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SAINT FRANCIS

## Poor Man of God

Margaret Q. Garvey

Saint Francis of Assisi is most easily remembered as a soul so full of love for God that his worldly cares were few and seldom. Francis Bernadone was a man who fully embraced the Gospels and found in the Word of God a way of life and a clear direction to follow, so much that he began a written rule for his followers by saying, "The Rule and the life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Francis realized that the "Rule" for Christian life had already been written and now only needed to be followed: seriously and joyfully.

*What a fine place this world would be  
if Roman Catholics tried to keep up with St. Francis*

For his wealth and for his spouse he chose "Lady Poverty". It was said there was no one so desirous of gold as Francis was desirous of poverty, and no one so solicitous in guarding his treasure as he was solicitous in guarding this pearl of the Gospel. How great was his compassion for the poor, Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of Francis writes: "...the soul of Francis melted toward the poor, and to those whom he could not extend a helping hand, he at least showed his affection. Whatever he saw in anyone of want whatever of penury, he transferred in his mind, by a quick change, to Christ. Thus in all of the poor he saw the Son of the poor lady, and he bore naked in his heart Him whom she bore naked in her arms."

Francis was a peacemaker in the Gospel sense. In his Third Order for the laity he wrote that they were "not to take up lethal weapons, or bear them about against anybody." He was a man who attained mystical heights yet suffered the stigmata. A man who attempted to live out the command given to him by God as he knelt at San Damiano and gazed upon the cross of his crucified Lord, "Go Francis, and repair my house."

Today while scientists direct the technology of destruction in plans called "Star Wars" and politicians and corporations dangle the world on the delicate fringes of destruction, we are able to look to Francis as witness, teacher and guide. We can share in the greatness that made Francis exuberant with joy if we are courageous enough to become little ones and join him in his prayer-

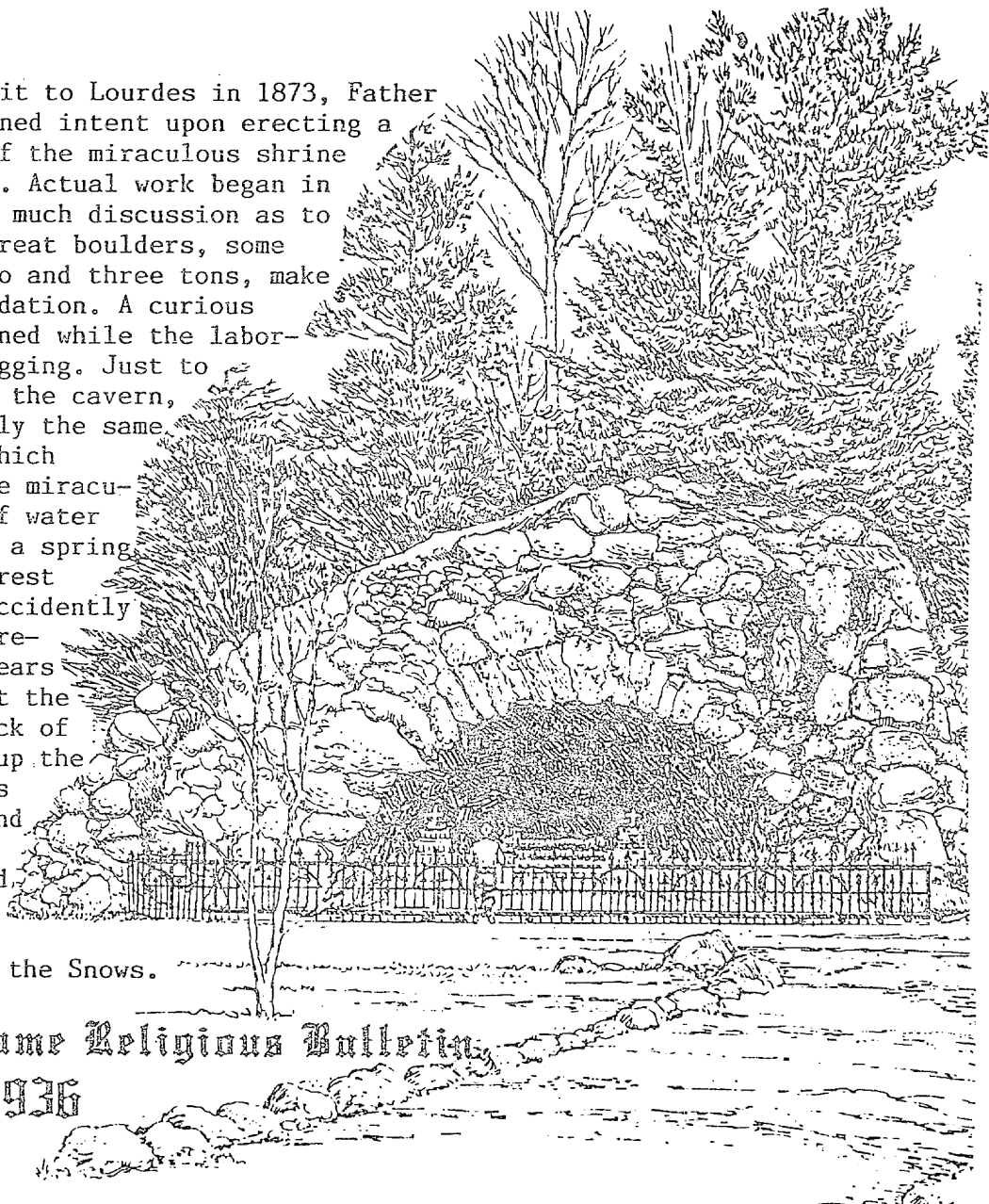
May the power of your love, O Lord, fiery and sweet as honey, wean my heart from all that is under heaven, so that I may die for the love of Your love, You who were so good as to die for love of my love.



