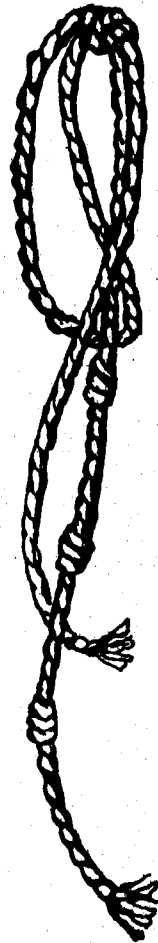


JANUARY, 1991

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy *
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commernicium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL

Facing 1991 with Franciscan Hope

Christian hope confirms us in our desire to make no concession of finality to the many glaring and frightening anti-gospel phenomena of our times. Much like the great Saint Augustine who as the Vandals were besieging the city of his bishopric, Hippo, nevertheless continued his ministry of writing refutations of heresy, our desire is to press on toward the gospel demands even in this somewhat distressing hour.

Francis and Clare are resplendent images of unwavering, Spirit-filled hope for us. Their steadfastness during periods of disappointment and darkness is a powerful reminder of the Spirit's gift of fortitude — a gift, by the way, which St. Bonaventure saw especially operative in Mary's life of discipleship. It is perhaps this gift we must call upon if we are to be the evangelizing and evangelized People of God we are called to be, especially as the events of our times suggest images of Armageddon. Neither Francis nor Clare was immune to temptations against hope. Both, however, ultimately were able to overcome them and to commit their spiritual energies to even more creative ways of allowing the reality of Jesus to pervade their lives and, thus too, the lives of those among whom they lived and ministered.

The Spirit has in a special way during the last twenty-five years awakened the Church to a vital and dynamic conviction regarding evangelization. Just as Francis and Clare, we too are empowered to intuit the deepest demands of this call and to actualize the spirit of evangelization in prophetic service to the Church and to the world. Like them, also, we can in this way add a special Franciscan nuance to this new dynamism in the Church.

This New Year is a special year of concentration in this regard as we prepare for the Fifth Centennial of the Evangelization of the Americas in which Franciscans played such a prominent role. To this end, The

CORD is pleased to begin with this issue a series of articles on Franciscan evangelization by Fr. Charles V. Finnegan, O.F.M., a friar eminently qualified to address our topic. Fr. Charles brings to his subject an expertise grounded in almost two decades of missionary activity in Brasil as well as several years of ministering to Hispanics in the Bronx and in the Washington, D.C., area. A former provincial minister of Holy Name Province, he has served the General Curia of the Order on international commissions of vital importance. During all of these years of ministry he has had a special interest in liberation theology and evangelization. His current writings for the Franciscan Mission Service of Silver Spring, Maryland reveal the depth of his thought and the zeal of his spirit.

We are convinced that all of our readers will discover in Fr. Charles' articles a graced opportunity to take to heart in a spirit of Franciscan optimism the promising and prophetic message of evangelization especially as enunciated in Pope Paul VI's "Evangelii Nuntiandi." The General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor which is to be held in San Diego from late May to early July of this year has chosen evangelization as its theme. The CORD is privileged to be a forum whereby all Franciscan men and women can be awakened to creative images of ministry that serve as sources of hope for themselves and those to whom they minister. As the gnawing uncertainty of world events casts a shadow of gloom over this new year we not only refuse to succumb to any form of fatalism, we also let ourselves be seized anew by the power and love of the Holy Spirit without whom, St. Bonaventure states, whatever the Father and Son do remains ineffective.

May this New Year continue to be one of enthusiastic Franciscan contribution to the spreading of the Word of God thus displacing the darkness as well as the false glitter of this world with the Gospel light of hope.

Fr. Joseph Doino O.F.M.



Franciscans and the "New Evangelization"

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

Introduction

This is the first in a planned series of articles in The CORD on the Franciscan mission charism, or Franciscan evangelization. These essays are being offered as a modest contribution to promote Franciscan participation in the "new evangelization" (a term first used by the Latin American bishops in their 1968 Medellin Conference), proposed by Pope John Paul II in 1984 as he inaugurated the "novena of years" preparing the churches in the Americas to observe our Fifth Centennial of Evangelization in 1992. Franciscans had a prominent role in the evangelization of the Americas from the beginning, as will be pointed out in the next article of this series, and our calling to be evangelizers today is surely one of our most urgent challenges and valuable opportunities.

This series of articles is not being presented as a scholarly treatise on Franciscan evangelization. That kind of project, surely worthwhile, would have to be undertaken by those with the time, resources, and competence to do it. Those interested in a complete study of the Franciscan mission charism will find a valuable tool in the publication *Build With Living Stones*.

ALL Called to Evangelize

It has often been noted that, unlike many other founders of religious institutions, Francis of Assisi did not start a religious family to undertake any specific work, or to meet any one specific need of the church or the world. His followers had no need to change their work when joining his gospel venture; rather they "should exercise that trade which they [already] know, provided it is not harmful to the soul and can be done honestly" (Reg NB 7,3).

We present a brief biographical sketch of the author in the editorial contained in this issue of The Cord.

There was, however, from the beginning, one task common to all of Francis' followers, whatever their specific work. All were, and are, called to proclaim the gospel. "Let all the brothers preach by their work" (Reg NB 17,3), *ALL* preach; *ALL* proclaim the gospel. A Franciscan non-evangelizer is a contradiction in terms.

This universal Franciscan calling is emphasized repeatedly in chapter 5 of the general constitutions of the Friars Minor:

— Just as the Son was sent by the Father, all brothers, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, are sent to the whole world as heralds of the gospel to every creature... (art. 83,1).

—All the brothers share in the whole church's duty of evangelizing... (art. 83,2).

— Wherever they are and whatever work they do, the brothers should dedicate themselves to the task of proclaiming the gospel: whether they live a contemplative and penitential life together as brothers, working for the fraternity, or in the world while undertaking intellectual and material activities, or exercising a pastoral ministry in parishes and other ecclesiastical institutions, or finally by the witness of a simple Franciscan presence that announces the coming of God's reign (art. 84).

Similar statements are made in the documents of all branches of the Franciscan family.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary variety that exists among Franciscans, all followers of Francis who wish to be faithful to the very essence of his charism, need continually to:

HEAR THE GOSPEL — LIVE THE GOSPEL — PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.

The reflections in this series will deal especially with the third of those imperatives: the Franciscan mission charism, or the Franciscan evangelizing ministry. Since all Franciscans share certain priorities and a common "Franciscan style" of evangelizing, these essays, based largely on Franciscan sources, will, it is hoped, be of interest to both religious and lay Franciscans.

Francis the Evangelizer

In their excellent translation of the writings of St. Francis and St. Clare, Ignatius Brady, OFM, and Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap., state: "St. Francis clearly emerges as a leader in the beginnings of the modern missionary activity of the Church." The *Dizionario Francescano* states: The friars minor are the first missionary order in the Church.

These statements make extraordinary claims, but not without reason. Francis is indeed the first founder of a religious order to treat in his rule

of mission to non-Christians. He is the first founder to go himself and send followers to peoples who did not believe in Christ. In his excellent volume "A History of Christian Missions" Stephen Neill writes:

Almost the first Christian to attempt to act [in a respectful manner towards pagans] was Francis of Assisi... This trip made by Francis to Egypt was more than an expression of personal interest or missionary zeal. It meant that a new spirit had come into the Christian world.

While it is true that in the centuries preceding St. Francis many monks undertook arduous missionary journeys throughout Europe, monasticism was not normally understood to be a missionary vocation. No less an authority than St. Gregory the Great (himself a monk, who sent Augustine and other monks to England) declared that "ecclesiastical missions and the monastic life do not belong together." Monks who went on missionary journeys were considered to have left their abbeys definitively and were not allowed to return. Important as missionary work was seen to be, it was not compatible with monastic stability or with the monastic emphasis on "flight from the world."

It is true that the word *mission*, in our modern sense, does not occur in the writings of Francis or in early Franciscan sources. It was not until the middle of the 16th century that church documents speak of "mission" to mean the sending of preachers, both to Christians and non-Christians. From the beginning of the 17th century the word was used in a more restrictive sense: the sending of preachers to non-Christian lands, which were in turn called "mission countries." In the ecclesiastical literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, the word *mission* was often associated with the Jesuits.

Beginnings of Franciscan Evangelization

Nonetheless, the idea of mission is prominent in St. Francis' thinking and in Franciscan literature from the start.

St. Francis discovers his vocation with clarity when he hears the *mission discourse* of the gospel while at Mass at Portiuncula. The mystical experience which Francis had earlier (the dream of Spoleto and the message from the Crucifix at San Damiano) left Francis a kind of undecided hermit. It is hearing the gospel, and specifically it is hearing the *mission discourse* in the gospel that enables Francis to exclaim for the first time, after some three or four years of searching: "This is what I want. This is what I am looking for. This is what I long to do with all my heart." Francis then takes off his hermit's garb and dons the habit of an itinerant preacher.

A Franciscan non-evangelizer is a contradiction in terms.

The Franciscan movement was born. In a magnificent paragraph, Thomas of Celano describes what would be Francis' work thereafter:

For eighteen years that were now coming to an end, his body had had little or no rest. He had travelled great distances through many regions to sow the seed of the word of God everywhere... **HE FILLED THE WHOLE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**, visiting in one day four or five towns and even cities, telling everyone about the reign of God. He edified his listeners as much by his word as by his example, and made his whole body into a tongue [to proclaim the gospel] (1 Cel 97).

When Pope John Paul II visited Assisi on November 5, 1978, he said something similar: "In very clear letters [Francis] wrote the gospel of Christ in the hearts of the people of his time... he carried in his own heart the misfortunes and concerns of his contemporaries." Do not those final words contain an important clue as to why Francis was such an effective evangelizer?

As with Francis, so with his followers — from the beginning. When they are only six in number, Francis sends them out on mission. The first papal document to mention the friars, *Cum dilecti filii* of 11 June 1216 by Pope Honorius III, says: "After the example of the apostles [the friars] spread the seed of the word of God."

Francis' Catholic (Universal) Mission

Notwithstanding the respect that Francis had for the church's prelates, and especially for Cardinal Hugolino, Francis would not allow that Cardinal to dissuade him from sending friars to other lands on missions:

As though in reproof the lord Cardinal said to him: "Why have you sent your friars to such distant places?" Blessed Francis replied with deep fervor: "My lord, do you imagine that God has raised up friars solely for the benefit of these provinces? I solemnly assure you that God has chosen and sent the friars for the benefit and salvation of the souls of all peoples in the world. They will be welcomed not only in the countries of the faithful but in those of unbelievers as well, and they will win many souls (*Mirror of Perfection* 65).

Notice the *universal* dimension in Francis' missionary thinking: "all

people in this world... the faithful and unbelievers as well."

Similarly, Francis' exhortation to the first six friars before sending them out on mission:

Dearest brothers, let us consider our vocation and how God in his great mercy has called us not for our salvation alone but for the many; we are therefore *to go through the world exhorting all men and women* more by our example than by our words (*Three Companions*, 36).

He expressed this same conviction in his *Letter to the Entire Order*:

[God] has sent you *into the entire world* for this reason: that in word and deed you may give witness to his voice and bring everyone to know that no one is all-powerful except him.

Perhaps the most catholic example of missionary zeal that one can find anywhere is in chapter 23 of the rule of 1221. Francis writes in the name of all his friars to

ask and beg [all] priests, deacons... all clerics, all religious men and women, all lay brothers and young people, the poor and the needy, kings and princes, workers and farmers, servants and masters, all lay people, men and women, all children and adolescents, the young and the old, the healthy and the sick, all nations and all peoples everywhere on earth who are and who will be [to persevere in faith and penance].

Francis' missionary zeal is universal because his love, expressed in service, is universal: "Since I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and minister to them the sweet words of my Lord." The great Franciscan service is precisely "ministering the sweet words of the Lord" to the world always so desperately in need of that saving word. And this "to all nations and to all peoples everywhere on earth, who are and who will be" — no one is to be excluded from the loving concern of Francis' family.

Questions for Reflection (preferably in common)

1. St. Francis "clearly emerges as a leader in the beginnings of the modern missionary activity of the church." What justification can you find for that statement?
2. Following the lead of the Latin American bishops, Pope John Paul II has called for a "new evangelization" in all the churches of the Americas. How can Franciscans, lay and religious, contribute to this "new evangelization"?
3. "St. Francis' venture of radical gospel living is especially relevant for the 'new evangelization' required today." Discuss.

Letter of the Blessed Francis to All the Peoples of Europe and to All the Leaders of the Nations on the Day Dedicated to World Peace

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

To all of you: men, women and children, to the young and the old, the christians, non-christians and atheists, to politicians and deputies, to citizens cleric and lay, I send these words from Chichicastenango in Guatemala.

MAY THE LORD GRANT YOU HIS PEACE!

For some time now, I have been present in this Amerindian continent with numerous brothers and sisters in order to give thanks to the Lord for the historic changes which result from His action in and through the people. The Amerindians, in common with all the poor of all times, teach us what it means to hope and to wait, and how we could together make preparations for the centenary of 1992.

The Lord in whom I place my confidence and to whom we all must render an account, reveals to us the profound meaning of history through simple and peaceful and apparently powerless people. The deeply felt conviction of being born free will never die in the hearts of men and women. From this place I plead with my old continent, with all its inhabitants and those in positions of trust: Abandon every kind of triumphalist policy and in 1992 choose instead a penitential celebration. In the collective memory of all Amerindians there is engraved the remembrance of

Fr. Hermann Schalück, O.F.M., of the Franciscan General Curia in Rome shares with us some powerful and profound thoughts in this "Letter of Blessed Francis." The Vatican Radio has begun to air his "modern Fioretti" which The CORD has published with regularity over the last several years.

having discovered invaders in their native land 500 years ago. But their thirst for freedom is inextinguishable; as is also their brotherly and peaceful disposition to help Europe to free itself from the burden of its own history.

I, a poor little man and your brother, who have heard the cry of so many peoples, beseech you; "One thing the Lord desires from you: to do justice, to be faithful and to walk humbly before our God" (Mi 6,8). Do not speak with haughtiness of the first, the second and the third world. Are you not aware that only one world exists, only one history of humanity, only one Earth, which is the mother of us all? Do you not understand that all men and all people live in mutual inter-dependence and are all dependent on one God; that they have a common destiny, that all have to give and to receive at the same time? No nation, no continent ought to enrich itself any more at the expense of the others.

Europe, do no longer export your arrogance, your egoism, your conflicts, your arms, your poison, your manner of living and thinking. Rather believe in the creative and peaceful forces of those whom you have herded together on the margins of society, those, indeed, in whom the Spirit of the Lord is equally at work. Be mindful to give a just recompense for the raw materials and the sweat of the labourers from the South. I am always mindful of the words of my brother, Bishop Oscar R. Madariaga from Honduras: "Drugs are the only product of our countries which is paid well." Why don't you export to us more true forms of solidarity, respect and help, forms that will allow us to be autonomous? Please give up sending us a civilization of consumerism and greed, built upon force and exploitation. Why not send us a civilization of fraternity, of respect and love for their people? Give your first priority to ecology, to the protection of creation for its own sake, in an economy geared to preserving life for the whole world. Ecologists should not be compelled any more to denounce poisoned products; producers should put on the market only what is safe, useful and beneficial.

Europe, please give up talking about "development" according to your standards; talk rather about "liberation" from all "oppressive, sinful structures," beginning with your own and the ones you have imposed on others. Our Lord Pope has often spoken about this need of liberation for all mankind.

Peoples and governments of Europe, when you become converted and are disposed to pay attention to the cry of the poor wherever they are, you will be contributing to your own liberation and be preparing your own future. Let yourselves be "contaminated" by the hope of your lesser sister in the faith. In spite of all your progress, you have too often given to the world the image of people who have no hope left but have come to fear the worst. When you cease to hope, then what you fear begins to happen.

Let us together have a look at another event of 1992 about which the whole world is speaking. You want to establish the bases of that which brother Mikhail of Moscow calls the "house of Europe," a project which the Lord Pope also has approved and blessed. Therefore I appeal to the politicians and the money-lords: Don't make a fortress out of Europe; make it rather a house of friends, with many apartments rich in color. Let the foundation you lay be respect of life; let the walls be your search for peace and your respect for all cultures and faiths. Finally let the roof be a tolerance like that of God, who sends rain upon the just and the unjust (Mt. 5,45) and who reserves to himself the judgment of history. Let your doors remain open wide. Demilitarize your hearts and your arsenals. Set up in your continent institutions which allow a large vital space for the intuitions of people, for dignity and liberty and human rights. Remember, you leaders of the people, that you have received a mandate from them and that, for the time being your special duty is the liberation and the well-being of your fellow citizens. The people themselves are the subject of their future. That is why they desire to change their leaders every so often. Do not act as if you were able to change the people according to your whim. Never treat your people as the mere object of your politics. "Prepare the way of the people" (Is. 62, 10). Let justice be your daily bread and for the future let national security be called respect for rights and liberty.

And you, peoples of Europe, as peace-loving, kindly, brave peace-makers, in these latter times have seen a great light. You have become brothers and sisters to all those who struggle for liberation and dignity. Your bravery and your deep intuitions have caused frontiers to become porous, have caused walls to collapse, and flowers of hope to spring up. The "new manner of thinking," of which the Apostle of the gentiles has already spoken (cf. Rom. 12, 2), will not fail to open a way for you. You have experienced suffering and persecution; many of you were not afraid to be precursors, "sowers," even martyrs. Your dreams and your utopias have achieved more than all the "realpolitik" of so many politicians.

No one has ever succeeded in walling in those lesser sisters of our faith, namely, liberty and creativity. You have shown to millions of your brothers and sisters throughout the world, that to live in hope is worth while, because the hopes rooted in the heart of a people produce more fruits than any ideology. Yes, you have demonstrated that the hope of the poor is long-lived and can not be quenched. No regime and no nation should in the future try to dominate or overcome another; nor should anybody again lay claim to a monopoly of the truth, apart from God. For that reason the various religions should not regard each other with suspicion;

rather should they discover and recognize their common responsibility for the life of the world and the whole cosmos.

Your courage has served as a lesson for all christians and for all church leaders. "Wherever there is the Spirit of the Lord, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3, 17). On 9 November 1989 I was in Berlin, in front of the broken wall. With my piece of wood as violin I played a duet with Igor Rostropovich for the poor and the oppressed of all times, a melody of Helder Camara for a more just and better world:

"When one dreams alone,
His dream is there forlorn;
When many people dream,
A new world is born."

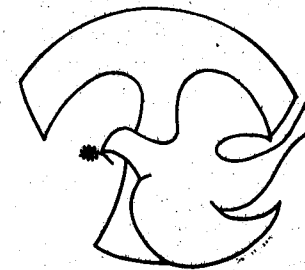
When will all the walls, of whatever kind, finally learn to dance?

Brothers and sisters, politicians and simple people of Europe, I ask you to accept these words of exhortation, a greeting and of thanksgiving from your poor little brother Francis, a citizen of Europe and of the world, standing at this moment on the high plateau of Guatemala. Later-on, in 1991, I should like to accompany the Lord Pope to Moscow and to Beijing. In 1992, on the wings of Brother Wind I shall fly to Santo Domingo, to commemorate the 500 years of evangelization of the Americas; a year which should also mark the beginning of a real discovery of Europe and its true values.

I salute you all, in East and West, in North and South, with these words of exhortation and consolation which I heard last year in Dresden and in Prague, words that I have sung with the native peoples of Chichicastenango during these latter months:

Hope is everlasting:
learn that as you stride.
And as you go on learning
Hope will be your guide.

Francis of Assisi, your brother.



Two Graces of Communication. *Bonaventure on Fruitful Preaching*

GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

Before the modern "communication explosion" happened, people flocked to hear the preacher. The alluring voices of radio and television had not yet invaded their homes to become the prevailing domestic sound. A preacher held the field; he was not only the bearer of a saving message but story-teller, too, often tempering stern words with homely anecdote and relieving the terror-stricken with some amusing "incident from life." But people listened. An inflation of words had not yet dizzied their attention, nor a million advertisers pummelled them into sating spurious needs, nor hosts of broadcasting know-alls violated their sense of wonder. Teachers also enjoyed a similar platform of authority. A rapport was quickly established between respected speaker and receptive audience. By a kind of osmosis the message of truth was transmitted. It was, however, a two-way operation. The giving and the receiving were equally vital to each other. Preaching and teaching were valued as charisms, graces; but listening and learning were also seen as graces.

