLES AND TOWNS. BUT THE LITTLE ONE~~S~~ THE



"IDIOTA" BELONGED TO NOBODY AT ALL. HE WAS TRULY FREE, LIKE THE GRASSHOPPER--NOT REALLY BEING CONSIDERED TO BE WORTH MUCH TO ANYONE--AND SO FREE TO SING HIS SONG UPON THE AIR FOR NOBODY'S EAR BUT GOD'S.

THIS WAS FRANCIS, "VIR IDIOTA ET SIMPLEX"--NOT DIVIDED IN HEART BUT SINGLY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY GIVEN TO THE HIGHEST LORD OF ALL, THE SERVANT OF NO ONE BUT THE KING OF ALL. FRANCIS REFUSED TO "PROVIDE FOR HIMSELF" FOR HE WANTED TO BE WHOLLY DEPENDENT UPON THE GREATEST MASTER OF ALL, IN WHOSE SERVICE HE REJOICED TO BE. BUT THIS DETACHMENT FROM ALL EARTHLY CONCERNS WAS NOT DONE IN DISDAIN OR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS OR EGOISM-- BUT HUMBLY--FOR THE KING OF ALL HIMSELF WAS HIDDEN IN THE LOWLIEST PLACES!

FRANCIS DIVESTED HIMSELF OF ANY SPECIAL INTEREST AND ANY SPECIAL PLEADING. HE BECAME A POOR MAN, AND IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WHOLLY WITH THE LEAST OF GOD'S CHILDREN --SO THAT HE MIGHT THERE LEARN CHRIST AND THERE FIND HIM. IN A REAL SENSE ONE CAN SAY THAT FRANCIS DID NOT SET OUT TO SERVE THE POOR DIRECTLY BECAUSE HE THOUGHT SERVING POOR PEOPLE WOULD MAKE HIM A BETTER HUMAN BEING. STILL LESS DID HE SET OUT TO CONVERT THEM TO EMBRACE THEIR LOWLY ESTATE WITH ENTHUSIASM, AS COMING FROM GOD. NOR DID HE DIRECTLY SET OUT TO CONVERT THE RICH TO BECOME MORE JUST AND SHARING IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE POOR, NOR CALL THEM TO DIVEST THEMSELVES TO BECOME POOR. RATHER, HE PLACED HIMSELF IN A POSITION TO BE CONVERTED BY THE POOR, TO BE EVANGELIZED BY THEM. OR PERHAPS IT IS MORE



ACCURATE TO SAY THAT HE PLACED HIMSELF IN A POSITION TO BE CONVERTED BY CHRIST WHO MANIFESTED HIMSELF IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR.

FREEDOM FOR FRANCIS MEANT TO BE UNENCUMBERED, LOOSED FROM ANY BONDAGE, EVEN TO HIMSELF. BUT IT ALSO MEANT GRACE. FOR FREEDOM IS NOT IDLENESS OR SELF-CENTERING TO THE LOGICAL EXTREME. FREEDOM IS ACTION, IS GIVING. FRANCIS WHO RECEIVED ALL FROM A HEAVENLY FATHER, HIMSELF LIVED FREEDOM AS A GIFT-GIVING GIFT--IN HUMBLE WORK AND SERVICE IN AND FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST.

FRANCIS RECEIVED FREEDOM AND THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD'S PROVISION AS A PURE GRACE RECEIVED WITHOUT ANY DESERVING OR EARNING. SO HE ALSO LEARNED THAT FREEDOM MEANS GIVING GRACIOUSLY, WITH PRODIGAL ABSOLUTENESS. FRANCIS' DIVESTMENT OF HIS OWN SELF WAS A LIVING OUT OF THE FREEDOM THAT IS LIFE-IN-CHRIST, AND SO HE BECAME THE LIVING VEHICLE AND EXPRESSION AND TREASURY OF CHRIST HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS. ALL FREEDOM IS CHARITY IN ACTION, ALL FREEDOM IS GIFT, AND THE TRULY RICH IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF FREEDOM ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MASTERED THE ART OF ENDLESS GIVING. IT IS NOT THE ONE WHO ACCUMULATES THE MOST WHO HAS THE MOST, BUT RATHER THE ONE WHO GIVES THE MOST WHO IS THE RICHEST OF ALL. GIVING ALL DOES NOT EMPTY THE VESSEL, BUT MERELY PLUMBS NEW DEPTHS AND MINES DEEPER TREASURES. THE SOURCE CAN NEVER BE DRAINED, FOR GRACE IS BOTTOMLESS.

BISHOP DESMOND TUTU--THIS YEAR'S WORTHY RECIPIENT OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE--IS A SON OF SAINT FRANCIS, FOR AS WELL AS BEING ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF JOHANNESBERG, SOUTH AFRICA, HE IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE ANGLICAN SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS' THIRD ORDER. RECENTLY HE SPOKE OF THE STRENGTH HE DREW FROM SAINT FRANCIS IN HIS DIFFICULT WORK FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN HIS TROUBLED NATIVE LAND. THEN HE TOUCHED UPON AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ST. FRANCIS' COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM WHEN HE SAID:

"ST. FRANCIS HAS HELPED ME TO RETAIN A SENSE OF HUMOR AND TO KNOW THAT OUR LORD GIVES US A JOY NO ONE CAN TAKE FROM US. FRANCIS CHALLENGES US WITH HIS DEVOTION TO LADY POVERTY AND TO A COSTLY IDENTIFICATION WITH THE POOR AND THE POWERLESS, KNOWING THAT ULTIMATELY OUR RESOURCES MUST BE SPIRITUAL, THAT WE MUST OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD AND STRIVE TO BE INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE."

[COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE--CAPUCHING PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH--DETROIT, MICHIGAN]

FRANCISCAN HUMOR IS INDEED THE CLOSE ALLY OF THE SPIRIT OF POVERTY WHICH IS THE GOSPEL FREEDOM OF FRANCIS. IT IS NO GALLOW'S HUMOR, OR CYNICAL AND BITTER SMOKE SCREEN FOR A SMOLDERING ANGER. THE HUMOR OF FRANCIS IS A NATURAL OVERFLOW OF CHRISTIAN JOY ITSELF, THE SURE POSSESSION OF A MAN WHO HAS EVERYTHING.

. THE HUMORLESS MAN <sup>PERSON</sup> IS THE ONE WHO HAS LOST PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER SINCERE AND COMMITTED HE MAY BE, <sup>etc</sup> NO MATTER HOW

NOBLE AND WORTHY <sup>the</sup> ~~HIS~~ CAUSE. THE HUMORLESS <sup>Person</sup> ~~MAN~~ IS IN BONDAGE TO A CONTEXT, AND CANNOT DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR THE NOBILITY OF A CAUSE CAN RUB OFF ON A MAN AND MAKE HIM LARGER THAN LIFE IN HIS OWN EYES ALL TOO EASILY. FRANCIS ALWAYS REMEMBERED HE WAS BUT A GRASSHOPPER OF GOD, NO MATTER HOW LOUD HIS CHIRPING. THE GREATER THE POWER OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED IN HIS LIFE AND IN HIS MOVEMENT, THE PROFOUNDER HE WAS AWARE OF HIS LOWLINESS--FOR HE NEVER FORGOT THE PRINCIPLE OF HIS PROPORTIONALITY--THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE WAS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE LOWLINESS OF THE CREATURE MANIFESTING THIS GRACE.

SO WE ARE INVITED IN THIS JOYFUL SPIRIT TO A LENTEN SEASON WITH FRANCIS, AND TO FIND WITH HIM ANEW AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN ROAD. THIS SEASON OF PENANCE IS NOT A CALL TO A SOUR AUSTERITY, BUT A DISENCUMBERING FOR FREEDOM'S SAKE, WHICH ONLY A TOTAL GIFT OF SELF TO GOD IN HUMBLE SERVICE OF OUR NEIGHBOR CAN GIVE. THE MESSAGE OF FRANCIS IS AS OLD AS THE GOSPELS AND ATTESTED IN ALL THE TRADITIONS, BUT NEVER LIVED AS WELL. FOR FREEDOM IS NOT A GASP OR CRY, NOR LESS A SPECULATION, BUT A GIFT GRASPED AND GIVEN, LIVED OUT AND LOVED WITH JOY.

I GIVE YOU MY SOLEMN WORD... YOU WHO HAVE FOLLOWED ME SHALL LIKEWISE TAKE YOUR PLACES ON TWELVE THRONES TO JUDGE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. --MATTHEW 19: 28

FEASTDAY OF ST. BENEDICT

21 MARCH 1985

ABBAY OF ST. ANDREW, CLEVELAND, OHIO

PROV. 2:1-9

EPH. 6: 10-13

MATT 19: 27-29

MY DEAR BROTHERS--AND FRIENDS OF SAINT BENEDICT.

WHAT A JOY IT IS TO CELEBRATE THIS FEAST WITH YOU

AND TO STAND ~~AT~~ <sup>in</sup> THIS ~~ALTAR~~ <sup>Pulpit</sup>, IN THE HOUSE OF THE SONS OF ST. BENEDICT. ~~AND~~ I AM AT HOME HERE, FOR I COME

TO YOUR DOOR A PILGRIM AND A STRANGER, AS DID MY

FATHER ST. FRANCIS ALMOST 800 YEARS AGO COME TO THE

DOOR OF THE MONASTERY OF MT. SUBASIO--AND YOU RECEIVE

ME <sup>AND ALL OF US</sup> TODAY AS MY FATHER <sup>FRANCIS</sup> WAS RECEIVED, WITH THE SAME LOVE YOU HAVE FOR CHRIST.

PILGRIMS THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN--THEY COME AND GO--BUT THE LOVE YOU HAVE FOR CHRIST ENDURES FOREVER.

SO WE PILGRIMS ALWAYS HAVE CAUSE FOR COURAGE AND

COMFORT AT THE DOORS OF THE HOUSE OF ST. BENEDICT.

FOR HERE AT THE ALTAR OF LOVE, THE HEART OF YOUR HOME,

"EVEN THE SPARROW FINDS A HOME, AND THE SWALLOW A NEST

IN WHICH SHE PUTS HER YOUNG--~~YOUR ALTARS, O LORD OF HOSTS, MY KING AND MY GOD!"~~ [Ps. 84:4]

INDEED, AS ST. AELRED NOTES IN HIS THIRD SERMON <sup>Solemnity</sup> FOR THE ~~FEAST~~ OF ST. BENEDICT, "YOU MY BROTHERS ARE THE

TABERNACLE OF GOD; YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD. AS THE

APOSTLE SAYS, 'HOLY IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD WHICH YOU ARE...