## GROTTO OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES 1896

After a visit to Lourdes in 1873, Father Sorin returned intent upon erecting a facsimile of the miraculous shrine in France... Actual work began in 1876, after much discussion as to the spot. Great boulders, some weighing two and three tons, make up the foundation. A curious thing happened while the laborers were digging. Just to the left of the cavern, in relatively the same spot from which proceeds the miraculous flow of water at Lourdes, a spring of the clearest water was accidentally struck. It required 18 years to construct the grotto. Lack of funds held up the work. It was completed and the dedication occurred on the Feast of Our Lady of the Snows.

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## *The Song of the Sun*

*Most loving and almighty Lord,  
Yours is the power and blessing forever.*

*To You be honor in each of your creatures,  
But first of all in radiant brother Sun. How quietly he tumbles shadows  
into dawn, and warmth into our blood.*

*Be praised, my Lord, in faithful sister moon. By her the tides and seasons  
run, with her the stars spill across your skies.*

*Be praised, my Lord, in the bellows of the winds. In their channels  
scarlet leaves and windmills twirl and dance.*

*And be praised, my Lord, by lowly sister water, pure wine of your creation.  
She babbles and banters in golden streams, making us young again  
in baptism and in rain.*

*Be honored, my Lord, by stately brother fire. He it is who purifies our  
souls, and brings us homeward in the dark. In his friendship men  
recline to crackling warmth and mellow wine.*

*Be praised, my Lord, in spinning earth, in worms and churning surf.  
Exalt, my Lord, in green and red, in dark and evening's end.*

*Tumble down, my Lord, in colored glass, in grass and chimes and horns.  
Be praised, my Lord, in sunly voices, scents and sounding songs.*

*And, yea, my Lord, be praised in chaff, in aching lives, on bloody trees.  
For it is You who make coins thick, and cast hope on unknown seas.*

*O praised and blessed be You, my Lord. Let us give You thanks and  
awake with the dead.*

*Francis of Assisi*