The Middle Ages fully appreciated this. True, time stood still when lives were simpler and "news," carried perhaps by some traveller or wandering minstrel, might be months, even years, old. And a medieval preacher or teacher was sure of an audience that was at least curious. At the same time, neither the grace of communicating nor that of listening was simply presumed or taken for granted; these were always prayed for.

Through his masterful insights and elegant translation from the original Latin, Fr. Gregory gives us an ever deeper appreciation of the preaching of Saint Bonaventure. Here we see how the Seraphic Doctor's evangelizing spirit manifests itself in unique ways from the very beginning of his sermons. Fr. Gregory writes from Greyfriars, the Capuchin College at Oxford where he is engaged in research.

We learn this from those *introductions* to medieval sermons, known as *prothemes*, which were in essence invitations to pray that the preaching of the word would bear fruit.¹ These introductions were also skilful applications of biblical verses or lines. The verse chosen (different to the sermon's main theme) was meant to stimulate a prayer for both preacher and hearer. They are examples of prayer based directly on Scripture. The *prothemes*, taken together, are a window giving us at least a glance at the medieval sermon's preparation by means of *lectio divina* and a view of sorts onto the orchestration of what was the most highly respected art in the service of minds and souls.

What was the prayer at the opening of a sermon for? The preacher, for his part, needed a profound knowledge of Scripture and a clear mind to expound it. For the medieval sermon was above all an exposition of scripture and an application of the word of God to the human itinerary. "For anybody to be considered a suitable teacher of what was brought to us by Christ and written through the power of the Holy Spirit," wrote St. Bonaventure, "an anointing with grace from above is a necessity." The preacher also needed, besides even this graced insight, the motive of charity and zeal for the salvation of the people who would hear him. He must also be humble, humble enough to know that his words belong to the Lord; humility would confer the grace of simplicity on his discourse and also lend him the confidence to realize he was being sent with the light and the power of God's message. The preacher must know he is to *bring good news to the poor*, he must be aware of being *sent* by the Lord in obedience, and he must feel "on fire with a fraternal friendship." The listener, too, must be a humble person who feels the need for the word of God, a mild and receptive person and not one who picks holes in the sermon, a person of faith before the announcing of Good News.² The word preached bears no fruit unless it finds a welcome in the "ears of the heart."

As examples, three of Bonaventure's Prothemes are here selected and translated. The first is attached to the sermon for the *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*, the second to *Quinquagesima Sunday*, and the third to the *Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost*.³ Brief and succinct, they will be found to fulfill all that is claimed for them.

1

In the first chapter of his Letter to the Romans [verse 16] the Apostle says that *the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith*. If the word of God, then, is directed to the salvation of our souls, do what the Letter of James says [1:21]: *Welcome with a mild spirit*

that word, which can bring salvation to your souls. It follows therefore that anyone who cares for the welfare of his soul is eager to hear the word of God; just as someone who has a care for his body's health is only too glad to listen to what his doctor says. Furthermore, the efficacy of God's word can sometimes be impeded; this is usually because of either a failing on the part of the preacher who is announcing it, or defective listening on the congregation's part. So, they both need the grace of God, the preacher for his communicating, the people for their listening. And for that reason, here at the beginning of this sermon of ours let us ask the Lord to help me to communicate and you to hear those things that should redound to His praise and glory and the salvation of our souls.

2

Listen, I have serious things to tell you — Proverbs, chapter 8 [verse 6]. In this second text, taken from the Book of Proverbs, the Divine Wisdom gives expression to three things that are needed when the Lord's passion is being preached on.⁴ And the first of these is for the hearer: listening with humble reverence, which is noted when it says, *Listen*. The second is for one who is suffering:⁵ depth of material for reflection; this is what the *serious things* indicate. The third is for the speaker: the skill to bring eloquence to what he expresses in words. This is what is meant when the text says, *to tell you*. And so, dearly beloved, as our sermon on the Lord's passion begins, let us entreat the Lord that, by his grace and goodness, on each member of this audience may be kindly bestowed the ability to listen with reverence, and on me announcing the word the readiness of speech to express my message. So may we be able, for the consolation of our souls, to carefully form some idea of the infinite privilege our redemption is and of the superhuman mystery of the Lord's passion. And that we may obtain more easily what we ask for, let each person please say the following verse:

*O cross, hail! sole hope of ours.*⁶

3

How beautiful are your feet in their sandals, o prince's daughter! — Song of Songs, chapter 7 [(verse 1)].

The beauty of a virtuous life, liveliness in the cause of truth, and the expanse of charity are what cause and hold together any religious soul's excellence. Hence, in the latter quotation, taken from the Song of Songs, the first words, *How beautiful*, touch upon the beauty of a virtuous life in regard to the quality of excellence in any christian soul, a soul called "daughter of Christ," prince in the highest degree.

Next, the phrase *your feet in their sandals* touches on liveliness in the cause of truth. *Feet* here is to be understood as referring to preachers and teachers; *sandals* are symbolic of the evidence of Scripture; for just as footwear protects the feet, so does the evidence of the Scriptures fortify preachers and teachers, in the sense in which Ephesians [6:15] says, *Your feet shod in readiness to publish the gospel of peace*.

The third phrase, *O prince's daughter*, refers to the expanse of charity. A faithful christian's soul is daughter of Him who is prince in the highest degree when, in opposition to avarice, it imitates His poverty, when, in opposition to lust, it imitates His chastity, and when, in opposition to pride, it imitates His obedience or his humility. Thus the beauty of a virtuous life exposes disfigurement, or else casts a veil over it, liveliness in the cause of truth entices the negligent, and an expansive charity censures the reluctant.⁷

And so, as our sermon begins, a prayer must be offered to the Lord that by His grace and kindness, during this present conference,⁸ He let me take my share of the beauty of virtue by my action, liveliness in the cause of truth by my speech, and an expansive charity in my heart. So may I at last be able to say something which will redound to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ the Blessed One, and for the consolation of each person listening to me.

Endnotes

¹On the *prothème* and its connection with the initial prayer, see J. G. Bougerol. *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure* (Paterson, N.J., 1963) 137-138.

²These precise requisites in preacher and listener find mention in the prologue to St. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (*Opera omnia* VII, 3-4).

³J. G. Bougerol, ed., *S. Bonaventurae Sermones Dominicales* (Grottaferrata, 1977) 199. 227. 473. Cf. *Opera omnia* vol. IX, 188 (Sermon 1). 201. 450 (Sermon 1).

⁴The *Prothème* refers to the *first* text of the sermon; it has already been announced, and the theme is the Passion (*Lk* 18:21).

⁵This suggests that the main sermon, covering Christ's sufferings, will offer meditation material conducive to sharing in the Passion.

⁶First line of sixth verse of the Holy Week Vespers hymn *Vexilla Regis*.

⁷This sentence is obscure in manuscript, and its sense has to be supplied from context.

⁸One of those collected and revised by Bonaventure personally in 1267 - 1268 (see Bougerol, *Sermones*, 29), the sermon which followed and is here referred to seems designed as a theological conference for religious, perhaps for an assembly of friars at Paris.

For the Sake of the Child

For the sake of the Child
Wisemen took another route.
Dazzled first by the star,
they found the
tiny king
covered only by
the young mother,
and the gentle boy
at her side.
The Child continued
to burn in their dreams,
brighter than the star,
and into that night
crept the warning voice
of the angel,
teaching them
the other way.
For the sake of the Child
Light will stream
from the borders
of the outcast.
For the sake of the Child
violence will surrender
one day... in shame.
For the sake of the Child
justice will genuflect
and love will seed
the hidden life,
given only his
infant cry
and the answer of
the poor couple
who watch and chant
his lullaby.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

Mercy in Francis of Assisi According to St. Bonaventure

LYN M. SCHEURING, S.F.O., Ph.D.

In this essay, we will focus on Bonaventure's understanding of Francis through the prism of mercy. First of all, we will consider the scripturally based "mercy seat" referred to by Bonaventure; secondly, we will look at the virtue of *pietas* and its link with mercy; and thirdly, we will conclude by noting Francis' compassion with the poor, as mercy incarnated.

The effect of Bonaventure's *Legenda major*, the biography of Francis, according to Regis Armstrong, is a portrait of the inner life of the Poverello.¹ Before his conversion, writes Bonaventure, "Francis was ignorant of God's plan for him. He was distracted by the external affairs of his father's business and drawn down toward earthly things by the corruption of human nature. As a result, he had not yet learned how to contemplate or acquire a taste for the things of God."² It so happened that at that time he had a prolonged illness which seemed to prepare his soul through a sense of personal poverty and dependence on God, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. After his strength was restored, he became more sensitive to the poverty of others and compassion was growing within him. During a certain moment, when he was praying and became "totally absorbed in God," Jesus Christ appeared to him fastened to the cross.

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"Francis' soul melted at the sight" ...³ In the PROLOGUE To The Life of Francis, we read:

In these last days
the grace of God our Savior has appeared
in his servant Francis
to all who are truly humble and lovers of holy poverty.
In him
they can venerate "God's superabundant mercy"
and be taught by his example
to utterly reject ungodliness and worldly passions,
to live in conformity with Christ
and to thirst after blessed hope with unflagging desire.
He was poor and lowly,
but the Most High God looked upon him
with such condescension and kindness
that he not only lifted him up in his need
from the dust of a worldly life,
but made him a practitioner, a leader and a herald
of Gospel perfection⁴

Francis was so conscious of God's superabundant mercy on him that it moved him to an ongoing conversion. Chesterton has written that Francis has seen the whole world as if hanging on "a hair of the mercy of God."⁵ Like the law of gravity, as if all reality were hanging upside down, all depending on God's merciful love.

Bonaventure explains in Chapter VI "On Humility and Obedience," that in Francis' "own estimation he was nothing but a sinner,"⁶ depending on God's merciful love. Here Bonaventure gives an example about Francis and another friar:

As they went along the road talking together about God, the friar, not unmindful of his vision, skillfully asked Francis what he thought of himself. The humble servant of Christ said to him: 'I see myself as the greatest of sinners... If Christ had shown as much mercy to the greatest criminal, I am convinced that he would be much more grateful to God than I.'⁷

Francis felt in such need of God's mercy and was so taken by it, that he didn't think he could thank God enough... Francis could not get over God's mercy through Jesus crucified!

Mercy Seat

In the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, Bonaventure shares his own experience of seeking the path which Francis took in his journey to God:

Following the example of our most blessed father Francis, I was seeking this peace with panting spirit — I a sinner and utterly unworthy who after our blessed father's death had become the seventh Minister General of the friars. It happened that about the time of the thirty-third anniversary of

the saint's death, under divine impulse, I withdrew to Mount La Verna, seeking a place of quiet and desiring to find there peace of spirit. While I was there reflecting on various ways by which the soul ascends into God, there came to mind Francis' vision of the Seraph whose six wings surround Christ Crucified from whom he received the stigmata. There Bonaventure discovered the path Francis took... there is no other path but the burning love of the crucified...⁸

In this work, Bonaventure writes specifically of the mercy which Francis experienced through Christ by referring to the "mercy seat":

Christ is the way and the door;
Christ is the ladder and the vehicle,
like the Mercy Seat placed above the ark of God
and the mystery hidden from eternity.⁹

Bonaventure evokes the imagination to contemplate the original symbol of God's presence, as expressed in the "Mercy Seat". Bonaventure footnotes this as coming from the instruction God gave to Moses regarding the Ark of the Covenant, from Ex. 25:20:

The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings... And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you of all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

On the day of atonement the high priest would sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed animal on the mercy seat. This sprinkled blood represented "life" given back to God, purified and consecrated anew, expiating the sins... It was a symbolic dedication of the life of the person who sacrificed it to Yahweh. It cleansed him of his faults in Yahweh's sight and reconciled him once more. We can refer to Paul in the Letter to the Romans (3:25), who seems to be looking on Christ's shedding of blood on the cross as the new "mercy seat" and the first Good Friday as the pre-eminently Christian Day of Atonement.

Bonaventure places Christ like the "Mercy Seat" at the center of the holy of holies, whose blood expiates, reconciles and redeems humankind. Christ, the way and the door, is the center of Francis' life and of Bonaventure's theology. He explains further, the significance of the "Mercy Seat":

For the Cherubim who faced each other
also signify this.

The fact that they faced each other,
with their faces turned toward the Mercy Seat,
is not without a mystical meaning,
so that what Our Lord said in John

might be verified:
'This is eternal life,
that they may know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.'¹⁰

Like the Cherubim, Francis turned to Christ... the Mercy Seat:

Whoever turns his face fully to the Mercy Seat
and with faith, hope and love,
devotion, admiration, exultation,
appreciation, praise and joy
beholds him hanging upon the cross,
such a one makes the Pasch, that is, the passover,
with Christ.¹¹

Like the wings of the Cherubim who surrounded the Mercy Seat, so too in Francis' experience of the stigmata, the wings of the Seraph overshadowed and surrounded Christ Crucified, *the* expression of God's mercy.

After Bonaventure describes the stigmata of Francis, he concludes:

Now is fulfilled
the vision of the Crucified...
at the beginning of your conversion
which pierced your soul
with a sword of compassionate sorrow.
Now the voice that came from the cross
as if from the lofty throne and the secret mercy-seat of Christ...
is believed as undoubtedly true.¹²

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures normally uses the Greek meaning for mercy ("eleos") wherever "hesed" occurs in the Hebrew Scripture. This term which images loving human relationships came to be applied to God's relationship with his people. God used this word to describe himself in Exodus 34:6: "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in *hesed* and fidelity, continuing his *hesed* for a thousand generations." God thus said that he was related to his people in mercy and faithful, compassionate love just as they were related among themselves when tied together by bonds of mercy and faithful, compassionate love.¹³ God's *hesed* is permanent and unconditional, and was seen as an aspect of his everlasting covenant with his people. The Latin word for mercy used by Bonaventure is "misericordia," meaning a heart sensitive to misery. One may describe mercy as God's historically verifiable and faithful sensitivity to misery through Christ crucified.

Francis was converted in this realization of God's mercy on him through

Christ crucified. Bonaventure notes that one day while Francis was weeping as he looked back over his past years in sadness (Isa. 38:15), the joy of the Holy Spirit came over him and he was assured that all of his sins had been completely forgiven.¹⁴ Subsequently, Francis experienced a need to "withdraw from the world" to a certain extent, but of course, not from the world of God's creation, which was dear to him, nor from the world of sinful humanity of which he was a part. He desired to "live for Him Who died for all,"¹⁵ and decided to withdraw from any distraction from the Lord's loving mercy, to let go of all encumbrances and embrace the poverty of seeking nothing but God. In his rule, Francis wrote:

We should wish for nothing else and have no other desire; we should find no pleasure or delight in anything except in our Creator, Redeemer and Saviour; he alone is true God, who is perfect Good, all Good, every Good, the true and supreme Good...¹⁶

Francis was initially tempted to "totally withdraw from the world," but after conversing with the friars and in consulting with Clare, Francis succeeds in freeing himself from this temptation.¹⁷ Celano writes:

They all conferred together, as true followers of justice, whether they should dwell among men or go to solitary places. But Francis, who did not trust in his own skill, but had recourse to holy prayer before all transactions, chose not to live for himself alone, but for him "who died for all" knowing that he was sent for this that he might win souls for God...¹⁸

Besides Francis' awareness of God's mercy on him, he was utterly moved by the mercy of God on his neighbors who were also redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Pietas

In Chapter Eight of the *Legenda*, Bonaventure describes this phenomenon of mercy toward one's neighbor as the virtue of piety in Francis. Another related word to "hesed" or "mercy" is the word "piety" which comes from "pietas." For the Romans, "pietas" was *the* glorification of virtue. *Pietas* implied interpersonal relationship and bonding. It meant love, loyalty, reverence, fidelity and compassion.¹⁹ Most of all, it was a family virtue and implied family ties.

Bonaventure presents the image of Francis who felt he belonged to the family of all creatures and creation, i.e. "brother sun," "sister moon" — have the same "Father of mercies." Francis saw each creature separately, distinctly, sacred — each being like a child of God and therefore a brother and sister to him. Bonaventure explains:

True piety
 which according to the apostle
 is helpful for all things,
 had so filled Francis' heart
 and penetrated its depths...
 This is what
 drew him up to God
 through devotion,
 transformed him into Christ
 through compassion,
 attracted him to his neighbor...
 (as brother & sister)
 through this virtue
 he was attracted to all things
 in spiritual love,
 especially to souls redeemed by the precious blood
 of Jesus Christ —²⁰
 (i.e., the mercy of God through His Son...)

In the same chapter on Piety, Bonaventure noted that when Francis encountered people redeemed by God's mercy, involved in sin, ...

he grieved with such tender pity
 that he seemed like a mother
 who was daily in labor pains
 bringing them to birth in Christ.
 This was his principal reason
 for reverencing the ministers
 of the word of God,
 because with their devoted concern
 they raise up seed for their dead brother,
 namely Christ,
 crucified for us,
 ... when these ministers guide them
 with their concerned devotion.
 He firmly held
 that such work of mercy
 was more acceptable
 to the Father of mercies
 than any sacrifice.²¹

Francis rejoiced in spirit, because of those friars who by word or deed led sinners to the love of Christ. "He abhorred like a snakebite," notes Bonaventure, "the vice of detraction as a foe to the source of piety and grace; and he firmly held it to be a devastating plague and an abomination to God's mercy..."²² because of God's unconditional love for that other person who is a brother or sister, and who has the same Father.

In his Chapter on Prayer, Bonaventure wrote that on several occasions the friars heard Francis groan aloud, imploring the divine mercy for sinners and weeping for the Lord's passion as if it were there before his eyes...²³ The sight of Christ Crucified was that source of ever present mercy. Francis would be seen praying at night, with his hands outstretched in the form of a cross.

What Christ did was certainly good news for Francis. He was utterly moved to compassion for Christ Jesus... Going back to the beginning of Francis' conversion, Bonaventure wrote that the vision of the crucified "pierced his soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow." Francis returned compassion for him, who is the "Good News," i. e., the embodiment of the Father's mercy — His loving compassion toward humanity, every creature and creation; and He gave His only Son as the way to experience this news. Francis knew the real sense of the "Good News," that God had superabundant mercy on him in Jesus Christ.

Bonaventure notes that Francis also embraced the mother of the Lord Jesus with indescribable love because she had made the Lord of Majesty our brother and because through her, he writes, we have obtained mercy (I Pet. 2:10). After Christ, Francis put all his trust in her and made her his advocate and that of his friars.²⁴

Compassion

Reflecting on the paradigm of Francis' journey toward knowing God's merciful love, Armstrong concludes that the grace-filled person must first empty self by following a life of penance, i.e., a life of poverty and humility. This initial process of renunciation enables him to be more fully imbued with the Gospel spirit of compassion and encourages him to conform his life more closely to that of Christ.²⁵

Bonaventure accounts for Francis' purification through conversion as he radically realized that Christ himself went through the "awe-filled" experience of the Incarnation, of embracing the purifying poverty of the human condition, particularly the crucifixion. ... "Whenever Christ's crucifixion came to his mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs ... from that time on he clothed himself with a spirit of poverty."²⁶

Conrad Harkins describes that before Francis' conversion, compassion for the poor had been at war with another side of him... "The pampered son of a rich merchant who never ate anything he did not like, who could live only surrounded with attention, who could not bear to look at the houses of lepers from a distance of two miles without holding his nose."²⁷ The spoiled playboy of Assisi heard the words of the Gospel, "if a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in my footsteps."²⁸ Francis' focus was the Father's

mercy (his sensitivity to misery) through compassion in the footsteps of Christ... In the first lines of his *Testament*, written shortly before his death, Francis reflects on his life's journey:

The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body; and afterward I lingered a little and left the world.²⁹

According to Wayne Hellmann, the spirit's leading Francis among the lepers... emerged from an experience of God's mercy on him ... and moved his heart to a new and deep compassion. For the first time his heart was opened and sensitive to the misery of his outcast brothers and sisters, and in his embrace of them, he was embraced. Francis realized that the poor evangelized him and that it was the Lord who led him, and thus to be among the lepers was his response to God. In the *Legenda major*, we find that the central spiritual experience of Francis is compassion, that is, the fleshing out of his own experience of God's mercy. Hellmann states that both Francis' conversion and the completion of his journey in contemplation are experiences of compassion. Francis' spirituality is thus realized in relationship to the humanity of his brother the leper and the humanity of his brother Jesus on the cross. In compassion for Christ and others, Francis reached the deepest level of likeness to our merciful God.³⁰

... now he rendered humble service to the lepers with human concern and devoted kindness in order that he might completely despise himself, because of Christ crucified, who according to the text of the prophet was despised as a leper (Isa. 53:3). He visited their houses frequently, generously distributed alms to them and with great compassion kissed their hands and their mouths.³¹

Recalling the events of his conversion, at the end of his life, Francis singled out his mercy through compassion for the lepers. When we consider that Francis as Minister General made clear to postulants that they must serve the lepers, perhaps the importance of this fundamental orientation of mercy through compassion for the poor can be appreciated.³²

Harkins notes that in Bonaventure's account, Francis has been so transformed into the leper, that the leper has disappeared. Francis, now free of his shackles, has been transformed into the leper, that is, into Christ. For medieval piety indeed every poor man and every leper was Christ... Such was simply the effect of a collective consciousness of twelve hundred years of hearing the Gospel text: "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40).³³ Every Holy Week the faithful heard the words from the Book of Isaiah (53:3-4): "Surely

he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted."