[PARA. 4]' " <sup>Yes,</sup> ~~AND~~ HERE EVEN THE SWALLOW CAN BUILD A NEST,

FOR, AS THE SAINT CONTINUES: "HIS LOVING PROVISION FOR US

IS SUCH THAT EACH ONE NEEDS THE OTHER, AND WHAT ANYONE

DOES NOT FIND IN HIMSELF, HE HAS IN THE OTHER. THUS HUMILITY IS PRESERVED, LOVE INCREASED, AND UNITY REALIZED. THEREFORE, EACH BELONGS TO ALL AND ALL BELONGS TO EACH." [PARAS. 7-8]

~~AND~~ SO HERE IN THE HOUSE OF BENEDICT, THE HOUSE OF GOD, EVEN THE SPARROW FINDS A HOME. FOR HERE, EVEN THE POOREST OF YOU, THE VERY LEAST IN TALENT OR SKILL OR PERSONAL QUALITIES IN THE WORLD'S MANNER OF JUDGING, IS RICH BEYOND HUMAN MEASURE. FOR HAVE YOU NOT ASKED THE LORD IF YOU MIGHT DWELL IN HIS HOUSE, AND HAVE YOU NOT ENTERED INTO THAT SCHOOL--WHICH ST. BENEDICT SPEAKS OF IN HIS PROLOGUE TO HIS RULE FOR MONASTERIES--THE SCHOOL WHOSE DISCIPLINE EXPANDS THE HEART TO RUN THE WAY OF THE LORD'S COMMANDS, PERSEVERING IN LEARNING THE LORD'S TEACHING, PATIENTLY ENDURING HIS SUFFERINGS SO TO DESERVE A SHARE IN HIS KINGDOM?

*Brothers,*  
 YOU, CONTINUE THE RICH HISTORY OF YOUR ANCESTORS AND WALK IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS, TEACHING US THE SAME LESSONS THEY HAVE TAUGHT THE NOVICES OF CHRIST FOR 1500 YEARS. YOU SPEAK TO US AS *YOUR ANCESTORS* ~~THEY~~ SPOKE TO THOUSANDS OF YESTERDAYS: "DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELF AN EARTHLY TREASURE, WHICH MOTH AND RUST CORRODE, THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. STORE UP INSTEAD HEAVENLY TREASURE, WHICH NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST CORRODE, NOR THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART IS ALSO [MT. 6: 19-21]

YOU FIND--IN THE CLARITY AND AWFUL SIMPLICITY OF THE ANCIENT WORDS OF YOUR RULE--THE SPIRITUAL TREASURE



WHICH OUR FIRST READING TODAY FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS ALLUDES TO: THE VERY WAY TO GOD, BETTER THAN ANY SILVER OR GOLD ANYONE COULD LONG FOR. ~~AND~~ CLIMBING THE TWELVE STEPS OF HUMILITY--AS PRESCRIBED IN THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF ST. BENEDICT'S RULE--THE MONK FINDS THE PERFECT TREASURE OF THE PERFECT LOVE OF GOD WHICH CASTS OUT ALL FEAR. SURELY THIS IS WHAT EPHESIANS MEANS WHEN IT SAYS THAT WE SHOULD PUT ON THE VERY ARMOR OF GOD. ~~FOR~~ THE PROTECTION WHICH THE RULE AND ITS OBSERVANCE AFFORDS CAN SURELY SAVE THE ONE WHO FOLLOWS IT FAITHFULLY FROM THE ENEMY OF SELF-WILL AND SELF INTEREST, WHICH WOULD DESTROY NOT ONLY EACH OF US, BUT THE VERY HOUSE WHICH GOD HAS FASHIONED FOR HIS GLORY.

IT IS NOT AN ACCIDENT THAT YOU HAVE A FINE HIGH SCHOOL ATTACHED TO YOUR ABBEY--BECAUSE IT IS HARD FOR ANYONE WHO KNOWS YOU TO IMAGINE YOU BENEDICTINES NOT BEING TEACHERS. YOU HAVE TAUGHT US ALL FOR CENTURIES. EVERY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT, EVERY REFORM<sup>m</sup>, EVERY NEW BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SOMEHOW CAN BE TRACKED DOWN AND BACK TO BENEDICTINE SOURCES. BEFORE FRANCIS, STRONG MOVEMENTS TOWARD SPIRITUAL RENEWAL WHISTLED THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE HOUSES OF ST. BENEDICT. FRANCIS FIRST HEARD THE GOSPEL READ FROM THE LIPS OF THE SONS OF ST. BENEDICT IN THE LITTLE CHAPELS OF THE SPOLETTO VALLEY. AND WHEN HE LEFT THE BISHOPS COURT,

BEREFT OF ALL EARTHLY GOODS, SINGING "I AM THE  
 HERALD OF A GREAT KING," THE KINDLY MONKS OF MT.  
 SUBASIO FOUND A PLACE FOR HIM TO SLEEP THAT FIRST  
 COLD WINTER--~~AND~~ HE WAS WARMED BY THE STOVE IN THEIR  
 KITCHEN, NOURISHED AT THEIR TABLE, AND KINDLED IN HIS  
 LOVE OF GOD FROM THE BREAD OF LIFE BROKEN UPON THEIR  
 ALTARS.

YES, BENEDICTINES WERE ALWAYS THE FIRST--AND IT  
 IS NO WONDER, FOR WERE YOU NOT THE FIRST TO RECEIVE  
 THE GOSPEL CALL IN ALL ITS TERRIBLE ABSOLUTE FULLNESS  
 WHICH ACCEPTED THAT HERE WE HAVE NO LASTING CITY, BUT  
 ARE SEEKING THE CITY THAT IS TO COME? [HEB. 13:14]  
 AND YOU DISCOVER FOR US ALL THE PATH OF DISCIPLINE, OF  
 SETTING ALL ASIDE FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM YOU HAVE  
 ALWAYS BELIEVED IN WITH DREADFUL SIMPLICITY.