Since the people of Assisi treated lepers, as in the time of Christ, as outcasts, Francis made himself one with them. He saw Christ's image in all the poor; and when he met them, he not only generously gave them even the necessities of life that had been given to him, but he believed that these should be given them by right,³⁴ because of God's merciful love and preferential choice for the poor.

In summary, from the mercy which Bonaventure observed in Francis, one may note that basically the phenomenon of Francis' conversion, seemed to emerge through his "fully turning his face to Christ," the Mercy Seat. Francis' relationship with the Father of Mercies manifested in *pietas*, directly connected him with all creatures, his brothers and sisters having the same Father whose expression of mercy through Christ crucified was fleshed out in Francis compassion for his brothers and sisters.

Endnotes

¹Regis J. Armstrong, "The Spiritual Theology of the *Legenda major* of St. Bonaventure" (Ph.D. diss. New York: Fordham University, 1978), 4.

²*Legenda major*: 2, 187 (LM will be the abbreviation) from the translation of Ewert H. Cousins in *Bonaventure* (New York: Paulist, 1978).

³LM 1:5, 189.

⁴LM Prologue, 179. Ewert Cousins has translated "Bonaventure's text into sense lines where it seemed appropriate because of the rhetorical and poetic quality of a passage." See Cousins' *Introduction* on p. 46.

⁵G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1924), 78.

⁶LM 6:6, 234.

⁷Ibid.

⁸*Itinerarium mentis in deum* Prologue: 2, 54 (translated by Ewert H. Cousins).

⁹*Itinerarium* 7:1, 111.

¹⁰*Itinerarium* 6:4, 106.

¹¹*Itinerarium* 7:2, 111.

¹²LM 13:10.

¹³George Martin, "Mercy", *God's Word Today* Vol. II, No. 7, July, 1989, 47.

¹⁴LM 3:C.

¹⁵Franciscan Federation of the Brothers and Sisters of the U.S., Inc., *Build With Living Stones*, "Unity of Contemplation and Mission," 1987, 10:17.

¹⁶Rule of 1221 (23).

¹⁷Franciscan Federation, Ibid.

¹⁸I Cel. 35.

¹⁹See Cousins' footnote, 250.

²⁰LM 8:1, 250.

²¹Ibid., 251.

²²LM 8:4, 253.

²³LM 9:4, 275.

²⁴LM 9:2, 264.

²⁵Armstrong, 52.

²⁶Lyn M. Scheuring, "The Poverty of Francis of Assisi According to Bonaventure and its Relation to Poverty in John of the Cross" (Ph.D. diss. New York: Fordham University, 1990, 183-4; see LM I: 5-6.

²⁷Conrad Harkins, *The Charism of St. Francis*, Our Franciscan Charism in the World Today: Proceedings of Super Conference IV held at St. Bonaventure University, NY 12-17 July, 1987, ed. Alcuin Coyle (Clifton: F.A.M.E., 1989), 15.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹*The Testament*, 67 (*Omnibus*).

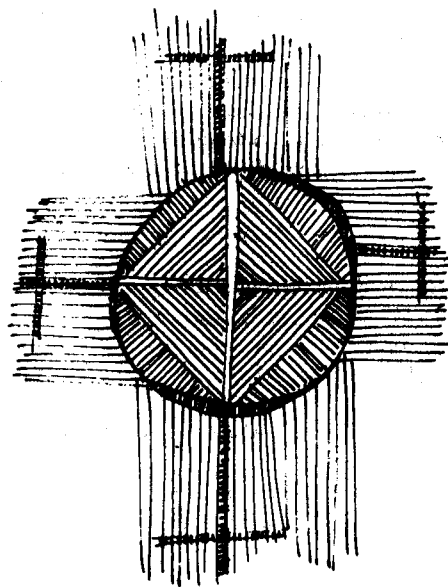
³⁰Wayne Hellmann, "The Spirituality of the Franciscans," *Christian Spirituality II*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 17:43.

³¹LM I: 6, 190.

³²*Legend of Perugia*, 90 (*Omnibus*), see Harkins, 15.

³³Harkins, 17.

³⁴LM 8:5.



Catching the Spirit

The proper stance, the right foot out in front
The lowered shoulder, the deft snap of the wrist —

And it is launched —

There, against the lattice of a flowering tree,
free as a bee,

It rides upon invisible support

To chart a course made by a wiser Hand;

Through comic ups and downs,

Surprising twists and turns,

Its flight remains quite faithful to its
higher law of Love,

And then, like feathered hope,

it gently comes to rest;

See, it was so easy —

Let's do it all again.

D. DeMarco

Spiritual Director

So often

I have knelt in prayer
and while I moaned beneath
the mystery of "vocation's" grace,
I have heard myself say
in the dark of the chapel and of my heart:
"LORD, SHOW ME THY FACE!"

For I have questions to ask
and feelings to explore
which seemed so unimportant before.

I had heard
and learned from others' hearing,
and even taught it to some as I had learned it —
"Christ is found in all around..."

And now I feel
that I have heard His voice and seen His face —
twelve times, I think,
in a certain place.

Sister Anne Marie Knawa, OSF

Book Reviews

The Franciscans. By William J. Short, O.F.M. Religious Orders Series, Vol. 23. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc. (now distributed by The Liturgical Press), 1989. Pp. viii + 152. Cloth, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M., Chair of the Department of Ecclesiastical History, Washington Theological Union, Silver Spring, MD, and summer lecturer in Franciscan history at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University.

After finishing this new introduction to the world of Franciscans, I sat still for a moment savoring it all, when suddenly the wonderful sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Pied Beauty," came to mind. If you recall, the poem opens in a burst of praise, "Glory be to God for dappled things," and then jumps into a series of intense images reflecting the overwhelming fecundity of nature from cloud-patterned skies through the "rose-moles" on the flanks of trout and the yellow patches on finches' wings to the more distant view of "plotted and pieced" farmlands. Yes, praised be the God of variety! For what William Short, currently President of the Franciscan School of Theology, has strikingly brought out in this engaging second volume of Michael Glazier's new series on the religious orders is the marvelously manifold meaning of the word Franciscan.

The person wanting to get to know

Franciscans presumably has some questions — Who are they? How did they start? How have they grown? What do they do? What do they believe? Where are they today? (p. 1). Short's largely successful attempt to answer these questions, in a compact 150 pages, is founded on his awareness that "making generalized statements about "Franciscans is dangerous", since they are not a monolithic organization, but "a heterogeneous collection of individuals, united (and divided) by their history" (p. 3). Indeed, the great virtue of this book is that it reminds us that the word "Franciscan" is not defined by the Friars Minor. Here the Poor Sisters of Clare and the men and women of the vast Franciscan penitential movement — regular and secular — are given "equal time." One sister I know summed up the reaction of many: "We finally made it out of the footnotes into the text." Such an attempt at inclusiveness is difficult — especially in such a brief compass — and it is a tribute to the author that he accomplishes it as well as he does.

This approach is evident from the very beginning. The first chapter, on "the Founders, Francis and Clare," clearly presents us with the story of a Gospel movement, not just the tale of one man. Francis and Clare are pictured as collaborators, struggling side by side to create new patterns of evangelical life with their brothers and sisters. The next three chapters trace the checkered historical developments

— expansion, division, renewal — of each of the three Franciscan orders over the past seven centuries: the Lesser Brothers (Short avoids the Latinized official title, "Friars Minor"), Clare's Poor Sisters, and the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. The following chapter, "The Franciscan Spirit," is undoubtedly the high point of the book; it is a very successful (and highly readable) summary of the "spiritual environment" in which the Franciscan family lives and grows. This is followed by a brief concluding chapter on current conditions in the family — its response to the challenges of the contemporary situation in church and society, as well as movements for greater inter-Franciscan cooperation. For its purpose, this book would be difficult to improve on. I did catch a few inevitable historical inaccuracies here and there. For example, recent research has made it somewhat anachronistic to view John of Parma as a partisan of the Spirituals (p. 27). And he certainly was not still alive in 1294 (p. 41). The only real dissatisfaction I experienced in this fine book — and it may seem strange for a historian to say this — is due to excessive historical detail in the three chapters dealing with the development of the various orders. Perhaps this tendency comes from a too-heavy reliance on Iriarte's *Franciscan History*, which is long on "factology" and short on interpretation. In any case the result in certain sections is a barrage of data and dates which might put off or confuse the general reader. For example, we learn much more than we need to about the intricacies of the various sixteenth and seventeenth century reform movements within the Observance (pp. 63-70). It might have been a more interesting use of this space to explain the com-

mon motivating spirit of these various groups, state a few essential facts about each of them, and then focus in on one for a more extended treatment. This method would have provided an opportunity to develop the Franciscan missionary efforts during the colonial period a bit more, an important facet of the friars' history, especially in the Americas. The same tactic could have been used to give a richer appreciation of the contribution of the Third Order Regular (pp. 93-103); instead of being confronted with a welter of founders and congregations, none of which we really get to know, one or the other could have been singled out to illustrate in greater depth the ideals and mission shared by many of the communities founded during this period, the others being reduced to simple mention.

But these reservations are minor; William Short has produced here a remarkably careful and insightful book. His love for Francis, Clare, and the rest of us is obvious, and the result is catching. There is really no better introduction to the Franciscan world.

Come Home! Reclaiming Spirituality and Community as Gay Men and Lesbians. By Chris Glaser. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990, 216 pp. Paper, \$10.95.

Reviewed by Br. Anthony LoGalbo, O.F.M., Assistant Librarian at the Franciscan Institute and Associate Editor of The Cord.

Chris Glaser states in the Introduction that this book is "for all persons outside and within the church, as well as the many standing on the church's threshold. It is written for gays and lesbians, as well as others seeking to be-

nefit from gay spirituality and ministry (p. xiv)."

The book is divided into five parts: 1. Welcoming God's acceptance; 2. Receiving our inheritance; 3. Discerning our call; 4. Making our witness; and 5. Declaring our vision. Within this framework, Glaser develops a spirituality incorporating various fundamental elements. As a foundation he highlights the importance of an adequate understanding of the Bible's broadest themes, e.g. God's redemption in Jesus Christ, choosing life, loving God and neighbor, the community of faith, etc. He examines the need to nurture the "mustard seeds of faith" not in some ideal world, but the one available in the midst of everyday experience. The author also considers a disciplined prayer life as a prerequisite for growing intimacy with God. To this, he adds such practices as the cultivation of a sense of wonder and gratitude about life, the need for spiritual advisors, spiritual reading and contemplation of the cross.

Although the tone of the book is more conciliatory than polemical, the author chides the institutional church for offering little sanctuary for homosexual orientation and expression. Glaser writes:

Many Christians hold the view that homosexuality is an issue wounding the church causing brokenness. What they fail to see is that homophobia and heterosexism are what is truly wounding the church, and that the church in turn, is wounding its gay family members and neighbors and encouraging society to do so (p. 185).

To those who may be gay or lesbian, Glaser makes an impassioned plea to recognize and value their spirituality as

well as their sexuality. His advice to those in the broader Christian community is not to ignore the spiritual aspirations of their fellow Christians who are gay and lesbian; for there is something to be learned from their unique spiritual gifts and insights.

This book breaks no new ground in the area of gay spirituality. It fits within the mainstream among similar works by such authors as John Fortunato, Richard Woods, John McNeill, Brian Mcnaught, Scanzoni and Mollenkatt, et al. For this reviewer, its value resides in the arresting manner of Glaser's presentation. The author writes in a clear, straightforward style. The narrative blending of personal reflections and life stories flows easily and is very readable. This is not to say that his message is a tranquil and calming one; what Glaser writes challenges and provokes thought. One may not agree with some of the things he writes, yet he is convincing and persuasive in his approach. It is a consequence of his first hand experience of ministering to gay and lesbian people. For almost twelve years, Glaser was Director of the Lazarus Project, a ministry of reconciliation between the church and the gay community at West Hollywood Presbyterian Church in California. It is also due in no small part to his own struggle to live what he preaches. This was introduced in seminal form in his earlier work, *Uncommon Calling: a Gay Man's Struggle to Serve the Church*.

This later book is suitable for its intended audience and also for those who are considering approaches to ministry to the alienated.

Next Year

Next year, Lord,
if it be your will
that Christmas time
is mine again,
spare me that grotesquery
of incipient insanity
when most of us,
bent on a binge to spend,
do damage greater
than if we put an end
to Christmas Day.

Christmas is not
a time to give of gift,
that curse of superstitious
fear begun by
three astrologers
who more than likely never were.

Certainly this season
is no reason
to give for the sake
of giving, a living
hypocrisy when what we do
does foully reek of soul
diminishment.

O let us pray
to banish this necessity
to join a
frenzy of fools
leading nowhere,
whose goal is that
of buying more
and more and more
until barns lean
obscene in excess store.

In God's sense, then,
let us dispense
of madness and pain,
learning the truth of Christmas gain,
to see in one another
this infant Babe on whom
we lavish the priceless gifts of
faith, hope,
and above all,
love.

April Oursler Armstrong

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum Commernicium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Om-
nibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The
Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Reflection:

Religious Game Playing and The Second Commandment

RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M. and JOSEPH MARTOS

Ever since Eric Berne wrote *Games People Play*, many people have become aware of the ways that people distort interpersonal relationships in order to avoid really getting to know and communicate with each other. Instead, they engage in patterns of behavior that allow them to feel good about themselves even at other people's expense. They think of life in terms of winning and losing, and the object of every game, of course, is to win.

Religion is at heart an interpersonal relationship — a relationship with God which affects the ways that we relate to ourselves and to other people. Like all relationships, religion too can become distorted by game playing, some types of which are as old as the Bible. Even people who are aware of this, however, do not realize that the second commandment was originally a prohibition of religious game playing.

A first type of religious game people play is the merit system. These people see only the stern, even angry, father side of God and they find him unapproachable, even unforgiving. Although they go to church, they inwardly don't like God, and they basically don't trust God. They see

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only one side of the Trinity, blind to that side of God which is merciful and forgiving. So the game they play is a form of trying to get right with God.

In Catholicism, the most common form of this game is legalism. Catholics love to play doctrinal legalism, in which the object is to find out the right things to believe and then hold on to them no matter what. When you die, St. Peter will examine your beliefs and, if you've got all the right ones, he'll let you into heaven.

Another form of this game is moral legalism. The goal here is to find out what things *not* to do, and then avoid them like the plague. When you die, St. Peter will not ask you any catechism questions, but he will be very concerned about your behavior, especially in the area of sexual morality. It does not matter much what you did with your life; as long as you did not do any of the bad things on his list, you're in.

Protestants play legalism, too, although the rules are somewhat different. You have to consult your local denomination to learn which doctrines are in and which sins are out. One Protestant variety of this game which has become more popular in recent decades is fundamentalism, which is a short list of fundamental beliefs which you have to accept in order to get right with God. Another variety is salvationism, which is the simplest game of all. All you need to do is say that you accept Jesus, and you are saved.

The main reason religious people feel the need to play these games is that they have no sense of their real relationship with God. They cannot envision themselves as brothers and sisters of Christ and as temples of the Holy Spirit. In psychological terms, they are not aware of their God-given ability to build healthy and creative lives without someone telling them what to think and what not to do. In theological terms, they are not in union with the God the Father and so, lacking the spiritual energy to discern and act in accordance with the Father's will, they need a rule book to guide them. In terms of spirituality, they substitute petty certitudes for the certainty of who they are in themselves and in relation to God—which comes only with struggle, through spiritual development.

Another game that has become popular lately is religious consumerism. People get religion not to get right with God but so God will get them what they want. They want an abundant life, which for them means the good things of this life. Or they want healing for various real and imagined hurts.

One consequence of this approach is the domestication of God. Instead of encountering the righteous Yahweh of the Old Testament or the demanding Christ of the New Testament, these game players prefer to make God a household word and turn Jesus into a home remedy for all that ails them. Instead of embracing the burden of crucifixion, they turn the

cross into a little lunch box with a handle on it — something that they can carry around with them so they can open it and feed on Jesus whenever they are hungry. They think of God as Dr. Feelgood — which to them is much more preferable than the image of God as Great Policeman, which is what the legalistic game players are into.

God gets domesticated when people are afraid to enter God's reign and so they bring him down into their own domain. It is a sort of spiritual infantilism. Not having grown to discover the kingdom of God, spiritual infants turn God into a toy that will fit into their religious doll house. Not having surrendered their common masculine or common feminine ego, they cannot find the deep masculine and feminine of God. Instead, they play with God, and play at being religious.

If anyone let God be God, it was Francis.

The domestication of God produces a serious distortion in our interpretation of the second of the ten commandments. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Did you ever wonder why God would get upset if someone used his name as a swear word? You would think that the Almighty is above such petty sensitivity, but in the Catholic Church we even had a Holy Name society to reduce the incidence of such profanity. Devout Protestants too felt they had to protect the sacred name of God and Lord, Christ and Jesus from abuse by unthinking or malicious blasphemers.

That's not what the second Commandment was originally meant to prevent, however. This commandment was originally a prohibition against using God loosely and taking God lightly — like when we use God to justify what we want to do. The name of God, to the Hebrew mind, stood for the person of God, so the commandment is actually talking about the vain — meaning empty or frivolous — abuse of God himself.

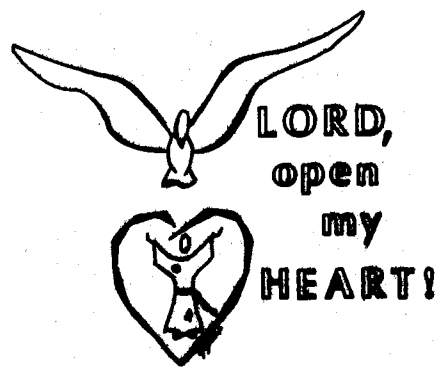
Whenever people use God to legitimate their own interests, they are abusing God. Whenever people use God as a front for their self righteousness, they are violating God. If you can parade God in front of what you do, you can justify practically anything. And everybody does it. God has been brought in to fight every war since the beginning of time. God has been made to bless the troops on both sides, for each side was always the side that God favored. The Germans used to engrave *Gott mit Uns*, "God With Us," on their swords and belt buckles. We Americans are not

quite that crass; we only put "in God We Trust" on our money. The domestication of God is the abuse of God.

People who are spiritually mature don't have to play that game. They can see the game for what it is, and they do not try to domesticate the wild God. Whether they be men or women, they have come in contact with the deep masculine and the deep feminine, and they have met God where those two energies complement and enhance each other. Since they are in touch with God's masculine energy, they are free to follow wherever the Spirit leads them. Since they are in touch with God's feminine energy, they are free to embrace whomever the Spirit brings before them. Since they experience the Trinity of God, they know the mystery of God, and they let God be God.