*Brothers,* WE ARE ENRICHED IN THE CHURCH OF CLEVELAND BY  
 YOUR FAITHFUL WITNESS AND YOUR APOSTOLIC TEACHING, AS  
 YOU SEND FORTH FROM YOUR DOORS OF THE SCHOOL OF GOD'S  
 LOVE, GENERATIONS OF YOUNG MEN GROUNDED IN THE CATHOLIC  
 FAITH, FIRM IN HOPE, ALIVE IN LOVE.

~~AND~~ LIKE A GOOD SCHOOLMASTER YOU SOMETIMES MUST  
 REBUKE US FOR THE WORLDLINESS OF OUR LIVES: "IS IT  
 NOT WRITTEN, MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER  
 FOR ALL THE PEOPLES? AND YOU HAVE MADE IT A ROBBERS  
 DEN." [MARK 11:17]

ST. FRANCIS MUST HAVE LEARNED THIS LESSON FROM THE



MONKS BECAUSE HE KNEW WELL HOW OUR PRIDE IS A THIEF AND A ROBBER--AS WHEN ANYONE IS ENVIOUS OF HIS BROTHER, OR SADDENED BY <sup>WHAT</sup> THE GOOD GOD DOES IN ANOTHER RATHER THAN IN HIMSELF--AND SO APPROPRIATES TO HIMSELF THAT WHICH BELONGS TO GOD ALONE.

BUT <sup>Francis</sup> HE KNEW ALSO THAT THE BROTHERS WERE CALLED TO BE A LIVING TEMPLE--EVEN AS ST. AELRED PREACHES. AND YOU HAVE INDEED BUILT A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE PEOPLES, IN THE LIVING STONES OF YOUR LIVES JOINED TO CHRIST [CF. I PETER 2], AND THE VERY MORTAR OF THE STRUCTURE IS THE CHARITY SO FIRMLY FOUNDED IN HUMILITY AND SIMPLICITY.

THE WORLD WITHOUT--NO DOUBT VIEWS YOU WITH MIXED REACTION--FROM ADMIRATION AND IMITATION, TO ENVY AND PUZZLEMENT AND CYNICISM. SOME THEN MAY BE DRAWN TO YOU IN A KIND OF ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT, AS IF TO GARGOYLES OF HISTORY IN A GOTHIC NOVEL--FULL OF MYSTIFYING SUSPENSE. ~~AND~~ OTHERS MAY LONG TO TAKE A VACATION FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND THINK THAT YOU ARE TOUR GUIDES ON A TRIP DOWN THE CENTURIES TO THE SHADOWS OF A FORGOTTEN AGE. ~~AND OTHERS~~ <sup>SOME</sup> STILL MAY BE CYNICAL, AND WONDER WHAT IS YOUR GAME--SUSPECTING THAT ALL OF THIS MUST BE SOME FORM OF COLLECTIVE MASS SELF-INDULGENCE. AND OTHERS MAY JUST WONDER FROM AFAR--WHAT MANNER OF FOLK YOU ARE.

~~BUT THIS IS NOT A HOUSE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE, SOME OF~~

~~WHOM SOMETIMES PRAY.~~ *But this Monastery is* ~~FOR HERE IS~~ THE VERY HOUSE OF GOD AND HERE HIS GLORY DWELLS. BY THE CONSTANCY OF YOUR PRAYER LIFE, BY THE HUMILITY OF YOUR LOVING SERVICE TO ONE ANOTHER AND TO THE VERY LEAST OF THE PILGRIMS WHO COMES HUNGERING AND THIRSTING, HOMELESS AND HURT AND LOST TO YOUR DOORS--INDEED, BY YOUR SERVICE TO CHRIST ~~HIMSELF THE PILGRIM, HIMSELF WITHIN AND AMONGST YOU--IN ALL OF THIS~~ YOU WITNESS TO US ALL --IN THESE ALL TOO MOBILE DAYS, THE TRUE STABILITY WHICH IS THE CONSTANCY OF GOD'S LOVE.

WE ARE A ROOTLESS AGE, OF RESTLESS MINDS AND HEARTS, PARCHED OF ANYTHING SPIRITUAL IN THE RELENTLESS PURSUITS OF POWER, PRESTIGE, AND POSSESSIONS WHICH SAVAGE THE SOIL OF OUR SOULS. SEEKING TO AMASS ALL, WE ARE CONSUMED BY THE VERY THINGS WE GREEDILY GRASP, AND ARE LEFT WITH NOTHING. SEEKING TO DEFEND OURSELVES AND OUR POSSESSIONS BY OUR OWN STRONG ARMS, WE DELVE EVER DEEPER INTO THE PITS OF INSECURITY. PILATE'S CYNICAL QUESTION ECHOES IN THE SONGS OF DESPAIR OF OUR TIMES WHICH DO NOT BELIEVE, WILL NOT HOPE, AND CANNOT LOVE. *(\*) insert*

BROTHERS==WE LOVE YOU AND WE NEED YOU. BE TRUE TO WHAT YOU ARE AND WHO YOU ARE CALLED TO BE. WHAT'S IN IT FOR US, PETER ASKS IN TODAY'S GOSPEL. WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU? WE ARE THE TREASURE OF MOTHER AND FATHER AND WIFE AND LANDS WHICH YOU THOUGHT YOU LEFT BEHIND. WE ARE, GOD'S PEOPLE--YOUR TREASURE AND YOUR PORTION. YOU RULE OVER OUR TWELVE TRIBES WITH THE LOYAL LIGHT OF YOUR LOVE. I GIVE YOU MY SOLEMN.... YOU WHO HAVE FOLLOWED ME SHALL LIKEWISE TAKE YOUR PLACES ON TWELVE THRONES TO JUDGE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

X insert

AS THE BENEDICTINE ABBOTS STATED IN THE RECENT CONGRESS OF ABBOTS:

WE ARE LIVING IN A WORLD WHICH IS FULL OF CONFLICT: THERE IS TENSION IN SOCIETY AND IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS, AND VIOLENCE IS RIFE IN ALL ITS FORMS. WE BENEDICTINES LIVING IN OUR MONASTERIES (THE ABBOTS CONCLUDED), AND WE CANOT PAS OVER IT IN SILENCE: RATHER, WE MUST WORK FOR PEACE.

hear the echo of all this conflict

hear the echo of all this conflict

TRANSITUS:  
OCTOBER 3, 1985  
ST. JUDES--CLEVELAND....

II CELANO # 217  
MATT. 6: 19-33

MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS: IT IS A JOY TO BE TOGETHER THIS EVENING, CHILDREN AROUND OUR COMMON FATHER. IT IS RIGHT THAT WE SHOULD CALL FRANCIS OF ASSISI "OUR FATHER"--FOR IT IS HE WHO BROUGHT US FORTH ALONG WITH SO GREAT A MULTITUDE THROUGHOUT HISTORY--TO THE FAITH.

IS IT NOT FAITH THAT BRINGS US HERE? IS IT NOT THAT FAITH--WHICH THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS CALLS "THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE PROOFS OF THINGS NOT SEEN?" [CF. HEB. 11:1] WE GATHER AROUND THE MEMORY OF A MAN WHO DIED NAKED ON THE GROUND SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY NINE YEARS AGO THIS EVENING. WE GATHER AROUND HIM TO SEE THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST WHICH HE BORE IN HIS HEART BEFORE HE EVER BORE THEM ON HIS FLESH.

IT IS FAITH WHICH DRAWS US TOGETHER--THAT SUBSTANCE, THAT INNER PROOF OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR, WHAT WE DO NOT SEE. WE DRAW NEAR TO THE "SPECULUM PERFECTIONIS"--THE MIRROR OF PERFECTION, THE RECTI VIA, REGULA MORUM--THE RULE OF OUR LIFE--AS TO A MEASURING ROD, TO MATCH OUR LIVES TO HIS, SPIRIT FOR SPIRIT, HOPE FOR DEED, PRAYER FOR PRAYER.... BUT WE MEASURE NOT TO FIND OURSELVES WOEFULLY DEFICIENT. WE ARE NOT HERE TO JUDGE OURSELVES OR OTHERS WITH HARSH CRITICISM. MUCH LESS DO WE SOUND A RETREAT INTO BITTER CYNICISM OR DESPONDENCY.

SUCH A SPIRIT OF BITTERNESS IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF PENANCE--WHICH ST. PAUL TEACHES US, IS A "SORROW PRODUCING REPENTANCE WITHOUT REGRET LEADING TO SALVATION." [CF. II COR. 7:10]

HOW EASY IT IS , MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TO FIND OURSELVES HOPELESS FAILURES WHEN WE MEASURE OUR LIVES. WE HAVE THE SAME GOD, THE SAME GRACE OF CHRIST. WE ARE MADE OF THE SAME SUBSTANCE AS FRANCIS AND CLARE, AS MARY--EVEN AS CHRIST. WE HAVE BEEN GRACED WITH THE SAME CALL TO HOLINESS, WE HAVE SOLEMNLY PRONOUNCED THE SAME VOWS, WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SAME SEED OF THE WORD OF GOD.

AND WHAT THE HARVEST? RAISING OUR EYES, IT IS EASIER TO SEE THE THISTLES AND THE WEEDS, RATHER THAN THE HUMBLE WHEAT. WE STUMBLE ON THE STONEY PATHWAYS, CHOKE UPON THE WEEDS ON A DUSTY BARREN FIELD. WE HAVE HEARD EACH OTHER TALK--ENDLESSLY--WE HAVE SEEN EACH OTHER STRUGGLE AND FALL. WE ARE WELL-EXPERIENCED IN HALF-HEARTED MEASURES, WISHFUL THINKING, BIG TALK AND NO ACTION, DELUSIONS AND PLAIN DISHONESTY. WE WATCH OURSELVES AND OTHERS SAY ONE THING AND DO ANOTHER TIME AFTER TIME.

NOW AGAIN LIKE A BROKEN RECORD COMES ANOTHER CALL TO RENEW, TO UP-DATE, GET BACK TO BASICS. MORE TALK, MORE MEETINGS, MORE SPEECHES, POSTION PAPERS, RESOLUTIONS. SO SEEMS THE HARVEST OF THE LORD, THIS FIELD OF BLESSINGS.

SO WE GO TO FRANCIS. TO WATCH HIM DIE, TO HEAR HIM, TO SEE HIM IN OUR HEARTS ONCE AGAIN. BUT IS IT TO MEASURE AND FIND OURSELVES WOEFULLY WANTING? IS THIS THE "REPENTANCE WITHOUT REGRET"? WHAT IS THIS WORD OF FAITH THAT WE RECEIVE TONIGHT?