St. Francis of Assisi is a shining example of such spiritual maturity. Once he heard God's call to sell everything and give it to the poor, he did it freely and immediately. Whether he heard the Lord asking him to rebuild his house or to preach to the infidel, he responded with abounding energy and a glad heart. His embrace of Lady Poverty led him also to embrace the ugly and the unwashed, and even the leprous. Yet he also extended his arms to welcome Brother Sun and Sister Moon, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.

If anyone let God be God, it was Francis. In that letting go, therefore, he could also let Francis be Francis. Without embarrassment, he could be God's child, God's fool, God's clown. With zest he could do what the Lord asked of him, and when the Lord was not asking him to do anything, he could play. His total devotion to Christ and the cross allowed him to be totally joyful toward all of creation. Since he did not have to play God, he did not have to be perfect, or even admired. Yet by doing that he became a model of Christian discipleship and one of history's most admirable figures.



A Question for Francis

Francis,
I wish to ask you
a question —

a question asked
in the midst of war,
in the midst of death,
in the midst of man's
disregard for man,

a question asked
as a whale's body
is slashed clean,
and a seal cub's blood
dampens a thoughtless club,

a question asked
as the megaton wolves
of Gubbio point in all
directions, and the gun
and bomb are eloquent
all over this world —

the question? —
Can Brother and Sister
have any meaning today
can they?

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Francis — A Man and A Saint

FRANCIS BERNA, O.F.M.
and
JOHN HOLCOMB

Introduction

Human sexuality is a subject that in recent years has sparked a great deal of debate and reevaluation within society as well as the Roman Catholic Church. Out of this process, a growing number of thinkers have begun to explore the role sexuality plays in many areas previously believed to hold no relationship at all to sexuality and sexual awareness. Any connection between sexuality and the spiritual life was negative — denial of sexuality promoted growth in holiness. As many feminist thinkers have come to recognize a connection between sexuality, the feminine, and the experience of the holy, spirituality, so men have a need to see their sexuality, their masculinity, in their relationship with themselves, others and God.

To this end Francis offers a credible and interesting path. In his *Writings* he outlines the way of holiness, a following of Christ by observance of the gospels. And, the witnesses to his life attest that he lived this spirituality as a man, a somewhat unique man, a saint. Fr. Eric Doyle explored this latter title as a "fully individuated personality," a self able to integrate the masculine and feminine dimensions of the psyche. For Doyle, the stigmata marks Francis as one who has brought together the conscious and unconscious, animus and anima, self and Self.¹ As most of the current literature explores the relationship of masculinity and spirituality with the same psychology, there is a solid foundation for exploring these insights in relation to Francis' way of holiness.

This timely article was co-authored by Fr. Frank Berna, O.F.M., Assistant Professor of Theology at St. Bonaventure University and John Holcomb, one of his students. Mr. Holcomb, presently a graduate student in mathematics at the State University of New York in Albany, provided a thorough review of the contemporary literature on male sexuality and spirituality while Fr. Berna developed his work in reference to Francis.

To understand how being a man interacts with an understanding of self, others and God, it is necessary to first refine the meaning of "sexuality." All humans are sexual beings. Sexuality constitutes the human way of being part of the world as people. Sexuality involves far more than genital activity, as it is the recognition that humans are "embodied" people — in male and female bodies. Sexuality is the desire for emotional and physical intimacy, the power which drives us from aloneness to communion, from separation to intimacy. Sexuality offers the capacity for sensuousness — enjoying the earth — and the capacity for love.²

With this overview in mind, one can begin to discover the elements of sexuality unique to men. Male sexuality has a biological reference which generates certain kinds of experience beyond cultural definition. Biological reference and cultural definition need to be recognized to develop a masculine spirituality which can lead to healing and wholeness individuation.

One area needing healing concerns the confusion and contradictions about the man's place in society today. Traditionally the man has seen himself as the breadwinner and financial supporter of the family. Modern economics force men out of this role which often times can lead men to feel deficient in living up to their underlying notions of masculinity. Aware of the feminist insight many men feel themselves caught, unsure of how to get on with being a man in the world. Men have difficulty understanding their relationship to the new roles and responsibilities of women.³

Francis certainly found in his father, the merchant, a typical example of the male provider. While his mother may have exercised some power in naming her son "John," upon the Father's return the boy's name was changed to "Francis." (L3S I,3) There is nothing in the text of the biographies to suggest that the Lady Pica exercised any role beyond that of what was typical for women in the Middle Ages.

More popular film and literature depict the same image. In Zeffirelli's "Brother Sun, Sister Moon," Lady Pica tends to favor and spoil her son. While she attempts to moderate the rage of Pietro she acquiesces to his demands of being wife over mother. With a strange twist of biography Hermann Hesse depicts Francis as spoiled by his father and admonished by his mother.⁴ However, it is interesting to note that at the end of the story the mother is the one to understand the young Francis, even better than he understood himself.

Hesse offers something else of great interest in his story. After playing a game of "mille fiori" with the young children of the village Francis fears that he has not lived up to what should be expected of the young man who longs to be a knight. He has not been manly. The mother consoles

him telling him that even knights dance when they are happy or wish to give joy to others. Typical of his novels, Hesse has the feminine bringing Francis to life and to God. Such life comes as the notion of what is masculine is expanded. Something similar would seem to be behind Zeffirelli's work. Perhaps one may see this as a parallel to Celano's narration of Francis freed from chains by his mother only later to be denounced by his father. (1 Cel VI, 3).

As Nelson, Kelsey and others point out, men today often find themselves lacking in meaningful emotional relations with their fathers, sons, other friends and women.⁵ While men may desire closer and more meaningful relationships, it is this very intimacy which scares them. As this yearning for life-giving relations with other people would also reflect a desire for a closer connection with God, it is apparent that men long for a deeper connection between sexuality and spirituality. That is, they search for a deeper connection between the way they find themselves in the world and the God they long to know.

Francis' "Letter to a Minister" readily demonstrates his connection of human intimacy, an intimacy among males, which discloses something of the holy. He writes,

... There should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, and who, after he has looked into your eyes, would go away without receiving your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. And if he were not to seek mercy, you should ask him if he wants mercy. And if he should sin thereafter a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him back to the Lord. (Ep Min 9-11)

In this very moving letter Francis perceives sin as alienation. He knows how uncomfortable this minister must feel. Yet, he calls this minister to embrace what sickens him, embrace the brother who has sinned, even if he does not ask for mercy. The tenderness of human action is to lead to the experience of God.⁶

Another more difficult area in the experience of Francis needs to be examined at this point. All of the biographies and related literature fail to mention Francis ever re-establishing a meaningful relationship with his parents. Zeffirelli has Francis return to his home only to be ignored by his parents even though this pains the mother.

Celano's *Second Life* relates the conversion experience of Francis stripped naked before his father, the bishop and the people of the city. Francis exclaims, "From now on I can freely say Our Father who art in heaven, not father Peter Bernadone." (2 Cel VII, 12). Through the use of a low born, simple man Francis has attempted to work through the abuse hurled upon him by his father. Still he is forced to renounce his inheritance and his father. He now claims God in place of his father.

One can see here an embrace of the archetypal image of father in Francis' experience of God. And this is complemented with his embrace of the archetypal mother, the earth.⁷ One has to question though the possibility of fully embracing the archetypal image without embracing the concrete expression of that archetype in one's experience. Is it possible to embrace the archetype without its symbol? While certainly God is "father" for Francis, and earth his "mother" one must acknowledge a seeming lack of integration in the particulars of the saint's life.

Nelson, who seems to hammer away at the father-son issue for male sexuality and spirituality, offers a rather significant insight. He cites the story of the prodigal Son — interestingly enough not a story connected to the life of Francis. The gospel text shows an image of the Holy One as completely accepting, unbelievably forgiving and loving with no sense of this being deserved or earned, typical masculine requirements. For many men this gospel portrait of a father and God simply do not exist. To know the truth of the story fathers and sons need to be embraced by one another. Part of Nelson's journey has been to forgive his father and recognize his own need to be embraced and understood by his son. Again, one is painfully aware of the distance in Francis' relationship between himself and his father.

Still, more needs to be said. Elie Wiesel after suffering in a Nazi concentration camp angrily poses the question of God's need for forgiveness. For Wiesel nothing other than God can account for so great a suffering especially that of innocent children. In the very parable of the prodigal son the son who has slaved for his father is very angry. Many would see the justice of such anger. The father begs him to understand. Might one not suggest that the father is asking his son to forgive his being too generous?

The experience of generosity separates Pietro Bernadone as father from God as father. As the biographies detail, Pietro's life is marked by selfishness and greed. A love of money keeps him from the embrace of his son. Francis sees generosity as authentic fatherhood, true masculinity, and cannot embrace its complete contradiction. Yet, in relation to the holy, Francis repeatedly praises the magnificent generosity of God. Does Francis have to forgive God? It would seem not. God is consistently praised as all-good, all-powerful, most kind. Perhaps the gratitude of Francis, his appreciation of divine generosity, comes from his journey not to take hold of God, but allowing God to take hold of him. Rather than having to work through his images of the divine, Francis allowed the mystery to enfold his existence. Francis was not only comfortable with giving, he was also happy to receive, to be taken care of. One need only recall his joy as a

habit was given him while he lay dying naked on the ground. Owning his own weakness proved to be his strength. Perhaps this is the very key for men in the continued self discovery as a discovery of the divine.

The Exterior Male and the Interior Spirit

Spirituality refers in a broad sense to the ways by which a person relates to that which is ultimately real and worthwhile. A male spirituality is grounded in the experience of the male body. In this respect men need to understand the experiences of masculinity as male phenomena rather than accepting it as the universal human experience as it was assumed for centuries.

The external character of the male genitalia enables men to appreciate the visually erotic and value strong sexual play. At the same time the male body and its expression harbor a real danger. Men can be trapped into thinking of sexuality as merely sex. The emotional, intimate nature of relationships can be neglected or ignored. For many men it is quite possible to engage in genital activity "which doesn't mean anything." Many men think of sex as acts, acts involving genital expression. With such an orientation it becomes easy to perceive why male sex organs become important self-images. Sexual performance can become focused on penetration and orgasm. Male sexual activity can stand in sharp contrast with a traditionally feminine appreciation of the internal, relational and mysterious quality of sexuality. For men the mystery is often viewed as external to the self.

With regard to spirituality the object of the spiritual life is viewed as "out there" rather than a mystery dwelling within. The desire is to grasp, understand, penetrate, analyze and possess. The transcendent character of God dominates divine immanence.

As noted above, Francis was willing to receive, to be taken care of by God. While Francis praises the transcendent God as creator and trinity, as Bonaventure Hinwood observes, he also appreciates the indwelling character of God. In fact, for Francis, the transcendence is the immanence — the trinity a community of love and creation alive with the creator.⁸ The Christocentric view of Francis speaks of the nearness of God.

The interiority of Francis' spirituality can also be found in Bonaventure's description of the journey to God. After detailing how God can be found in the created order, the *Itinerarium* calls the pilgrim to "look within." After considering the oneness of God's being, the pilgrim is to consider the overflowing goodness of God as trinity.

A richer, more fulfilling masculine spirituality may well depend upon new ways of learning to be sexual. Nelson contends that male biology

seems to offer a "deep, dark instinctual energy that we want and need to tap."⁹ On the one hand males relate to the desire to penetrate and explore the mysteries of others, a desire important to human fulfillment. Yet this aspect of the male nature seeks to be balanced through the development of a more receptive and vulnerable male sexuality. Nelson suggests that the latter can be found in the nurturing character of fathers — an experience often left to mid-life or later, though now often more common in two career households.

... powerful images in his writings and the stories of his life ... offer a model for being a man which corresponds to the challenges of contemporary psychology.

On the other hand, a father not often physically present and emotionally distant, who bestows love based on performance achievements, helps shape a male for independence, self-protection and competition. However, the male often lacks preparation for intimacy, vulnerability and mutuality. Yet, these too are important and powerful experiences in life. God as distant father encourages human initiative. But often this is at the expense of a genuine relationship with God.

Men, Friendship and Spirituality

Another example of how an understanding of sexuality affects the perceptions of life and God can be seen in the lack of true friendship among many men. Generally men are much more self-disclosing to women than other men. For men sex seems to be the greatest intimacy, thus the notion of loving someone seems to suggest something genital. Few models exist exemplifying adult intimacy without genital activity.

One serious element in this estrangement is fear: fear of vulnerability. One does not want to reveal to another man self-doubts and weaknesses, for then he would not fit the mold of a "strong normal male." Thus, many men become overdependent upon women, particularly one woman for all emotional support. This is not healthy for either and can lead to serious problems in relationships. Furthermore, the denial of fellow male

friendship denies a special kind of disclosure that can occur only between men. Sam Keen states:

There are stories we can tell only to those who have wrestled in the dark with the same Demons. Only men understand the secret fears that go with the territory of masculinity.¹⁰

A serious threat to such intimacy among men is the fear of being labelled a homosexual. Nelson uses the term "homophobia" to describe among other things a personal dread of same sex attraction and erotic expression.¹¹ The reasons for this phobia are complex and deeply rooted in Western culture. Unfortunately the complex reasons cannot be examined here. However one immediate factor would be the male tendency to equate intimacy with genital expression. Not skilled in other ways of demonstrating friendship and affection, men often have difficulty in positively expressing their care for one another. It is interesting to note how often men actually express their like for one another with a playful exchange of punches or by calling one another derogatory names. While one might suggest other more positive forms of exchange, perhaps it is best to accept and start with identifying this kind of behavior for what it is — men showing affection to one another.

In contrast to many modern men, Francis maintains a most intimate relation with Leo. Francis writes, "I speak to you my son, as a mother." (Ep Leo 2). And, Francis was not afraid of his own weakness, not afraid of intimacy. The "Rule for Hermitages" also details the kind of intimacy that is to exist among the brothers.

"Two of these are to be mothers, and they may have two sons or at least one. The two who are mothers should follow the life of Martha while the two who are sons should follow the life of Mary... The sons shall sometimes assume the role of mothers." (Reg R 1,2,1i)

While the imagery of Martha and Mary has a wide use in the Middle Ages, Francis' use of the terms does suggest a high integration of the masculine and feminine. This is underscored with his references to "mother" as descriptive of the friars caring for one another. Not being afraid of the feminine imagery shows that Francis has no homophobic concern and has achieved a high level of intimacy with his brothers. The sense of balance between male and female can be seen in those special friends, Leo and Sylvester, as well as the deep relationship he had with Clare.

As in the other areas, alienation between men has consequences for the spiritual life. Not knowing male acceptance, men can have difficulty

feeling accepted by God as father. Love becomes likened to respect and that respect must be earned.

At first glance one may see Francis' acts of penance and poverty as "earning respect." But they are not that at all. For Francis life is a thanksgiving, a praise of God for his many gifts. Francis uses poverty and penance to see the things of life in their true perspective, for their worth. In Celano's *Second Life* Francis is asked by a brother to give an opinion of himself. Francis says, "It seems to me that I am the greatest of sinners, for if God had treated any criminal with such great mercy, he would have been ten times more spiritual than I. (2 Cel LXXXVI, 123)

This statement, and the many like it on Francis' "humility" do not inhibit his development of a positive self-image, the healthy self-love critical to an integrated sexuality. Any kind of intimacy depends on a solid sense of identity for each of the partners. Emotional intimacy is threatening to the person who lacks self-affirmation. With selflove comes a sense of identity which allows one to expose the depths of self. Kelsey makes this clear emphasizing that growth in self-esteem can often take place as one tries to see oneself in the eyes of God. One can also grow in this area by learning to accept forgiveness and believing it is morally wrong to devalue, dislike and despise the self.¹² While Francis continually sees himself as the greatest of sinners, in fact grows in this conviction, he doesn't see himself as distant from God. His sinfulness becomes an ever more powerful awareness of divine generosity, an amazing event of God being interested in this poor little man.

Eros and the Spiritual Life

Eros — desire and passion, constitutes another essential element in friendship. It is the desire for fulfillment through communion. Eros is sensuousness and bodily. One longs to feel, to touch, to experience the other.

Males find this problematic in that many of them have been taught to fear this desire. Eros has its proper release only in the dark bedroom. One's capacity for eros is diminished the more it is separated from friendship. Without eros, selflove becomes cold, friendship is seriously limited and sexual desire becomes merely an act. Eros invites the experience of the Holy because it encourages men to loosen their grip and the need to control. Eros makes the male admit his own neediness. It can lead to humility and the realization that one need not be always strong, cheerful, proud or a winner. By admitting the yearning, thirsting and fear of genuine friendship a man may find grace in knowing that he belongs to God.

Eros can be found in the passion with which Francis lives life. The "Canticle of the Creatures" shows how he has filled his sense with creation's beauty. Francis finds that it's OK to be a fool for Christ's sake. When the task had grown too large, Francis willingly handed over the leadership of the Order. He was convinced that the Order was God's, not his, and that the true Minister general was the Holy Spirit of God. In eros Francis found freedom.

Another way in which a man's understanding of his sexuality affects his perception of the world is a withdrawal from the idea of "body connectedness." Nelson contends men, in a sense moreso than women, have to recover a part of themselves that has been submerged. Men tend to see their bodies as a car or truck which they drive around in. Nelson advocates a "Resurrection of the Body" in which men affirm their natures as creatures of flesh and deny the body/spirit dualism.

A great many benefits may be derived from such an affirmation. One such benefit would be the recovery of male capacities for feeling. Often feelings are conditioned away from men, they are left for women and often a man is not expected to have intense feelings, except perhaps anger or jealousy. Often enough men do not know what they are feeling and thus are unable to disclose to another the nature of those feelings.

Secondly, when one is detached from one's body reality, he becomes detached from the body reality of others. A recovery of body recovers a capacity for pleasure. Nelson reports a study which shows that in a great number of societies a close correlation exists between peacefulness and the expression of bodily pleasure in contrast to cultures of violence with the suppression of bodily pleasure. It seems societies which pass on to their children sex positive, body positive, images are more demonstrative and peaceful societies. On the other hand, pleasure deprived youngsters are much more likely to be violent adults.

In recovering a sense of pleasure for ourselves we can recover an understanding of a pleasure loving God. The God of Ancient Israel had a sense of humor and playfulness. The God of Ancient Israel could be described as the passionate lover in the "Song of Songs." Jesus, the Word Incarnate, comes in the flesh. He comes not as an ascetic but as one who fully enjoyed the company of others, as man with real friends, a man who enjoys a good meal.

Where is Francis in all this? Certainly his strict asceticism is hardly a literal following of Jesus or an appreciation of the body. In fact it takes him until the end of his life to be reconciled to "brother body" whom he has treated too harshly. But, as in many of the other areas there is another side to Francis. One is reminded of his awakening all of the brothers in the middle of a night to eat with a young brother who was hungry. Francis

did not want the young brother to feel embarrassed. In both Rules Francis writes that the sick brothers are to be cared for as any one of them would like to be cared for.

Celano's *Second Life* presents another ambiguous event. After failing to overcome a temptation toward lust with scourging and rolling in the snow, Francis makes another attempt.

Then gathering handfuls of snow, he made from it seven lumps like balls. And setting them before him, he began to speak to his body: "Behold," he said, "this larger one is your wife; these four are your two sons and your two daughters; the other two are your servant and your maid whom you must have to serve you. Hurry," he said, "and clothe them all, for they are dying of cold. But if caring for them in so many ways troubles you, be solicitous for serving God alone." (2 Cel LXXXVII, 117)

On the one hand Francis is very much in touch with his body and sexuality. He is aware of and can well imagine genital expression and the creation of family. Francis does not negate himself as a sexual being. On the other hand, the scourging, the rolling in the snow and seeing genital expression resulting only in family responsibility suggest a limited appreciation on the part of Francis. However, his sexuality is no different than any other area of his life. Sexuality, like everything else in life must be integrated to his service of God. Consistent with his asceticism, Francis' rejection of genital expression in this temptation is not a rejection of the goodness of sexuality, the goodness of creation. Rather it is his consistent rejection of whatever he perceives as distracting him from God, a valuing of the creature above the Creator. In this sense there is real integration and consistency in Francis. He integrates his self-expression with who and what he understands and embraces as the direction of his life.