WE ARE HERE TO REMEMBER! THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING: REMEMBERING! "THOUGH YOU HAVE NOT SEEN HIM, YOU LOVE HIM, AND THOUGH YOU DO NOT SEE HIM NOW, BUT BELIEVE IN HIM, YOU GREATLY REJOICE, WITH JOY INEXPRESSIBLE AND FULL OF GLORY," ST. PETER TELLS US [I PETER 1: 8]. OUR OWN PHILOSOPHER AND THEOLOGIAN, JOHN DUNS SCOTUS TEACHES US THAT "MEMORY" IS THE MOST POWERFUL ACTION OF OUR INNERMOST SELVES. FOR MEMORY IS THE GATHERING OF ALL WE HAVE KNOWN, ALL WE ARE--IN FAITH AND HOPE AND LOVE CREATING THIS BEST OF OUR THOUGHTS. IT IS FROM MEMORY, SCOTUS TEACHES, THAT THE ETERNAL WORD OF THE FATHER IS GENERATED. IT IS FROM MEMORY TOO THAT GRACE IN OUR LIVES BRINGS FORTH THE BEST OF OUR HOPE, THE CONVICTIONS OF OUR FAITH, THE FIERY WARMTH OF OUR LOVE.....

NO MATTER WHAT WE SEE TODAY, NO MATTER WHAT IS DINNED INTO US BY A COLD AND CYNICAL WORLD, THE HYSTERICAL AND DESPONDENT FORCES OF POWER--- WE LOVINGLY PASS ON TO EACH OTHER "WHAT WAS FROM THE BEGINNING, WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, WHAT WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES, WHAT WE BEHELD AND OUR HANDS HANDLED, CONCERNING THE WORD OF LIFE ..." [I JOHN 1:1]

WE SEEK FIRST THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST, THE GOSPEL



WE READ TONIGHT TELLS US. OUR MEMORY IS THEREFORE A SEEKING MEMORY, STRAINING AND SEARCHING FOR CHRIST. WE ASK NOT WHAT USED TO BE. WE DO NOT BEWAIL WHAT WE NO LONGER CAN HAVE. WE ARE NOT ENDLESSLY LOOKING FOR IMPROVEMENTS ON EVERYTHING, SATISFIED WITH NOTHING. OUR MEMORY IS CREATIVE, FRESH AND FREE, FULL OF OPTIMISM, AND THE STRENGTH THAT COMES FROM A YOUNG SPIRIT, A YOUTHFUL GRACE. "BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN."

IN OUR WEAKNESS, WE ARE GIVEN THE POWER TO SURRENDER --THIS MEMORY OF MERCY TEACHES US! WE LEARN MORE HUMBLY, WE LISTEN MORE READILY. IN OUR BITTER FAILURES AND MISTAKES, EVEN IN OUR SERIOUS SINS-- MEMORY GIVES US A LIGHT TO QUICKLY ADMIT THAT WE HAVE BEEN WRONG, THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF MISTAKES. WE ARE THEN QUICK TO SEEK OUT NEW DIRECTIONS, EAGER TO BE TAUGHT BY ANYONE. THIS LIGHT EASILY DISPELS THE DARKNESS OF CLOSED DOORS AND CLOSED MINDS.

THE MEMORY OF FRANCIS AND CHRIST TELLS US THAT IT IS OUR CHARTER AS A FELLOWSHIP OF PENANCE TO BE EAGER TO BEGIN, TO BE HUMBLY CONFIDENT THAT HE WHO HAS BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN US WILL BRING IT TO A HAPPY CONCLUSION.

FRANCISCANS HAVE JOYFUL MEMORIES--EVEN IF THEY ARE FULL OF PAIN. THEY ARE NOT FOOLISHLY NAIVE, BUT HOPEFUL AND HONEST. WE HAVE NOT BEEN POOR LIKE CHRIST-- BUT WHY CAN'T WE BEGIN RIGHT NOW? WE HAVE NOT

FORGIVEN ONE ANOTHER, OR LOVED OR SERVED--IS NOT NOW THE GRACE, THE TIME AND PROPER HOUR? WE HAVE BEEN TEPID IN PRAYER, SELF-INDULGENT, SMALL-MINDED AND PETTY, DEFENSIVE, RIGID AND SELF-RIGHTEOUS! WE NEED NOT CONTINUE TO BE--INDEED, MERCIFUL MEMORY PRODS US--WE HUMBL Y HOPE, BY GOD'S GRACE WE SHALL NOT BE.

IT IS IN BLESSED HOPE THAT WE RECEIVE THE TENDER WORDS OF MEMORY: CHRIST LIVES! AND FRANCIS LIVES! ETERNALLY IN HEAVEN--BUT IN US, CREATIVELY, IN FAITH AND HOPE AND LOVE: WORD PLANTED, WATERED, NURTURED; VINE PRUNED, HARVEST LONGED FOR. THE CUP OF BLESSING, IS IT NOT A PARTICIPATION, A DEEP PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL TAKING-PART IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, HIS BLOOD OUTPOURED? THE BREAD WE BREAK, IS IT NOT A PARTICIPATION, A DEEP TAKING-PART-IN, THE VERY INCORPORATION OF CHRIST HIMSELF? [CF. I COR. 10:16] GRACE ABOUNDS, MEASURE BEYOND MEASURE--AND OUR POOR AND LITTLE EFFORTS, LIKE SEEDS CAST UPON THE RICHEST SOIL OF CHRIST HIMSELF, YIELD HARVEST UPON HARVEST OF HOPE.

WE PRAISE GOD FOR FRANCIS TONIGHT, MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GATHERED IN LOVING MEMORY AROUND THE SPOT AND IN THE HOUR IN WHICH THE CHRONICLER TELLS US, "HE HAPPILY WINGED HIS WAY TO GOD." HE DIED SINGING.