A Sense of Fulfillment

Consistent with some of the associations established by Nelson one can suggest further grounds to establish a healthy integration in the saint. Francis lays aside violence while maintaining a sense of chivalry. He is ever the gentleman to his Lady Poverty. As previously noted, tenderness marks his life. He is a man of emotion, capable of great joy and moved by great sadness. He could laugh and weep freely.

One of this most evident forms of male sexual alienation is simply the lack of a solid sense of manhood. Martin Pable, *A Man and His God*, points out the Western society's picture of a man is the college educated individual possessing a perfect body.¹³ He is the irresistible yet tender lover, who is tough and competitive on the job. The reality is that most men are average looking, struggling to hold on to unglamorous jobs,

working to hold on to marriages, and worrying about providing a secure home for their children. It is easy to see why men can feel so insecure about themselves. Measuring self against the ideal leaves a man with a sense of failure, a contradiction of the success he is supposed to be.

Francis certainly confounded the meaning of masculine success operative in his day. He holds out a different ideal and formulates that vision in his writings. Certainly there is some refashioning of the ideal man in contemporary culture, but it would seem even this ideal, like the popular stereotype and the vision of Francis, can do nothing more than lead to a sense of frustration and failure.

There is a difference with Francis. Throughout his life, he always sees himself as "on the way." While he never sees himself as having reached perfection, this honest recognition of himself does not generate frustration or despair. Rather, the recognition is the impetus to keep growing. "Brothers, let us begin to serve the Lord, for up to now we have made little or no progress." What a statement for the end of his life! Yet it is not a statement of personal failure, disappointment or anger. Life remains growth to the end. "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours." In the last moments of life Francis had a sense of satisfaction. He had been faithful to the call of God. Fidelity to the gospel call stands as the absolute of the ideal held out by Francis. It is the being of oneself, the giving over of one's whole self, to the mystery of God as God awakens that mystery in one's life.

Conclusion

A quick review of the recent literature on the topic of male spirituality indicates that there are many more avenues to be pursued. And, looking at Francis, it should be immediately apparent that there are some serious questions about the degree of his sexual integration. However, as has been shown, there are some powerful images in his writings and the stories of his life which offer a model for being a man which corresponds to the challenges of contemporary psychology. Perhaps the most powerful image arises from the fact that it took him his whole life to achieve the integration with which he is credited. The passionate, courageous and often times foolish way in which he lived his life brought him a sense of satisfaction and happiness. He died at peace with himself, with life and with God. □

Endnotes

¹Eric Doyle, O.F.M. *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood*, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1980, pp. 21 & 29. Fr. Doyle notes his obvious use of Jungian categories for understanding the human psyche.

²James B. Nelson, *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988, p. 28.

³Helen Mayer Hacker, "The New Burdens of Masculinity," in Sol Gordon and Roger Libby, *Sexuality Today and Tomorrow*. North Scituate, MA: Suxbury Press, 1976, pp. 28-29.

⁴Hermann Hesse. "The Childhood of St. Francis of Assisi," *Stories of Five Decades*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. London: Triad Grafton Books, 1976.

⁵Morton Kelsey, *Caring: How Can We Love One Another?* NY: Paulist Press, 1981.

⁶Cf. Sr. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C. "Francis: the Tender," *The Cord*, 32 (1982) 67-71.

⁷Eloi Leclerc, O.F.M. *The Canticle of the Creatures, Symbols of Union*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977, pp. 21, 135ff.

⁸Bonaventure Hinwood, O.F.M. Conv. "St. Francis and God," *The Cord*, 37 (January 1987): 3-21.

⁹Nelson, p. 43.

¹⁰Nelson, o. 51.

¹¹Nelson, p. 60.

¹²Kelsey, pp. 46-66; Nelson, pp. 52-54.

¹³Martin Pable, O.F.M. Cap. *A Man and His God*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1988, p. 43.

* * *

Recollection

silence seeps
through colored panes
laced like leading
with birdsong

soon a pool
laps gently
hushed
at memory's shore

Sr. M. Felicity Dorsett, OSF

Franciscan Evangelization II: A Brief Historical Overview

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

"I now begin a noble subject, for I begin to write of the glorious and exceedingly great labors of [Franciscans] throughout the entire world, of sufferings and death, endured for the sake of Christ and His Church." So wrote the Franciscan historian, Dominic Gubernatis (+ 1689), as he began his work on the history of Franciscan missions.

Gubernatis died before completing his work, and today his words might seem a bit chauvinistic. It is nonetheless true that, notwithstanding many flaws (characteristic of even heroic human endeavors), our Franciscan missionary heritage is a very inspiring one.

"Sent Into the Entire World" (Ep Ord, 9)

The history of the Franciscan family is, to a great extent, a history of missionary activity. As Stephen Neill notes: "Before the thirteenth century is out, we shall find Franciscans at the ends of the known earth." By 1500, Franciscan missions extended from Lapland to the Congo, from the Azores to China, and even into the "New World."

Without making an attempt even to list all the major missionary undertakings of St. Francis' followers, the following instances of early Franciscan evangelism on various continents may serve as examples.

1. Europe

At the Portiuncula chapter of 1219, Francis sent friars to France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and into the provinces of Italy where they had not been before.

This is the second in a series which began in the January 1991 issue of The CORD and which will continue through this year.

It is commonly held that the first Franciscans arrived in England on September 10, 1224, although some authorities claim May 3, 1220 as the correct date. Some 30 years after their arrival they number 1,242. From England Franciscans went to Scotland (where in 1230 they were numerous enough to become a province) and Ireland, where there were friars certainly by the year 1232 and possibly as early as 1226.

By 1230 there is a province in Slavonia, and in 1233 a Franciscan mission in Georgia. By 1240 we find friars in Albania, in 1246 a Franciscan mission in Armenia, and in the 1280s letters of Pope Nicholas IV mention Franciscans in Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria.

John of Piancarpino, before going as a papal envoy to the Great Khan of China in 1245, had already pioneered founding the Order in Bohemia, Poland and Norway.

Later, in the 17th century, missionary work among Eastern Europeans would be undertaken mostly by Conventual friars, for they were debarred by royal decrees from taking part in the evangelization of the "New World."

2. Africa

While Christianity had flourished in North Africa in the early centuries, it was practically wiped out by the Islamic jihads in the seventh century, except for the Coptic Christians in Egypt and in Ethiopia.

Blessed by St. Francis at the conclusion of the general chapter of 1219, six friars set out for Morocco. Their leader, Br. Vitalis, became ill and had to remain in Spain. The others, under the leadership of Br. Berard, became the protomartyrs of the Order, on January 16, 1220. A Franciscan province was established in North Africa in 1235. During the 13th century Franciscans are found along the entire northern coast of Africa, from Morocco to Egypt.

Among the most remarkable missionaries to Africa was the Franciscan tertiary Raymond Lull, who died a martyr in 1315. With great foresight and zeal he established a school where friars received specialized training before going to Islamic peoples.

Franciscans carried on a heroic ministry after 1400, especially on behalf of Christians who had been enslaved by Moslems in North Africa. When the "Portuguese Crusade" to evangelize Africa began in the 15th century, the first missionaries were often Franciscans. One of the great glories of the Capuchin Franciscans was their mission to the Congo, beginning in the 17th century.

Although today the majority of North-American black Christians are Protestants, the first Christianity to be adopted by the ancestors of African-Americans was Catholicism, thanks largely to the missionary work of Franciscans.

3. The Holy Land

In 1217, several friars under the leadership of Br. Elias, left for Syria and the Holy Land, where the general chapter that year had created a new province. It included the south-east Mediterranean basin, extending from Egypt to Greece. With the fall of Acre in 1291, 14 friars and 64 Poor Clares were put to death. Other Franciscans took refuge in Cyprus awaiting the opportunity to return. The definitive return of the Franciscans to the Holy Land occurred in 1342, and they have been there ever since carrying on what is surely the most famous of the Order's missions.

4. Asia

Turning our attention to this, the largest continent, we note that the Franciscan, John of Piancarpino, the first papal envoy to Asia, brought letters from Pope Innocent IV to Genghis Khan in 1246, and was well received. More importantly, from a missionary perspective, was the work of John of Monte Corvino, who between 1294 and 1305 baptized 6,000 Chinese. He translated the New Testament and the Psalter into the language of the people and became the first Archbishop of Peking, in 1308. His suffragans were also Franciscans.

The first Franciscans arrived in India in 1500 and a province was erected there in 1612.

The first stable Franciscan mission in Indonesia was established in 1588.

The first Franciscan missionaries to Japan were St. Peter Baptist and his companions who arrived in 1593 and were martyred on 5 February 1597.

In Vietnam there is a Franciscan presence as early as 1584 and in 1592 we find three friars in Cambodia.

5. The "New World"

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the enthusiasm with which thousands of missionaries came to the Americas, starting in the 15th/16th centuries, to establish a "new Christendom." The Franciscans were assembled in general chapter in 1493 when word reached Europe that Columbus had discovered a "new world" full of "Indians" waiting to be evangelized. The friars reacted with such enthusiasm, says the chronicle, that they were like "thirsty elephants sniffing fresh water."

Among the first missionaries to the New World there were at least two Franciscans: the lay friars, Juan de Deule (who appears to have baptized the first native convert), and Juan de Tisin. They accompanied Columbus

on his second voyage, in 1493. According to historian Lino Gomeza Canedo:

[T]hese two friars seem to have been the only ones who labored at that time for the conversion of the Indians, together with the hermit, Ramon Pane... This was the first missionary work realized in America... In search of help they went back to Spain and returned in 1500 with 3 Franciscans... Two years later (1502) seventeen Franciscans, thirteen of whom were priests [came to the New World].

By 1500, Franciscans claimed to have baptized 3,000 natives.

Throughout the colonial period the Franciscans sent the largest number of missionaries to the New World. That's understandable since they were by far the largest religious order in the church at that time. In 1680 there were sixty thousand friars in the world, and their numbers increased to 76,000 by 1762. At least a third of these were living in the Americas, according to some estimates.

In 1505 the Franciscan province of the Holy Cross was established in Santo Domingo, the first religious province in the Americas.

The first missionaries to Brazil were Franciscans who accompanied the Portuguese discoverer Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500, and the friars were the only evangelists in that country until 1549 when the Jesuits arrived.

The very flourishing Franciscan missions in Mexico began in 1523, and in Peru in 1527. From there they spread throughout much of South America.

Turning our attention to what is presently North America, we note that Franciscans accompanied Ponce de Leon in 1513 on his discovery of Florida (an area that included Georgia and South Carolina). In 1527 four Franciscans came to this territory as missionaries, including the first bishop of Florida, Fray Juan Juarez. For almost two centuries pastoral work in this area would be done mostly by Franciscans. Among the most revered of these missionaries were the five martyrs of Georgia who were put to death in 1597 for their defense of Christian marriage.

The area known today as New Mexico, Arizona and most of Texas was discovered in 1539 by the Franciscan Marco de Nizza of the Mexican province of the Holy Gospel. He gave the present area of New Mexico the name "The New Reign of St. Francis." For more than two centuries the work of evangelism would be carried on only by Franciscans.

Farther north, the first Franciscans (three priests and one lay friar) arrived in Canada from France in 1615, and Franciscans began working in English-speaking North America (in Maryland) around 1673.

In California, the famous work of the friars began with founding the Mission San Diego de Alcalá (named in honor of a 15th century lay friar

missionary to the Canary Islands), on 16 July 1769, and lasted until 2 February 1848 when California became part of the U.S. Between 1769 and 1846, the friars baptized 98,055 Indians, celebrated 28,040 weddings and 75,340 funerals.

The Franciscan missionary enterprise had its flaws to be sure, but our heritage is an inspiring one...

One final note on Franciscans in the New World. The first martyr in the Americas was Fernando Salcedo, killed in the Antilles in 1516, and another Franciscan, Juan de Padilla, gave his life, probably at Kerington, Kansas, around 1542, the first martyr of North America.

It is easy to agree with the opinion of Canedo: "[The Franciscan missionary effort] was unequalled in the American continent."

More Recent Franciscan Institutes

The subject is a vast one, beyond the limits of this essay. Nonetheless, we need to recall that in the past few centuries literally hundreds of Franciscan apostolic institutes have been founded by women and men who derived their inspiration from St. Francis and the whole heritage of Franciscan commitment to evangelization.

Conclusion

The Franciscan missionary enterprise had its flaws to be sure, but our heritage is an inspiring one, as can be seen even in a sketchy summary. As we today read the signs of our own times, can we not discern in the world, as did so many of our predecessors, "a powerful and tragic appeal to be evangelized" (Paul VI)? We too need to make our own the words of Jesus: "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God; that is what I was sent to do."

Questions for Reflection (preferably in common)

1. This essay mentioned only a few of the highlights of Franciscan missionary activity. Can you expand on those mentioned or think of others?
2. Among the most remarkable figures in Franciscan mission history

is the Third Order Franciscan martyr, Blessed Raymond Lull. What can you find out about his life and ministry and how is his example relevant today?

3. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n. 55), published in 1975, Pope Paul VI claimed "that it would not be an exaggeration to say there exists [in the modern world] a powerful and tragic appeal to be evangelized." What signs can you detect in our world today of that same appeal?



Renewing the Franciscan Community Moving Towards Union/Mission

SR. JOAN MUELLER, O.S.F.

To technically define a charism is a seemingly impossible task. Even the apparently obvious attempt to classify the Franciscan charism as "evangelical"¹ has lead to insightful critique.² Yet the need to identify charism in the search for communal mission is an ever-pressing one. Mary Jo Leddy in her new book *Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model*³ calls again for the radical search for charism and for the need to be present and committed to the process of religious life. In a Franciscan community struggling with the contemporary situations of aging, lack of new members, diversity without common energy, etc., what will the next paradigm look like? Can we believe that the Holy Spirit is offering all the ingredients necessary for the bold proclamation of the Gospel today?

In an excellent presentation "Transformational Leadership in a Time of Diminishment"⁴ Donna J. Markham, O.P., develops three stages of organizational transformation within the present context of religious life: managing the ending, dealing with the neutral zone and launching the new beginning. Under the concept of ending Markham discusses the familiar topics of losing attachments, institutions, friends, structures, control, future vision, etc. In various presentations and articles in the last twenty years, these topics have been both identified and grappled with. Yet if our grieving is not to become pathological, it must of needs eventually come to an end. Many communities today, therefore, find themselves in

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what Markham calls "the neutral zone." They feel ready, eager and energized to move on and yet, when they come together for process gatherings, regional meetings, chapters, etc., they are unable to direct the energy of the Spirit which they know is in their midst.

In Franciscan gatherings attempts to define the future energy often reveal similar but vague themes. Attitudes such as joy, simple living, trust, dependence, mission and contemplative prayer are common. These common themes seem to say something about who the Franciscan community is and yet, often the community process gets stuck after their emergence.

The Gospel Life

That the Gospel is absolutely central to the Franciscan life as it is to all Christian life is presupposed here. Our purpose, however, is surely not to identify Franciscans as a group which alone possesses the charism of the Gospel or even as one which interprets that charism in a specific way. Rather it is preferred here to leave the charism/identity of Franciscanism to the realm of mystery and therefore to acknowledge it as experienced, albeit in a variety of ways, but also to perceive it as a gift of God beyond empirical definition.

Once free from the compulsive search for pragmatic identity, the Franciscan heart spontaneously moves to the Gospel as the rule of life. Although Franciscans must admit that their history accuses them of erring in this direction, for Francis the movement towards the Gospel was never a fundamentalist one. In discerning various themes which arise within the Franciscan assembly, therefore, a facilitator must constantly ask: Does this theme have the potential of speaking the entire Gospel within this particular congregation and to the world today?

The question is an important one. Some themes such as simple living or contemplative prayer have become loaded with agendas in particular community situations. In searching for Gospel dynamics agendas that have the capacity to become oppressive and fundamentalist must be avoided at all costs. The Franciscan goal is simply to become and to preach the Gospel. If the particulars of simple living or contemplative prayer or service to the poor prevent the radical living and proclamation of the Gospel, they must be tempered and delegated their appropriate place as servant of the Gospel within the contemporary milieu. The Holy Spirit brings life and energy to a group. If an assembly can be convinced to adopt a particular attitude only through recourse to guilt tactics, then the agenda does not emanate from the Holy Spirit. Perhaps capturing the reasoning of such a process will illumine its error. Let us take, for example, this abbreviated scenario of a communal process:

The love of Francis and Clare was poverty. Because of this Franciscans should also love poverty. Therefore if you do not approve of a particular agenda (living in community houses, fewer cars, less money for travel, etc.), of what this countercultural poverty looks like, you are not a good Franciscan. Since everyone at this assembly wants to be a good Franciscan, we adopt this particular agenda as who we are.

Putting this bluntly it is easy to observe where the error occurs. The fallacy is the premature equating of a particular agenda with a deep-seated value. Because the assembly knows it believes in the value, it is often tricked into accepting an agenda which appears to promote this value, but which in the lived reality creates not the value but rather oppression. Again it must be emphasized that this is not a movement of the Holy Spirit.

Another movement seems common within contemporary assemblies. Unlike the above action this inclination is in line with the movement of the Holy Spirit but it is rapidly becoming out-dated and out of sync with the desires of communities renewing in the 1990's. The movement referred to here is the self-help movement.

Early in renewal efforts to identify and heal individual wounds, addictions, disabilities in community life was imperative and necessary. Coming from the institutional model which often squelched individual responsibility for the sake of the institutional mission, the removal of institutional structure left many members ill-equipped to move responsibility into the future. Many addictions, co-dependencies, grudges, etc., that were tolerated previously needed to be healed before renewal could occur. Although communities will always need to be sensitive and responsive to this agenda within the lives of particular individuals at different times, a community does not exist to function merely as a support group for its members.

A community that feels itself within "the neutral zone" will grow impatient with the constant return to the self-help agenda. Although this movement brought needed peace and consolation in the past, it will offer only disappointment for communities whose corporate spirit has grown beyond this. Hence one will often notice in an assembly two dynamics. First, there might very possibly exist the temptation to run to the place of past consolation simply because a group does not know where else to search. The path to self-help is well-worn and familiar. The spiritual masters have long cautioned against such movement. One must fall in love with the Holy Spirit of God and not with consolations.

Secondly, there will always be those in the group who have not grown beyond their own self-help agendas and will attempt to impose this personal need upon the community. It needs to be kept very clear that while the community does exist to encourage and support its members in their service to the church and in the love of God, it does not exist solely to help people through the basic dynamics of coming to personal responsibility.

Therefore, if an individual has a particular need, that individual must take responsibility for the need. If the need is so great and so intense that the corporate energy of the congregation is seriously diverted for a substantial amount of time, then both individual and community must discern whether or not a particular individual is truly called. This is specifically important in the discernment of new members.

Gospel Living: Essential Elements

One has every right to be leery of the phrase "essential elements," but it seems fitting to suggest its appropriateness here. If the Gospel is to be for the Franciscan the "rule of life," then what concretely does this mean? What are we to look for in assemblies struggling to discover and then to articulate their Gospel mission for the future?

I would like to propose five mysteries of our faith that seem to summarize these dynamics. It seems that these mysteries when played together illustrate the tensions and paradoxes of true life and of true religion. In the history of spirituality and of theology these dynamics can be found in different variations in the life of the saints and in the spiritual and theological tradition.⁵ The mysteries as they will be developed here are vocation, repentance, incarnation, passion and union/mission.

Vocation

In the sacrament of baptism one is adopted as a son or daughter and invited into Trinitarian life. In appropriating the grace of this sacrament one becomes aware of being both unconditionally loved and uniquely created. Therefore a basic level of self-confidence and security are essential to the Gospel life.

In religious life this basic level of knowing that one is both loved and uniquely chosen is fostered by contemplative prayer and by a challenging and loving community life. Although this dynamic of vocation is absolutely essential to the Gospel life, a community which finds itself in "the neutral zone" cannot solely concentrate its energies here for long. When one has experienced the love and call of God, one will need to move. Thus the dynamic of appropriating the grace of unconditional love and uniqueness will be ongoing in religious life, but it cannot be the sole focus.

Repentance

Eventually one will realize that although one is loved and chosen, one is also wounded and responsible for the wounds of others. In the Catholic tradition one almost spontaneously equates this dynamic with sin and in

one sense this is true. Woundedness does prevent the free and undisturbed embrace of Trinitarian union. Yet this does not automatically imply that one is personally responsible for inflicting upon oneself the sin one carries. Most wounded with co-dependency, addiction, negatives tapes, etc., do not choose these disabilities.

However, each person is called to holiness; to work with their particular giftedness, even if this giftedness is in the form of a disability, for the glory of God. Therefore working through addictions, co-dependencies, negative attitudes, etc., are and always have been essential to Gospel living. Yet, like the previous dynamic, the inspiration for religious life includes, but does not spring from this dynamic.

Incarnation

The Gospel begins when the divine struggles to lead a human life. One common temptation for the Franciscan charism is to escape into the divine without integrating it with contemporary human reality. For instance, if it is to be true to the Gospel, a focus such as "contemplative living" would need to take particular care to ground itself in the nitty-gritty.

On the other hand, a focus such as "social justice" would need to center its attention on the Holy Spirit who is its source of energy. Franciscan movements eager to be of service can also be guilty of the heresy of Pelagianism which attempts to live the Gospel without acknowledging where the power to do this comes from. A community who chooses the focus of social justice would therefore need both to clearly articulate that its energy comes from the Spirit of God and practically live its life in such a way that begging for that power in prayer played an important communal role.

The mystery of Incarnation is frequently the beginning inspiration of religious life. Orders often develop when there is a human need and religious people bring their love for God into that need.

Passion

Passion is the crisis of religious life as it is of Christian life. It is here one discovers that love is not loved. It is here that one experiences that one's image of God is false and one feels abandoned and disillusioned. It is here that violence and hatred seem to strip love of its power and mock its wounds.

The Gospel gives only one solution to this supreme trial — the solution of forgiving love. This love is a decision of the will, not a feeling. It is a firm resolution to hold onto love and to will to forgive despite the hatred and mockery.

St. Francis' insistence that his followers embrace and love the cross is well-advised for communities in every age. In this dynamic discernment is often simplified as a decision between love and hate. Those communities who chose a focus from this dynamic, for instance "nonviolence," will find that the dynamics of the Gospel will play themselves out. The spiritual tradition has always exhorted the centrality of the cross. In choosing to be poor with the poor Christ one's life will either become Gospel or it will become hatred. In this dynamic there is no middle road.

Yet as followers the passion one day comes to an end, and one is beset with confusion and emptiness. It is true that the Lord shows himself now and then, but on the whole one only experiences a community held together by a vague dream. One has given one's life for this! At times all seems empty, but still one can no longer lose hope.

Union/Mission

This focus makes no sense to those who have not embraced the passion. To those who embrace the passion and who wait in hope, this dynamic will be given. Union/mission cannot be planned, but is rather a gift of the Holy Spirit which comes to a community in the fullness of time.

Vatican II was for many the call of the church to renew communal life in the Gospel Spirit. Many religious took this call seriously. This call has meant for most a healthier life style as well as an embrace of personal responsibility and maturity. It has also meant decreased membership, loss of security and a vague sense of mission. Valiantly communities have struggled to maintain hope. They have in their own particular ways continued to be about the mission of Jesus. Yet a quarter century after the Council they now are face to face with the consequences of their generous eagerness. Many are dying, some are merging, some are transferring, some are leaving.

There is, however, movement in the tomb and anticipation is mounting. What will the new Spirit look like? What will it empower us to do? What will it empower us to be?

Those in "the neutral zone" wait for the union/mission of Pentecost. Like the early church the Gospel tells them simply to wait and pray. Union/Mission cannot be planned; it can only be given. All one can do is reject the temptations to run backwards, to attempt to satisfy oneself with dynamics that no longer have the capacity to satisfy and then to wait and pray together for the new outburst of the spirit of Francis and Clare, the spirit of the Gospel, the Spirit of God.

Give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command.⁶ Amen.

Endnotes

¹See the contribution of Thaddeus Horgan, SA, and Jeanine Morozowich, CSSF, in the "Franciscan Federation Newsletter" August/September/October, 1987.

²See the article by Sr. Jane Kopas, OSF, "Reflection on Franciscan Life as Evangelical" in the November, 1989, issue of *The CORD*.

³Mary Jo Leddy, *Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model* (Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990).

⁴This talk was presented to the LCWR Region VII, April 18, 1988.

⁵See for example St. Bonaventure's outline in *The Tree of Life* in which he divides his reflection on the Gospel into the mystery of the origin of Christ, the mystery of his passion and the mystery of his glorification. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola divide the Gospel dynamic into the knowledge of God's unconditional love (Principle and Foundation), the coming to awareness of one's woundedness (week 1), integrating religious desires with the reality of human life (Week 2), embracing the cross (Week 3) and coming into the joy of mission (Week 4). In his work *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985) pp. 29-62, Charles Curran describes a five-fold mystery of the salvific process as creation, sin, incarnation, redemption and resurrection.

⁶From St. Francis' "Prayer Before the Crucifix."



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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum Commencium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

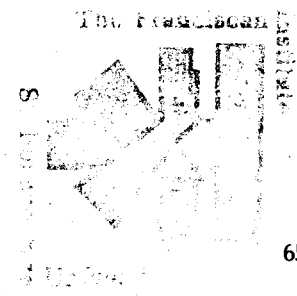
About the March, 1991 CORD

In this issue of **The CORD** we are privileged to publish talks on the theme of Franciscan Ministry delivered at the Franciscan Formation Directors Conference held at St. Bonaventure University in July of 1990. Brother F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M., new director of the Franciscan Institute and originator of the conference, graciously took the initiative in suggesting to the three presenters at the conference to use **The CORD** as a medium for making their reflections and insights available to all of our readers. We are most grateful to Fr. Dominic Monti, O.F.M., Fr. Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Conv., and to Sr. Rosemary Chinnici, S.L., for their generosity.

Because of the thematic nature of our three articles, we have chosen to publish them in one issue and have had to suspend for March the series on evangelization by Fr. Charles Finnegan. The April **CORD** will resume his fine series.

I believe that our readers may appreciate knowing that all who contribute writings to **The Cord** do so without monetary remuneration. They simply accept as recompense three copies of the particular issue in which their writing appears. This spirit of generosity has enabled us to continue our mission to our readers.

We encourage artists, poets, and all those gifted with the ability to write to join us in serving our Franciscan sisters and brothers.



Franciscan Ministry — Changing Contexts and Historical Developments¹

DOMINIC MONTI, O.F.M.

'Franciscan Ministry': titles are generally innocuous, but I must admit that, on second thought, the wording of today's topic causes me a little discomfort. Does it imply that there is some kind of norm which would allow us to bestow the epithet 'Franciscan' on a particular type or type of ministries and to deny it to others? I instinctively recoil against such a suggestion, and for a good Franciscan reason. When Francis wrote to Brother Leo: "in whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footsteps and his poverty, do it with God's blessing and my obedience,"² he was promulgating for his followers a charter of personal liberty which is nothing less than the spontaneous freedom of the children of God. As a result, if the expression 'Franciscan ministry' means anything, it can only be this: 'ministry that is done by a Franciscan.' After all, on his deathbed, Francis did not demand that his own brothers continue his particular ministry, rather, he prayed for a new inspiration: "I have done what was mine to do, may Christ teach you what you are to do."³ Francis is telling us something here: our charism and its consequent mission are not located in the past; they exist only in the present moment, whether that be yesterday or today. The activities of past generations of Franciscan men and women cannot dictate precisely how and where we are to serve the kingdom; we have to find that out for ourselves.

Are we condemned, then, to a hundred and one different opinions about ministry, a situation which would mean that, even on a superficial level, one of the essential bonds which unites us in Franciscan communities

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striving to follow the footsteps of Christ according to Francis' example would simply dissolve? Yes, we are all individuals not clones working for some spiritual services version of IBM. Each of us has our own distinct and valuable personal identities, our different talents and particular "grace of working." This personalistic dimension must always be respected when we approach Franciscan ministry. But there is another question that must be asked, which flows from the essentially fraternal character of our life. Francis and his brothers, Clare and her sisters, despite their prized individuality, also held chapters to discern where and how they together wanted to witness to the Lord.

This same issue arises for us: how are we bound up with Francis and one another? Does being a Franciscan mean simply that I am blessed with a hassle-free environment enabling me to hang up a shingle for *my* private ministerial practice? It seems clear to me that the answer to this question is no. The very fact that I claim to be a Franciscan, and not simply an individual Christian, Dominic Monti, attempting to minister to God's people in my own way, means that I have to search out some fundamental issues with my brothers. Why I minister as a Franciscan and not simply as an individual implies sharing some meaningful vision of ministry with the others who also call themselves 'Franciscan.' Therefore, we also have to ask Francis' question precisely as communities: 'What is the Lord calling us to do?'⁴

My own background as a historian convinces me that the past can offer us a good deal of assistance in answering this question. But we should not turn to our Franciscan tradition in hopes of discovering there some blueprint laying out for us exactly what ministries should be considered Franciscan. We can only expect to find out how earlier generations of Francis' brothers and sisters answered that question — "what is *ours* to do?" — for themselves. Still, to look closely at their answer can be very instructive in forging our own. And so in this presentation, I would like to do two things: first, to better understand why facing the question of Franciscan ministry is an especially critical one at our particular point in history, and secondly, to give an example of a creative Franciscan ministerial response by examining the one given by the friars of the thirteenth century.

First of all, we should briefly consider the importance of asking this question about the nature of Franciscan ministry at this point of our history. Just where are we? Posing the question of ministry out of our experience today as North American Franciscans, we are very much aware that the past twenty-five 'post-conciliar' years have resulted in a wide divergence of positions on this issue in all our communities. Those of us who are old enough realize that this is indeed something new. Prior to Vatican II, despite the obvious superficial differences between First, Sec-

ond, and Third Order communities, most Franciscans in the United States were actually pretty similar when it came to ministry. Except for our contemplative sisters, the Clares, we were all involved in various corporate apostolates of pastoral or social service maintained by our congregations. These ministries were animated by a common vision and sustained by a shared system of meaning and symbols; our ministry was very much a 'team effort,' often to a point of stifling individual initiative and creativity for the sake of the common effort.

Although we are almost totally absorbed in these ministries, it is important to put them in perspective. The vast majority of them were products of the relatively recent past, and reflected a specific historical context: the immigrant church of the later 19th and early 20th centuries. No Franciscan community in the United States or Canada is yet 150 years old.⁵ The current organized Franciscan presence in our countries dates back to the 1840's and 1850's, when German, Italian, and Irish immigrants formed missionary units of European provinces or created independent communities on American soil.⁶ The ministries these Franciscan men and women developed reflected their mission to an immigrant church. The vast majority of them, clergy and laity alike, were small-town or rural European Catholics shaped by the forces of the Restoration era. Suddenly on alien soil, they assumed that their Catholicism and the American way of life were fundamentally at odds, that as Catholics they comprised a sub-culture having values distinctly different from the larger society. Their ministries, therefore, were tied to maintaining and nurturing the faith of this immigrant faith community. We Franciscans committed ourselves to provide the institutions which could offer a cultural anchor, a spiritual refuge, and social security to a threatened block in an unfriendly environment.⁷ The Friars Minor, unlike their European brothers, found themselves staffing a large number of parishes. The many new Third Order congregations of women and men became deeply committed to the burgeoning parochial school system, hospitals, and orphanages.

The situation has changed dramatically in the last twenty-five years. Sociologically speaking, American Catholicism had lost much of its ethnic cast by the early 1960's; the children and grandchildren of the immigrants were increasingly culturally assimilated to the wider society. When coupled with the new vision of the church's mission in the world which emanated from the Second Vatican Council, our traditional ministries were placed in an entirely different context. With the passing of a "ghetto Catholicism," voices began to be raised questioning our tremendous investment in maintaining distinctly Catholic institutions. In addition, the church's growing consciousness of a 'preferential option for the poor' has also rightly caused a number of communities to re-examine their ministerial commitments in its light.

Today we see a vast ministerial spectrum across our Franciscan communities. A few of the most conservative groups among us have attempted to carry on pretty much as before, but even they have had to cope with serious ministerial dislocations caused by declining numbers. In most of our congregations, however, ministries have been radically transformed by the forces of liberalization, which in Franciscan circles has been carried out under the aegis of "fraternity." In reaction to the hierarchical, uniform, and authoritarian structures of our communities prior to the Council, we spent a good deal of energy in the late 60's and through the 70's developing organizational patterns "to allow for more personal freedom, wider pluralism of expression, and a greater tolerance for diversity."⁸

These internal changes have had a tremendous impact on our Franciscan ministries. More and more individuals, expressing their own personal talents and responding to what they believed to be critical needs of the contemporary church, have taken the opportunity to minister outside of their community's corporate commitments; many of these religious increasingly live alone, with only tenuous personal links to the rest of their congregation. Meanwhile, many communities, in an attempt to respond to the 'signs of the times,' have enthusiastically sent members to establish new ministries to the 'marginalized' members of society, reflecting the peace and justice thrust of the contemporary church. At the same time other Franciscans are still desperately trying to staff the parishes and other institutions built up by previous generations; with fewer and fewer of them doing the work, they hardly have time to question what is really being done, for whom, and why. If your community is like mine, you are coming to the realization that all three of these directions cannot continue at the same time. None of us have the 'troops' to do everything, and a time for real choices in our ministries seems to be needed. I say *choices*, based not on some Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' but on a renewed communal effort to work out of a shared vision of Franciscan ministry today.⁹

When we turn to the Franciscan sources for some assistance in this task, we find that they offer us a tremendous inspiration, but not many concrete ministerial directions. What is clear from the sources is that the Franciscan charism is essentially missionary in character. Francis himself stated this when he told his friars: "For he has sent you into the whole world for this reason: that in word and deed you may give witness to his voice and bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except him."¹⁰ The fundamental documents of our congregations, attempting to retrieve Francis' charism for our own time, have reiterated this basic missionary thrust. For example, the 1987 *General Constitutions* of the Friars Minor begin the chapter on the work of the friars with the statement: "all the brothers, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, are

sent to the whole world to be heralds of the Gospel."¹¹ This passage sets the tone for the rest of the chapter; the word 'ministry' is seldom used; instead, we see reference to 'mission,' 'evangelization,' and 'work.' This distinction is not merely semantic. It goes right to the heart of the role of the Franciscan movement in the church, for it turns out that formal 'ministry,' in the ordinary ecclesiastical sense of that term, is only one aspect of a much broader reality. As the next chapter of these same Constitutions continue:

Wherever they are and whatever they do, the brothers should dedicate themselves to the task of proclaiming the Gospel; whether they live a contemplative and penitential life together as brothers, working for the fraternity or in the world while undertaking intellectual and material activities, or exercising as pastoral ministry in parishes or other ecclesiastical institutions, or finally by the witness of a simple Franciscan presence that announces the coming of the reign of God.¹²

This passage, very reminiscent of Chapter 17 of the *Earlier Rule*, makes it obvious, in the words of the seminal document, "The Vocation of the Order Today" (1973), that the Friars Minor are "not merely an apostolic team.... an organization structured for one or several apostolic tasks." Indeed, the contemporary retrieval of the Franciscan charism has shown that the original work of Francis' brothers "was not principally ministerial in the present meaning of the word."¹³ Of course, this same passage illustrates why the Poor Clares are also exercising an authentically Franciscan 'ministry.' For if the Franciscan mission is simply 'living the Gospel' together as brothers and sisters, then silent contemplation may be as effective a missionary proclamation as preached words or works of active service.¹⁴

These statements of our charism create a tremendous latitude for Franciscan communities in their current process of refounding. But just as in the thirteenth century, these basic convictions of our order regarding its missionary role within the church involve a certain tension with existing ecclesial structures. Canon law presently recognizes only two basic types of religious life: monastic orders, devoted to contemplation, and 'apostolic institutes.' In the latter, the "works of all the members are directly related to a common apostolate which the church has recognized as expressing concretely the purpose of the institute." An increasing number of Franciscan scholars have drawn attention to the fact that our charism does not really fit into either category, since its work "is clearly not formal prayer nor is the work determined by the needs of world within the context of a 'corporate apostolate.' The work is to imitate Christ and to make that experience available to others."¹⁵

It seems to me that a major unresolved issue in many Franciscan communities worldwide is the relative weight to be given to these two very

different forms of Franciscan mission envisioned by our sources; do we allow friars and/or sisters simply to establish a fraternal life together, but going out separately to work 'in the midst of others' (the intentional community model) — not viewing this as people 'doing their own things,' but precisely as an integral expression of the mission of the community — or do we emphasize participation in the structured 'corporate commitments' of the community which better fit into the patterns of the 'apostolate' exercised through formally established church institutions? Some Franciscan communities have resolved this question by selecting one or the other of these alternatives; most of us, I presume, are somewhere in the middle, trying to allow our members to do both, but as the 'personnel crunch' becomes more critical, chapters are being forced to make painful decisions in this regard.

Even for the three orders of Friars Minor, which historically have been orientated towards the pastoral ministry since the 1230's, a crucial question emerges: how does our ministry as Franciscan priests and deacons fit into the ecclesial structures? Is there simply 'one priesthood,' so that the only difference between diocesan and religious clergy is one of their particular spiritualities and the fact that the latter are bound by the religious vows in their personal lives? This question has been squarely addressed by the Jesuit historian John O'Malley in an important article in *Theological Studies*. In my opinion, O'Malley convincingly demonstrates that historically this has never been the case. Although since the rise of the mendicant orders religious have seen involvement in the pastoral ministry as an important element of their way of life, they have generally gone about that ministry in a very different way from the diocesan clergy. The latter's ministry has focused around local, stable faith communities (exemplified in the parish), in close hierarchical union with their bishop. In contrast, religious orders have tended not to concentrate their ministries around fixed local communities, but were mobile, reaching out to a wide population and/or forming associational types of communities; their ministry was prophetic, largely directed to the marginalized "edges" of Christian society or to non-believers; it was often exercised without a direct relationship to the local ordinary.¹⁶ For many American friars, this distinction of roles became blurred due to the missionary situation of the church in the United States in the middle of the last century, when Franciscans began reestablishing themselves in this country. The needs of an immigrant church on alien soil, where a local church had to be established from the ground up, meant a heavy investment of friar personnel in parochial ministry.

O'Malley concludes by calling upon religious communities "to recover the pragmatic approach to ministry that current historiography is showing happily characterized our past,"¹⁷ realizing that the true demands of the Gospel today are not necessarily determined by institutional church needs,

that even exercising pastoral ministry as religious priests does not necessarily imply 'filling the holes' in the diocesan structure. In other words, O'Malley is calling us, as our own Franciscan documents do, to discern the demands of being 'heralds of the gospel' in our contemporary world, and to reevaluate our involvement in specific ministries in light of this renewed sense of mission.

O'Malley speaks of religious having "a pragmatic approach" to ministry. My dictionary defines 'pragmatic' as "relating to matters of fact rather than theory," a conviction that "the function of thought is to guide action." In other words, he is calling us to root our ministry in the 'real world where people are at,' rather than working out of some purely theoretic concept of what ministry 'should be.' That is why I believe a look back at the thirteenth century can be very instructive for us, for our brothers and sisters, in the first generations of the Franciscan movement went to the heart of their culture, imaginatively devising new approaches for ministry responding to the real needs of their time and place.

Over the past decade, a new generation of historians has tried to locate the Franciscan movement in its broader social, economic, and cultural context, clearly illustrating how the ministerial strategies of the new mendicant orders were responding to the pressing needs of their times.¹⁸ This research has made it very clear that the Franciscans were the popular movement *par excellence*; the men and women attracted to it were drawn largely from the broad middle classes of the rising new towns of medieval Europe, they had experienced certain religious needs themselves, and although they rejected certain 'demonic' elements of their society, they turned towards the same people from whom they had come, ministering to their needs.