LET US LIVE AS HE SANG. LET US DIE AS HE LIVED.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN NEPOMOCENE

22 MAY 1986

Is. 61: 1-3

PHIL. 4: 6-9

JOHN 14: 23-29

MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS--WHAT A SPECIAL DAY IT IS FOR US ALL. THE WHOLE CHURCH REJOICES WITH THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE CZECH PEOPLE. WE ARE ONE WITH YOU TODAY ON YOUR PATRONAL FEAST DAY.

IT IS FAIR TO KNOW A PEOPLE BY THEIR HEROES AND HEROINES. WE HONOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES GIVE EVIDENCE OF WHAT WE MOST ADMIRE. HEROES AND HEROINES ARE PEOPLE WE ADMIRE AND LOOK UP TO. PEOPLE WE WISH WE WERE, PEOPLE WE WOULD LIKE TO BE. SO IT IS FAIR ENOUGH TO ASSESS A PEOPLE BY THE HEROES AND HEROINES THEY ADMIRE.

SOME PEOPLE LONG TO BE GREAT AND POWERFUL AND RICH--SO THEY CHOOSE HEROES AND HEROINES WHO ARE MILITARY OFFICERS--GREAT CONQUERING GENERALS--AND GORGEOUS MOVIE QUEENS, POLITICIANS AND WEALTHY TYCOONS AND CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY--THE MOVERS AND THE SHAKERS. OTHER PEOPLE WANT TO BE WISE--SO THEY MAKE HEROES OUT OF PHILOSOPHERS AND SCHOLARS, ARTISTS AND POETS.

BUT YOU--TODAY--MAKE A HERO / OUT OF A SAINT AND A MARTYR. HE COLLECTED NO GOLD, LED NO REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, WROTE NO CONSTITUTION OF A COUNTRY. HE BUILT NO MONUMENTS, DISCOVERED NO NEW TERRITORIES TO SUBDUE, NOR ENRICHED OUR CIVILIZATION WITH THE INVENTIONS OF A CREATIVE AND FERTILE MIND.

ST. JOHN WAS A DIFFERENT SORT OF HERO. HE DID NOT EXERCISE POLITICAL POWER NOR COLLECT WEALTH--INSTEAD HE OPPOSED THE GREED OF THE POWERFUL AND THE OPPRESSIVE INJUSTICE OF THE GREEDY. HE PLACED HIMSELF SQUARELY ON THE SIDE OF THE DEFENCELESS/ AND RECEIVED PRISON AND DEATH AS HIS REWARD. <sup>1</sup> ST. JOHN SURRENDERED HIS LIFE TO PRISON AND TORTURE SO THAT THE CHURCH MIGHT BE FREE OF THE OPPRESSIVE POWER OF THE STATE. <sup>2</sup> <sup>St. John</sup> HE PUT HIMSELF IN THE POWER OF THE VIOLENT OPPRESSOR, SO THAT THOSE OPPRESSED BY THE VIOLENT STATE MIGHT BE FREE. <sup>3</sup> IN OPPOSING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OPPRESSION, ST. JOHN IN LEGEND AND IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE | BECAME THE GREAT SYMBOL OF FREEDOM FROM SPIRITUAL AND MORAL OPPRESSION.

ST. JOHN NEPOMOCENE MIGHT SEEM AN ODDITY TODAY, A QUAINT ANACHRONISM TO MANY PEOPLE. IN A DAY OF EASY COMPLIANCE, / IN A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE ARE CONDITIONED TO "GET ALONG WITH EVERYONE," / TO GO WITH THE TIDE, / AND TO STAND FOR NOTHING IN PARTICULAR-- ST. JOHN AND HIS HEROISM SEEMS ODD, ~~INDEED~~, PECULIAR, <sup>Strange</sup>.....

INDEED, A PEOPLE WHO STAND FOR NOTHING IN PARTICULAR / SOON FALL FOR ANYTHING AT ALL, FOR THEY GO ALONG WITH ALMOST ANYTHING. IN THIS DAY OF EASY COMPLIANCE, FOLLOWING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE, CHILDREN OF SLAVERY LEARN AN EASY VIRTUE: THEY SURVIVE AT ALL COSTS. THEY GET ALONG, THEY GO ALONG.



IT WOULD BE AT LEAST SOMETHING, IF THE CHILDREN OF EASY COMPLIANCE WOULD GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AT THE COST OF THEIR SOULS. BUT THOSE WHO ARE ENSLAVED TO SURVIVAL AT ANY COST, SELL THEIR SOULS FOR NOTHING AT ALL. BELONGING TO NO ONE, / ANSWERING TO NO ONE, / ACCOUNTABLE FOR NOTHING, / THEY THINK THEMSELVES FREE, WHEN THEY ARE IN FACT ENSLAVED TO EVERY FEAR, ANY POWER, ANY VOICE.