The Franciscan movement would have been inconceivable without the revival of urban life. In the later eleventh and twelfth centuries, Western Europe had finally begun to emerge from a purely subsistence farming economy; for the first time since the end of the Roman Empire, there were agricultural surpluses and a revival of manufacturing (chiefly cloth) and commerce; prosperous towns began to spring up along the trading routes. Nowhere were these trends more apparent than northern and central Italy, where recent studies have shown that the years between 1210 and 1340 were a period of general prosperity and rapid population growth. The economy was burgeoning, and labor was a short supply. The feudal system started crumbling under the impact of these trends. Better-off peasants were increasingly becoming freeholders, and large numbers of them were drawn to the thriving industrial and market towns for work. Assisi itself had to extend its city walls three times in fifty years of accommodate a rapidly expanding population. These crowded towns were not composed of destitute masses. We cannot project back the vast systemic

The activities of past generations of Franciscan men and women cannot dictate precisely how and where we are to serve the kingdom; we have to find that out for ourselves.

poverty of today's third world nations to Francis' Italy, where "poverty resulted from choice or idiosyncratic misfortune of the most personal sort... those who had suddenly lost their normal means of sustenance [widows, orphans, sick, injured], not from the structure of the economy. Indeed the overwhelming mass of the urban population... had steady work and enjoyed a reasonable level of economic security."¹⁹

These vast economic and social changes created a ferment within existing political and religious institutions. On a political level, the old feudal aristocracy was gradually forced to share their power with the new elite *popolo grasso* the merchants and bankers who were the 'movers and shakers' of the urban economy. The vast rank-and-file of ordinary *popolo*, the craftsmen, shopkeepers, and professionals, were also seeking their place in the government of the commune. Civil strife was a constant feature of thirteenth century Italy, but the religious aspirations of the townspeople were no less important. Their new social and economic realities governing their lives demanded a relatively sophisticated type of moral guidance, in which Gospel ethical principles could be made relevant to individuals in very different situations. In addition, this increasingly literate urban population hungered to approach the Scriptures on its own, or at least through effective preaching, being naturally drawn to the new affective piety which emphasized the direct personal relationship of the individual to God, rather than simply through cultic worship.

The existing structures of church ministry were ill-equipped to meet these needs. The typical priest was theologically uneducated, a situation perhaps excusable in a rural setting where he functioned largely as the performer of ritual and 'rabbi' of an oral tradition; but this type of clergyman was in no position to preach effectively or offer the type of moral guidance people were demanding in the towns. The centers of spiritual vitality — the monasteries — were, by definition, withdrawn from the flux of urban life. In addition, as the new popular classes struggled to gain political power from the nobility, they found the institutional church closely allied with their opponents, the old feudal aristocracy. Both clergy and monks were supported by their landed estates; the rents, dues, and tithes due them by law placed them over and apart from the average town dweller.

For many, the wealth and careerism of a largely inadequate clerical establishment created an almost insuperable obstacle to their relating to the church, and goes a long way to explain the form and appeal of the popular heresies of the time.

It was the peculiar genius of the friars to respond to this situation. They were able to do so because, for the most part they came from this same urban *popolo*; they knew what the religious needs of the people were because they had experienced them themselves. I think it is extremely important here to note first who the friars and sisters *were*, how their society viewed them, and what was the life they created for themselves. So often we Americans immediately leap to 'ministry' as the solution, to the various services we can offer people, forgetting that our primary contribution is ourselves, the way we 'live the Gospel.' The friars were such a great success in the thirteenth century because their whole way of life was a powerful message, expressing so many of the deepest aspirations of their society. Their very name, "Lesser Brothers," denoted this. On the one hand, the friars were clearly rejecting the old feudal order the rest of the *popolo* was also rejecting; on the other hand, they were also refusing to participate in what they and many others of that same urban *popolo* were experiencing as 'demonic' elements of that new social world.

First of all, the very notion of 'brotherhood' expressed the deepest political aspirations of the *popolo* of the medieval town. A brotherhood was not a hierarchical order; it existed only in the concrete, created out of the reciprocal relationship of each brother or sister to the other; everyone had a vital and constituent part. Furthermore, Francis' brotherhood was universal, open to all, regardless of social class, ecclesiastical status, or economic condition. Finally, there was a radical equality of its members; there was one set of rights and duties, and titles of rank ('abbot' or 'prior') were banned. In addition, Francis' brothers were *minores*, little brothers. Typical townspeople could say, "They're just like us — working for a living." The Lesser brothers and Poor Sisters identified with the working poor — "those who acquire their daily subsistence by the work of their hands, without anything remaining to them after they have eaten." Living from day to day by the fruit of their own labor, or by begging in return for their spiritual service of witness and preaching, the friars placed themselves firmly among the working classes, at the same time rejecting the great temptation of the upwardly mobile — money, which could simply breed avarice and a desire for profit.

From this context, an identification with the best values of the broad urban masses, the friars creatively developed a ministerial strategy responding to their needs. It has been said that our ministry, like that of Jesus, has to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." In many

ways, the friars in the thirteenth century did precisely that: on the one hand, they validated the positive religious experience of the *popolo*; telling them in a wide variety of ways, "you're worthwhile. God is present in your lives." At the same time, the friars went on to challenge these same people to deeper conversion, calling them to recognize and confront the 'demonic' elements in their lives. Thus, "the unique achievement of the friars was their creation of new forms of religious expression specifically for the urban sector of society and the classes of people dominant in it."²⁰

The chief vehicles of the friars' pastoral ministry in the thirteenth century were preaching and the sacrament of reconciliation: the first was their means of reaching the widest popular audience; the second was the way they could deal one-on-one with the individual who had felt the desire to turn more deeply to God and implement Gospel values in his or her life. Using these means, the friars created a new spirituality and a new theology.

Franciscan preaching in the middle ages was eminently popular, aiming at having people experience God in their lives and moving them to action. Franciscans would have agreed with the great American evangelical, Jonathan Edwards, who argued that the seat of religion was in the affections: people are not moved so much by head-arguments as by gut-convictions. The task is somehow to reach that deeper level which alone can motivate true conversion. In doing so, the friars abandoned the newly-developed Scholastic sermon increasingly popular in academic clerical circles (about the only place one could hear a sermon until the mendicants began hitting the markets), which articulated and elucidated a text by means of a series of logical divisions. Instead, the friars believed in "measuring the word of God according to the capacity of the hearers," and so spoke, not in educated Latin, but in the languages of the streets. An eye-witness, Thomas of Spalato, tells us that he was stunned when he first heard Francis preaching: he was not really giving a sermon at all, but talking like a merchant hawking his wares or a politician arguing a point at a public assembly; in other words, he was trying to sway an audience to action.²¹ The keys of a Franciscan sermon were its concreteness, immediacy and simplicity. Its purpose was to have its hearers confront God's presence in their experience, move them to conversion of heart ('a new way of thinking'), and so to action and involvement.

The Franciscan call for penance reached every sector of society, many who were touched by God's call in their lives sought concrete direction from the friars, often in the sacrament of reconciliation. "What must I do to gain everlasting life?" That perennial question was now being asked by people in situations which were morally ambiguous by the standards of the current moral theology, which had been developed in an earlier age and did not really address the very different ethical situation of the

new urban environment. Indeed, the new service and commercial economy had created a virtual crisis in moral theology. In not so subtle ways, the church, still emotionally tied to the old order, had been telling the new social classes they were "no good." The very existence of cities was traced back to Cain. Canon law stigmatized merchants by consistently maintaining that it was impossible to avoid sin in the course of buying and selling. Gratian's *Decretum* summed it all up: "a merchant is rarely or ever able to please God." This prejudice was picked up by theology; Peter Lombard, whose work had such widespread currency, reiterated that merchants could not perform their duties without sinning. Part of the reason for this negative view of commercial activity was that money-lending, an essential fact of life at the new capitalist economy, had been consistently condemned as intrinsically immoral if even the slightest bit of interest were taken on a loan. Other professional activities were not considered so dishonorable, but still, by what right did lawyers and teachers "sell" advice and information? Their knowledge was a gift of God, not a product. Thus, many in the new urban *popolo* experienced a good deal of religious conflict and anxiety.²²

As the thirteenth century progressed, Franciscan and Dominican theologians developed a new moral theology which, while still condemning their excesses, largely legitimated the new urban professions. They validated the religious experience of their audience, assuring them that they too could find a path to salvation in their way of life. Mercantile activity was justified by the development of a theory of the 'just price': merchants were entitled to a moderate profit, for by transporting and distributing goods they were performing a useful service for the community. They should determine the value of their goods in terms of their usefulness, scarcity, and "delightfulness" (essentially the laws of supply and demand). By a new appreciation of the value of time as a commodity, these theologians were able to argue for the legitimacy of professionals charging fees. Exceptions were even found to the strict condemnation of usury: lenders could charge penalties for damages, delinquency in repayment, and even for the fact that the lender could not benefit by the use of his money in the meantime.²³

At the same time, the friars also challenged the well-to-do to implement Christ's call to "love your neighbor." As Peter John Olivi explained, the rich have a duty to give alms to the poor, who have a right to the superfluities of the wealthy. Indeed, in times of dire need, the state could force the rich to give alms.²⁴ In practice, the chief means of medieval social relief were the various lay penitential confraternities, most of which were of Franciscan inspiration. A recent dissertation by Jeanette Hurst points out the important role that Franciscans played in communal politics of Italy in the thirteenth century, serving as mediators in civil disputes

and advisors to town governments. For example, St. Anthony was called in by the town council of Padua in 1231 to help draw up a new municipal code. Among other things, it provided release of debtors from prison, advocates for the poor, and a legal process of reconciliation to stem recourse to vendettas. As another Franciscan preacher of the time, Bonaventure of Iseo observed, true love should result in lasting peace with God and neighbor, and a true and lasting peace can be founded only on justice. Affective love leads to effective love, transforming the relationships within society.²⁵

These reflections on the ministry of the thirteenth century are only a small indication of the tremendous impact the Franciscan movement had on the people of their time. They are not offered as a blueprint for us to replicate. We certainly cannot reproduce — nor should we — the ministerial tactics of a past age. What worked for them might very well be a disaster now. But the goal of these friars of the past — to seize upon the deepest and best hopes of the ordinary people of a society, refusing to succumb to its 'demonic' elements, articulating in their lives, words, and works of service a creative Gospel message of comfort and challenge — all this is still the Franciscan mission. We are heralds of the good news of the kingdom above all; rediscovering this mission will help us decide where to focus our ministerial efforts. Where this may lead us — and it may well lead different communities in different possible directions — I will leave to those of you in the trenches; historians do not necessarily make good prophets.

Certainly, our American cities, like medieval ones, continue to be the cutting edge of our societies. They continue to be the place where those ignorant or alienated from traditional religion congregate. How do we help these people to discover the presence of God in their lives? How do we develop the pastoral theologies to reach out to the divorced and remarried, gay people, and countless others whose life-style puts them at odds with the official theology? How do we challenge people in a very complex ethical environment to be committed to a Gospel of justice and peace? While providing direct services to the poor and marginalized of society will always be a dramatic incarnation of the Franciscan charism, I must say that I believe Alan McCoy is correct when he tells us that the proximate goal of Franciscan ministry in the United States today is the conversion of the broad middle class.²⁶ Yes, the city is the place that continues to beckon us in a special way, as it did our medieval brothers and sisters and the 'immigrant' Franciscans in our own country in a very different context. If we can identify with the people and exist for the people, I trust that we too can be just as creative in meeting the task that the Lord is giving us to accomplish.

Endnotes

¹This article is based on two presentations given at the Franciscan Formation Directors Conference, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, July 9, 1990. An earlier version appeared as "What Is Ours to Do? The Roots of Franciscan Ministry," in *Friar Lines*, a journal of the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province, vol. 2, n. 3 (1990): 1-20 *passim*.

²EpLeo, 3 (*Francis and Clare, The Complete Works*, ed. R. Armstrong and I. Brady, (New York: Paulist, 1982), p. 48.

³2 Cel, 214.

⁴For me, this point has been made convincingly by Mary Jo Leddy, *Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990), pp. 66-78.

⁵This only possible exception is the California province of Friars Minor, where a tiny remnant of friars at Mission Santa Barbara provided a tenuous link with the mission effort of the Spanish colonial era. However, this small community faced almost certain extinction, and so sought incorporation into Sacred Heart Province, a Mid-West German immigrant foundation in 1885, from which base a new Franciscan presence in California resulted.

⁶The Friars Minor date their refounding to the coming of Austrian friars to Cincinnati Province in 1844; Third Order Franciscan brothers arrived in Pennsylvania from Ireland in 1847; the first American Franciscan sisterhood was founded in Milwaukee by Bavarian immigrant women in 1849; German Conventual friars arrived in Texas in 1852, Swiss Capuchins, in Wisconsin, in 1857. The Poor Clares were finally established in Omaha in 1878 by Italian sisters, after a number of abortive foundations in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

⁷For a good popular summary of the ethos of the immigrant church, see F. Michael Perko, *Catholic & American: A Popular History* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1989), pp. 131-216.

⁸Again, see Leddy, pp. 17-18.

⁹A good deal of the current discussion has been sparked by Gerald Arbuckle's *Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Congregations* (New York, Paulist Press, 1988).

¹⁰EpOrd, 5 (Armstrong-Brady, p. 56).

¹¹Art, 83.

¹²Art, 84.

¹³General Chapter Documents, Madrid 1973, par. 14, 36, 26.

¹⁴As Francis himself pointed out in Chapter 16 of the *Earlier Rule*, which is devoted to mission. Cf. William Short, *The Franciscans* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1989), p. 129: "Mission, in Francis' view, does not mean merely speaking a message, nor even undertaking certain activities. Mission is the revelation of God through living among others in this good world. Living according to the Gospel is always 'missionary,' it reveals who God is."

¹⁵A good summary, from which these quotations are taken, is Joseph Chinnici, "Evangelical and Apostolic Tensions," *Our Franciscan Charism in the World Today*, ed. Alcuin Coyle (Clifton, N.J., Franciscan Advertising and Media Enterprises, 1987), pp. 96-101.

¹⁶John O'Malley, "Priesthood, Ministry, and Religious Life: Some Historic and Historiographical Considerations," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 223-57.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 257.

¹⁸Among these I would especially mention, John Fleming, *The Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977); J. B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1977); Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); Michael Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), and Daniel Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

¹⁹Lesnick, p. 27.

²⁰Little, p. 173.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 162-63; Lesnick, 134-41.

²²Little, pp. 35-41.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 173-83; cf. Jacques LeGoff, "Trades and Professions as Represented in Medieval Confessors' Manuals," *Time, Work, & Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 107-121.

²⁴Mollat, pp. 128-34.

²⁵Jeanette Hurst, *Franciscan Preaching, Communal Politics, and the Struggle between Papacy and Empire in Northern Italy, 1230 - 1268* (Cornell, 1987).

²⁶Alan McCoy, *The CORD*, 39 (1989).



A Franciscan Approach to Ministry

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I

It is rather commonplace to hear Franciscans characterize their ministry in terms of "serving the needs of the church." In itself this is an admirable description of what Franciscans do and it captures the important Franciscan value of being connected and obedient to the church in terms of the service it offers. Further, it is general enough in that a variety of forms of ministry can be included within this description. At the same time, however, it allows for the implication that Franciscans are not at all self-directed or self-motivated in the concrete choices made concerning the ministry they do. "To serve the needs of the church" seems to imply that Franciscans exist to do all and whatever the church requests, when the church requests it and how the church requests it. In other words, Franciscans have no ministry proper to themselves except that which the church entrusts to them; it is the church which sets the ministerial agenda for the Franciscans!

Allowing the church to set our agenda has no doubt been at least partly responsible for the problem of clericalization in our history, and at least for the first order today, poses again another danger as the church in North America faces a severe shortage of ordained priests. As more and more parishes become "priestless," the needs of the church become clearer. And if Franciscans do exist to serve the needs of the church, then the ministry of Franciscans will become even more closely linked and identified with parochial, clerical ministry.

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In addition to this attitude concerning the ministry of Franciscans in particular, the discussion of ministry in general has become almost paralyzed by the paradigm of the sacramental ministry of the ordained. A case in point is a work of the theologian Richard McBrien in which he offers the following definition of Christian ministry:

Christian/specific ministry is a Christian service rendered in the name of the Church and for the sake of its mission, rooted in some act of designation by the Church, and to be done by relatively few members of the Church.¹

Ministry as public service for the sake of the mission of the church as servant of the Kingdom, and ministry as that which is officially designated such by the church reflects the paradigm of the sacrament of Holy Orders which sets men apart for sacramental service. It is not an exercise of the common priesthood of the faithful which is invoked, but the difference which results from public designation that here characterizes ministry. Without public designation by the church, there is no ministry in the strict sense.

McBrien's definition of ministry, as well as the definitions offered by other theologians and bishops, operates out of an ecclesial understanding which places much more weight on the tradition of ministry inherited from the past than from the present tradition of experience of today's ministers themselves who are already giving shape to the church of tomorrow. This becomes especially problematic and tension-ridden in that the Kingdom of God, which ministry exists to serve, is not yet given in its full and final form. What is experienced of the Kingdom today is only tentative because the Kingdom is an eschatological reality. Thus, our definitions of ministry, even our ecclesial definitions, are tentative. In this sense, it is not surprising that much tension surrounds the issue of ministry in the church. And Franciscans are not immune from this experience of tension when it comes to defining their ministry in the church for the sake of the Kingdom!

II

Francis himself was not free of the tension which surrounded the issue of ministry within his fraternity. An indication of this tension is given by Jordan of Giano who reported that while Francis was in Syria a number of disturbances had rocked the Order in his absence. First it was reported to Francis that the ministers had adopted new constitutions which regulated the life of the fraternity according to the paradigm of monastic life in terms of fasting and abstinence, thus "modifying" the Rule in this regard. In addition, Brother Philip had obtained letters of protection from the Roman Curia for the Poor Ladies contrary to the spirit of humility

which Francis desired. And finally, Brother John of Capella seemingly attempted to define and limit the ministry of the fraternity to the service of lepers by writing the new rule.¹ Each of these incidents threatened the integrity of the fraternity according to the mind of Francis.

It is important to note that these three incidents threatened three aspects of the life of the brotherhood which Francis held to be essential to the living of the Gospel. In imposing new constitutions on the fraternity the ministers were attempting to institutionalize the order according to the existing ecclesial model of the monastic and canonical traditions, which for Francis, was tantamount to extinguishing the source of the Franciscan charism as expressed in his inspiration to live according to the form of the holy Gospel. The letters of protection requested for the Poor Sisters from the Curia directly challenged the central foundation for the Franciscan charism in absolute trust in God's providence. The attempt to identify the fraternity with a specific ministry, even that of service to the lepers as important as it was to Francis himself, threatened that openness to the inspiration of the Lord which defined the vocation of Francis and hence of each friar and of the entire fraternity.

In addition to these difficulties which the friars themselves experienced in living according to the form of the holy Gospel, the church too attempted to assimilate the Franciscan movement within its hierarchical structures as evidenced by the willingness of the Curia to provide letters of protection as Jordan of Giano remarked. Thus both the friars and the church had difficulty in understanding just what the Franciscan movement was all about.

An episode recounted in the *Assisi Compilation* speaks to this issue. In the light of attempts by both the friars and the cardinal protector to convince Francis to change course and adopt a tried and true way of life in the church, Francis addressed the chapter with the following words:

My brothers! My brothers! God has called me by way of simplicity and shown me the way of simplicity. I do not want you to name any Rule to me, not St. Augustine's, nor St. Bernard's, nor St. Benedict's. The Lord said to me that he wished that I should be a new-born simpleton in the world (*novellus pazzus in mundo*). God did not want to lead us by another way than by this kind of learning, but God will confound you through your learning and your wisdom.³

The difficulty which both the friars and the church faced in Francis was precisely the novelty or newness of his vision for the Order. For this reason, because Francis was convinced that God called him to be this "new-born simpleton," both the structures from the past in terms of monastic/canonical life and the practical responses of the present in terms of letters of protection from the curia or an univocal ministerial function

for the Order, would not do. Neither of these options was a real choice for Francis as both limited God's freedom in directing and developing the Order. Francis' religious experience was absolutely original. As Giovanni Miccoli remarks, "Francis in effect lived a religious experience which, as far as its essential core is concerned, had no link or reference to the ecclesiastical tradition of his time."⁴ This original religious experience touched on not only how the friars lived, but also on what the friars would do in terms of ministry. This sense of being something novel and new is an essential aspect of the Franciscan charism and patrimony and is as central to living the Franciscan life today as are fraternity and poverty. Having already existed for some 780 years does not diminish the innate challenge of Francis' charism to realize even today that newness in the world!