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS TODAY REMIND US THAT WE ARE A PEOPLE CALLED / TO FREEDOM. "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME," ISAIAH CRIES--IN WORDS THAT JESUS HIMSELF WILL USE TO DESCRIBE HIS OWN MISSION AND OURS: "TO BRING GOOD NEWS TO THE AFFLICTED....AND FREEDOM TO PRISONERS!" "BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING!" ST. PAUL REMINDS US FROM HIS PRISON CELL WHILE HE AWAITED A MARTYR'S DEATH. FEAR BELONGS TO THOSE WHO ARE ENSLAVED TO WEALTH AND POWER. BUT WE RECEIVE A DIFFERENT CALL IN FREEDOM. TOGETHER, / IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, / ONE PEOPLE IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THE POOR AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, / IN SOLIDARITY WITH CHRIST ON THE CROSS, / WITH ST. JOHN NEPOMOCENE GAGGED AND BOUND IN BODY BUT NOT IN SPIRIT--TOGETHER WITH ALL THE HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE WORLD, FROM SOUTH AFRICAN PRISONS TO THE FIELDS OF CENTRAL AMERICA, FROM THE BAG LADIES AND PERMANENTLY UNEMPLOYABLE OF OUR CITIES, TO THE

VICTIMS OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERSECUTION  
OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION--WE ARE ALL  
ONE FAMILY, ONE ~~SPIRIT~~ IN CHRIST.

AND WE ARE NOT ALONE. JESUS TELLS US  
IN TODAY'S GOSPEL: THE FATHER AND I WILL COME TO YOU  
AND WE WILL MAKE OUR ABODE WITH YOU. WE WHO LOVE  
FREEDOM, WE WHO CHERISH OUR HERITAGE, WE WHO HONOR  
OUR HEROES AND HEROINES--MAY SEEM ODD TO THOSE WHO  
STAND FOR NOTHING, GO ALONG WITH EVERYTHING, AND ARE  
TAKEN IN BY ANYTHING. BUT THOSE WHO LOVE FREEDOM  
UNDERSTAND US--AND UNDERSTAND WHAT AND WHO WE CELEBRATE  
TODAY.

<sup>Likely</sup>  
^ ST. JOHN NEPOMOCENE WOULD BE AT HOME IN  
EASTERN EUROPE TODAY. <sup>Likely</sup> ^ HE WOULD MARCH WITH SOLIDARITY,  
AND FIND HIMSELF IMPRISONED WITH THE REFUSENIKS IN  
THE SOVIET UNION. <sup>Likely</sup> ^ HE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD MRS. ROSA  
PARKS AND THE BIRMINGHAM BUS BOYCOTT IN THE 1960'S AND  
WOULD HAVE MARCHED WITH CAESAR CHAVEZ AND THE UNITED  
FARM WORKERS. <sup>Likely</sup> ^ HE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD DOROTHY DAY,  
AND WOULD HAVE BEEN STANDING NEXT TO MARTIN LUTHER  
KING IN ATLANTA IN 1968--AND BEEN IN JAIL WITH DANIEL  
BERRIGAN IN 1970. <sup>Yes, perhaps,</sup> IN FACT, ST. JOHN WAS THERE-- IN ALL  
THOSE PLACES, IN ALL THOSE FACES.

FOR THE VOICES OF TYRANNY ARE AS MANY AS THE  
DEVIL WHOSE NAME IS LEGION--BUT THE VOICE OF FREEDOM IS  
ONLY ONE. INJUSTICE TAKES MANY FORMS AND EVIL WEARS



A THOUSAND UGLY MASKS--BUT THE JUSTICE OF GOD IS ONLY ONE, AS GOD HIMSELF IS ONE--AND THE WORK OF HIS PEACE CANNOT BE DIVIDED. IF WE ARE A PEOPLE OF PEACE, IF WE ARE TRUE TO THE PRECIOUS HERITAGE FOR WHICH SAINTS AND HEROES AND HEROINES SHED THEIR BLOOD ALONG WITH ST. JOHN NEPOMOCENE WHOM WE CHERISH AND HONOR WITH LOVE TODAY--WE CANNOT CLOSE OUR HEARTS --OUR NEIGHBORHOODS--OUR HOMES--TO THOSE WHO HEAR HIS VOICE, AND GOD'S.....

My friends, there is another Saint John Nepomucene whose relics you have in this Church. He was named after the patron of this Church, but in the United States he is known as St. John Neumann. Born in Bohemia on March 20, 1811, he was later to become the Bishop of Philadelphia. St. John Neumann is also with us as we celebrate your patronal feast today.

Sisters and Brothers, these two saints daily nourished themselves at the Table of the Lord. As we now nourish ourselves at this same Table, may we draw from the Eucharist the will and courage to live as they did, true and committed followers of Jesus.

The Feast of Saint Patrick  
Saint Patrick Church, West Park  
March 17, 1988  
10:00 a.m.

#### Introduction

- A. the perfect spouse
- B. the perfect saint

#### I. Portions of the Confessions of Saint Patrick so beautifully parallel the scriptures of today's Liturgy:

- A. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who will bring glad tidings" - Isaiah 52:7

"It is among that people that I want to wait for the promise made by God, who assuredly never tells a lie. He makes this promise in the Gospel: "They shall come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." This is our faith: believers are to come from the whole world."

- B. "With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become." (Thessalonians 2: 8)

If I am worthy, I am ready also to give up my life, without hesitation and most willingly, for Christ's name. I want to spend myself for that country, even in death, if the Lord should grant me this favor.

- C. "Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men." (Luke 5:11)

"I came to the Irish peoples to preach the Gospel and endure the taunts of unbelievers, putting up with reproaches about my earthly pilgrimage, suffering many persecutions, even bondage, and losing my birthright of freedom for the benefit of others."

#### II. Qualities of Patrick in the work of evangelization: humility, courage, persistence. Patrick was convinced that the world needed the person and message of Jesus Christ.

#### III. Our call to evangelization

40.7 million Americans have some Irish blood - acc to the U.S. Census bureau - all traceable to Patrick

What shall we do to make sure that all America and the world has some Christian blood