III

While Francis refused the identification of the Order with a particular ministry and while he does not define specific ministries as being proper to the Order, he does give clear indications of the parameters of ministry for his movement. In his *Major Life of St. Francis* Bonaventure describes a personal crisis which Francis experienced about the direction of his life. It had to do with the desire of Francis for solitary prayer to the point where he felt forced to choose between it and the active ministry of preaching. Bonaventure recounts the argument which convinced Francis to return to an active life of preaching:

But there is one thing to the contrary, that seems to outweigh all these considerations before God, namely that the only begotten Son of God, who is the highest wisdom, came down from *the bosom of the Father* for the sake of souls in order to instruct the world with his example and to speak the *word* of salvation to men, whom he would redeem with the price of his sacred blood, *cleanse with its washing* and nourish with its draught, holding back for himself absolutely nothing that he could freely give for our salvation. And because we should do everything according to the *pattern* shown to us in him as *on the heights of the mountain*, it seems more pleasing to God that I interrupt my quiet and go out to labor.⁵

Francis was convinced that he was called to follow the pattern of Jesus Christ who embraced the world in the Incarnation, freely surrendering everything in humility and compassion for the sake of salvation.

Francis first learned of this pattern of life in his experience with the leper which he describes in the first lines of his *Testament*. The young merchant Francis, accustomed to the good life and fine foods and clothes and wealth and friends, came face to face with ugliness, filth, stench, disease, loneliness and poverty in the leper he embraced. Francis re-

marked that after embracing the leper, however, "that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of body and soul." It was, as Francis describes, an experience of grace! But what is most significant about this experience is the conviction that it was "the Lord Himself" who led Francis to the leper. This is perhaps the clearest description by Francis of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

For Francis the logic is clear. As God moves toward the world and humanity in the humility of the Incarnation, Francis moves in humility to embrace the world in the leper. And in embracing the leper Francis embraces Christ. It is ultimately this humility of God which captivates Francis' body and soul and defines what Francis means when he states again in the *Testament* that the Lord called him to "live according to the form of the Holy Gospel." It is not the Incarnation in general, the fact simply that God becomes human in Jesus, but more importantly, it is the pattern of life, the form of life which Jesus embraced that defines the Franciscan following of Christ. As Francis indicates in his own words:

Through his angel Saint Gabriel, the most High Father in heaven announced this word of the Father — so worthy, so holy and glorious — in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from which he received the flesh of humanity and our frailty. Though he was rich beyond all things, in this world, He willed to choose poverty.⁶

What characterizes Francis' Christocentrism is its concrete realism: Jesus does not take on any human flesh, but frail flesh, weak flesh, humble and poor flesh, transient flesh. Again, it is not merely the Incarnation as a concept which captures Francis' attention, but rather the *modality* of the Incarnation, God's movement in humility toward the world, which describes and defines the nature of the Franciscan following of Christ. In the Incarnation, Jesus embraces the world as it is, the real world, with all of its saints and sinners, its darkness and light, its error and its truth.

What is at stake here in this for Francis is nothing less than the truth. The truth which Francis discovers and comes to live is that the leper is Christ and the leper's world is God's world. This is what the Incarnation reveals to Francis: in turning toward those around him, Francis turns toward God. In turn, it is this turning toward others which gives power to Francis word and allows him to be heard. This is what the life of penance is all about: it is not a private affair nor is it something I do for myself. Penance is something that God does for me in turning me toward others — "The Lord himself led me among them!"

This explains Francis' great love for the feast of Christmas and his desire to celebrate the feast with great solemnity by feeding the poor and even the birds of the air:

For Saint Francis had a greater regard for Christmas than for any other

Francis never speaks of a mission to the church, but rather of a mission to the world which is becoming the Kingdom!

festival of the Lord, since although the Lord may work our salvation in his other festivals, yet, because he was born for us, as St. Francis used to say, it was His concern to save us (*Assisi Compilation*, 110).

This is why the celebration at Greccio was so important for Francis. Thomas of Celano says as much when he explains that Francis wished to recall to memory the child born at Bethlehem in order to "set before our bodily eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs..." (1 Celano 85). The crib at Greccio reminds humanity of where God is to be found, in the fragile flesh of an infant. Francis' invitation and challenge is to see the mystery, to see the truth about human life in the world, and to see God's concrete embrace of it in the Incarnation.

This is also why the Eucharist plays such a central role in Francis' life and religious experience because the Eucharist is all about seeing the truth in faith. Francis challenges his followers in the first Admonition:

Why do you not recognize the truth and believe in the Son of God? See, daily he humbles himself as when He came from the royal throne into the womb of the virgin; daily he comes to us in a humble form; daily he comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest. And as he appeared to the holy apostles in true flesh, so now he reveals Himself to us in the sacred bread (*Admonition I*: 14-19)

Francis here insists on seeing the visible mystery of God's humility. Reflecting somewhat the eucharistic piety of his day which focussed on seeing the elevated host and chalice as the means of salvation, Francis transforms this piety in the direction of mission and ministry. The Eucharist becomes Francis' plan of action as it celebrates the world becoming the Kingdom. As a result, Francis will demand that his brothers,

show all possible reverence and honor to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom that which is in the heavens and on the earth is brought to peace and is reconciled to the all powerful God (*Letter to the Entire Order*, 12 - 13).

As the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ the truth is revealed, the truth is made manifest to human eyes. God embraces the world as well as the work of humanity in transforming the world into the Kingdom. Thus, Franciscan mission and ministry is

defined by seeing, following, and becoming the mystery of God present before our eyes. This is what Francis' *Cantic of Brother Sun* celebrates — the mystery of cosmic reconciliation. God's creation models true fraternity. The challenge is to become what we see in the world and to participate in creation's hymn of praise to the extent that we pardon, forgive and live in humility.

All of this leads to the following description of Franciscan ministry as "following Jesus in the real world," or to use Francis' own self-description, "becoming new-born simpletons in the world." Clare of Assisi captures the sense of this best when she states that "The Son of God has been made for us the Way, which our blessed father Francis, His true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example" (Clare's *Testament*, 5). Following Jesus the Way means to embrace the world in humility as God embraced the world in the Incarnation. Following Jesus the Way means allowing God to turn us to everyone and everything which surrounds us in the world, which is of the essence of the life of Penance. It is not so much a static model of an ideal Jesus as it is rather the pattern, the dynamic form of the Gospel which is represented to us by Jesus' own embrace of the lives of men and women and creation itself in the Incarnation which defines the Franciscan following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Where are these footprints of Jesus Franciscans are called to follow? As Francis' own example of life demonstrates, they are found in the real world, the world as it is, the human world with all of its joys and sorrows, its brokenness and pain, its poverty and its wealth, its light and its darkness, with all of its victories and defeats. Franciscan mission means to go about this world and embrace it as Jesus did. Francis never speaks of a mission to the church, but rather of a mission to the world which is becoming the Kingdom!

Based on what has been said to this point, Franciscan ministry, as the means of expressing this mission, can be further characterized in three ways. First, Franciscan ministry is preeaching. As Francis stated, "All the brothers, however, should preach by their deeds" (*Earlier Rule*, XVII:3). The model envisioned here by Francis is not that of liturgical preaching, but preaching as a way of life, an activity, an engagement with the world. This kind of preaching names grace in human experience, reveals the presence of God in the world, and is only possible to the extent that one turns toward those people one meets, wherever and whenever they are met. This Franciscan preaching points out the truth which lies sometimes just beyond sight, and helps one to see God in reality. This preaching is Eucharistic in that it calls forth the proclamation of the world becoming the Kingdom. It is above all a positive word about how God is active in human experience, not a negative word which speaks the absence of God from human lives.

Second, Franciscan ministry is evangelical in the full sense of the term. It responds to the Gospel injunction to go into the whole world and preach the Good News. The real world becomes the focus for Franciscan ministry for it is in the real world that the footprints of Jesus are to be found and followed. There are no boundaries, ecclesial or otherwise, to this mission as it is the world which sets the Franciscan agenda.

Third, Franciscan ministry is presence. The Franciscan is called in the words of David Flood to "sit down at table and get into people's lives."⁷ Ministry does not bring God to a people or a place suffering God's absence. The Franciscan minister is called to recognize Jesus who goes before us in the world. Ministry is the engagement of human lives which results in the shared experience of God's presence, and is the fruit of Penance, of turning toward those around us.

V

All of this leads to the clarification that to define Franciscan ministry as simply that which serves the needs of the church is to drastically alter Francis' own understanding of the mission and ministry of Franciscans. To be sure, Francis insisted on obedience to the church. But this did not mean for Francis that the church determined the ministerial agenda of the Order. The world extends beyond the boundaries of the church. It is that entire world which God embraced in the Incarnation. It is that world which Francis embraced in the leper and it is that world which Franciscans today are called to embrace.

That there will be, as there were, tensions which result from this call to ministry in the real world is inevitable. There will be tension between what the church determines its needs to be and the concrete choices of particular forms of Franciscan ministry which are determined by going about the world. The church too is called to minister to the needs of the world and has responded to these needs in many ways. But, the world continued to remain bigger than the church, and here too God goes before us calling Franciscans in a particular way to respond to God's presence by following in the footsteps of Jesus even beyond the limits of the church.

This fundamental intuition of the mission and ministry of Franciscans is captured by one of the earliest Franciscan texts to appear after the writings of Francis himself. The *Sacrum Commercium* records the dialogue between Lady Poverty and the friars after they had shared a frugal meal. When Lady Poverty rises from a peaceful sleep,

She quickly arose and asked to be shown the cloister. Taking her to a certain hill they showed her the whole world, as far as she could see, and said: "This, Lady, is our cloister."⁸

The pattern of this has been revealed to Francis by God in moving toward the world in the humility of the Incarnation. To be faithful to this pattern which describes the Franciscan vocation, Franciscan ministry demands nothing less than following Jesus in the real world!

Endnotes

¹Richard McBrien, *Ministry: A Theological, Pastoral Handbook* (San Francisco: Harper & Row): 22.

²See *The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano*, par. 12 - 16.

³*Assisi Compilation*, 114. Rosalind Brooke, ed. & trans., *Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli Sociorum S. Francisci* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970): 289.

⁴G. Miccoli, "Francis of Assisi's Christian Proposal," *Greyfriars Review* 3 (1989): 131.

⁵Bonaventure, *Major Life of St. Francis*, XII:1; Ewert Cousins, trans., *Bonaventure* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978): 292-293.

⁶*Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful*, 4.

⁷David Flood, "Assisi's Rules and People's Needs: The Initial Determination of the Franciscan Mission," *Franziskanische Studien* 66 (1984): 93.

⁸*Sacrum Commmercium*, 63.

Trees

(Adapted from *TREES* by Joyce Kilmer)

I think that I shall never see
A poem ugly as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against our earth's polluted breast.

A tree that looked to God one day,
Now has no leafy arms to pray.
A tree that must in summer wear
The same sad look as winter... bare.

Upon whose stump no snow has lain,
A freak, a tree that can't use rain
For it has suffered crass destruction
For man's mis-named asset called *construction*.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can replace that tree.

Sr. Mary Clare Heath, O.S.F.

Ministry Today and Tomorrow

ROSEMARY CHINNICI, S.L.

The following letter was addressed to Ann Landers December 3, 1980.¹

"Dear Ann:

I'll bet you've had it with the secretaries who resent being asked to get coffee for the boss, but please hear me out. I get coffee not only for my boss but several other bosses in this office. This means collecting money, getting the paper cups and plastic spoons, making the coffee and serving it, cleaning the urn — along with a cheerful "Good morning" for everyone who comes in.

I love it! It's not a chore. It's a ministry. Some people say thanks, others don't. But I don't care. I don't need praise. I do this simple chore because it makes me feel good to be of service to others. Sign me — a Very happy secretary in Columbus, Ohio."

Ann responds: "Hello, Mary Sunshine! A 'ministry' yet. I'm glad you didn't sign your name. Knowing your identity would be more responsibility than I want. Too many secretaries out there would cheerfully strangle you, dear. Thanks for letting me know you exist. You're the last of a vanishing breed."

Every year, in the *Introduction to Ministry* class that I teach at the Franciscan School of Theology, in Berkeley, California, I ask students to discuss whether this woman is in fact engaged in ministry. Their answers are amazing:

Some say it is ministry because the secretary says it is; Some say it is ministry because she does it *cheerfully*; Students have told me it's not ministry because she gets paid for it;

One student, rather unenlightened about the women's movement, told me it was ministry because it is a secretary's job to get coffee for her bosses!

The CORD is happy to publish this article which is based on a talk delivered by Sister Rosemary Chinnici at the Franciscan Formation Conference held at St. Bonaventure University in July, 1990. Sister Rosemary is Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Franciscan School of Theology Berkeley, California.

... to understand ministry is to be involved
in an attitude of mutuality towards others.

After they wrestle with this question for awhile, I then read them the following article:

"Sister Angela has an unusual ministry — she cuts hair for shut-ins, including inmates in the Contra Costa jail.

The licensed cosmetologist with 1,600 hours of training says she finds it 'very stimulating' meeting all of the interesting boys in the jail. According to Peter Christiansen, managing director of the Friends Outside chapter here, 'Inmates think the world of her. She's a super woman who relates to these guys and they line up- for her to cut their hair.'

'As a child,' Sister Angela says, 'I had two dreams — to be a beautician and to be a nun, so now both dreams have come true. There's no formal counseling involved in my work but I like talking with the inmates. We talk about religion, about hair styling, sports, families, and problems — they just like to talk. When they are with me they get all of the attention and I know I am ministering for these boys in a human way and that makes me feel better too.'"²

The students have less trouble with Sister Angela. They almost always agree that she is performing ministry — after all, she is a religious, doing volunteer work, even some counseling, in a prison, and it is clear the inmates appreciate her availability.

A variety of issues about ministry are raised by these two articles and I would like to spend some time discussing some of them.

The first point may seem somewhat surprising but it is extremely important. No one agrees on the definition of ministry. Certainly many books have been written on the subject: *The Rebirth of Ministry*, *Future Stages of Ministry*, *Ministry In Transition*, *How the Church can Minister to the World Without Losing Itself*, *Competent Ministry*, *Creative Ministry* to name just a few. None of these books, however, actually provides a working definition of ministry or an agreed-upon definition.

There are "models" of ministry, "theologies" of ministry. People in religious communities engage in what seem like eternal conversations about the unique "ministry" of their order. We even used the word to tempt you to come to these talks. Yet the truth is we could go around this room and there would be as many different definitions as there are people. The actual truth is "ministry" is one of the most over-used and potentially meaningless words in our theological vocabulary.

My students, or people entering religious formation, do not like to

believe this fact. They shouldn't. After all, they are lay and religious men and women who have set aside two, three or four years of their life to prepare for service in the Church. If there is no one meaning to the word ministry there may not be meaning to their future work.

As a consequence, they insist that they know the meaning of the word. Nine times out of ten, when asked to define the word, they supply definitions related to service:

"ministry" is service to God's people;

"ministry" is when I'm open to meeting the needs of others just as Jesus did;

"ministry" is graced servanthood.

Yet, there are a variety of problems when we equate ministry with service.

The first is that "ministry" becomes whatever we want it to be. As long as we try to do a good job, be of service, we are "ministering." In this schema, there is no room for failure. Things do not work out because "the people were not ready for it" or "it was not a good community to begin with." We are always successful because we want to be of service. Yet we know that this is not true — we know we fail and that others fail us. As long as ministry is defined by the person supposedly performing the activity we will never have a worthwhile critique of our own actions and we will not understand our potential for failure.

The second problem encountered when we equate "ministry" with service is that this is actually antithetical to our experience. We have all had moments of being touched by another — being graced. The person did not necessarily know what they were doing, in fact they may never have defined their actions as "being of service." Yet we were truly moved by their actions. We know ministry because we encounter it. It therefore becomes a strange twist to experience when we define it from the point of view of the actor rather than the recipient. If we were to discuss "ministry" from our actual experience we would talk about "receiving grace," "being touched," "experiencing God." When we equate "ministry" with our service rather than our experience it becomes self-limiting. As long as we make our work "holy" the expansiveness of creation disappears and there is no longer any room for God, grace, or Christ. "Ministry" is what we say it is. We control the "ministry" but, unfortunately, this makes it limited by our fragile selves.

A third problem in defining ministry as service is that, in actuality, service is simply another term for job. Because this is difficult for us to admit, we find ourselves in the strange position of having to "baptize" our work. I submit to you that if we wanted to be more honest with ourselves we would stop proliferating types of "ministry" — "sacerdotal ministry," "minister of the word," "minister of hospitality" — and acknowledge our jobs as honest attempts to respond to the Gospel call.

Defining ministry as service or as job also raises the question of what message is given to people who are no longer able to participate in meaningful employment. In the Directory for my Religious Community we have placed people's work after their name. Those who were retired complained about this because they said it looked like they were no longer worthwhile. So we changed the directory and now, after their names, we have people listed as engaged in the work of "prayer and suffering." While these elderly sisters may indeed be engaged in prayer and suffering, I still think we are continuing the subtle message that self-esteem is based on an activity rather than an innate worth. Surely all of these sisters participate in the creative goodness of Christ, and this dynamism occurs whether they are "of service" or not. If we were to no longer define ministry in terms of service what replacement ideas would be available to us. In the time remaining I would like to discuss three alternatives:

Carter Heyward in her book *The Redemption of God* talks about two types of power available to us in our lives — the power of *exousia* and the power of *dunamis*.³ *Exousia* is the power given to us by legitimate authority to operate within a certain role. As a teacher I have the power of *exousia* — I operate within a certain role in my classroom. The power of *dunamis*, however, is the force from within, the liberating and creative spark that is in each of us, is good, and in mutuality, is able to touch the essence of another person. It is *dunamis* that actually allows me to teach a student. *Exousia* is proscribed by limitations — I have the power to say yes or no to you and establish boundaries for you. *Dunamis* is expanded by freedom — I have the power to say yes to you and, in mutuality, enable both of us to grow. Interestingly, Jesus did not have the power of *exousia*, he had no official authority or role. He did, however, have the power of *dunamis*, the ability to creatively touch others.

Certainly every person in any position or role of service has power — and when we define ministry as *our* service to another we can over-identify with the institution we represent. When this happens we can arrive at the point where we are so identified with our role in the institution that we operate only out of our *exousia* power. We come to believe our exercise of power is justified, even when it is power over another, power that violates the dignity of another. We have all seen this type of power in action. In formation it may appear in the words "trust me, it is good for you to do this." In churches it can appear by ignoring the pain of women, and refusing to use inclusive language. We might decide against taking an unpopular stand because we are afraid of sanctions from others in authority.

Dunamis power, on the other hand, is not service, it is mutuality, the equal exchange of creative freedom. One example of this type of mutual exchange of power is found in Heyward's explanation of the woman with

a hemorrhage.⁴ There is a mutual exchange of power between the woman and Jesus. In her courage and trust she reaches out to Jesus and is healed. The woman claimed for herself the power of *dunamis*, the power to exist in relation. Because of this she was healed. Jesus recognized this intimacy because He Himself possessed the same creative power of *dunamis*. Between the two of them there is a mutual exchange of love: the woman receives healing from this encounter, Jesus receives affirmation for His mission. This is the creative exchange of grace that is known to us when we experience "ministry."

Another example of this same type of mutual exchange can be seen in the life of a woman that I know. She is afflicted with chronic mental illness, cannot work, and every day confronts extreme bouts of depression. She has never committed suicide — a gift of hope that I consider extremely courageous and moves me greatly. In one of my classes I tell students about her psychological battles and she finds this extremely encouraging because she finds it difficult to believe she is worthwhile enough to be used as an example of anything. Between us we have a mutual exchange of grace — something I do not understand but is one of the closest things to experiencing ministry that I can imagine.

A second alternative image helpful in thinking about ministry can be found in the curse of the werewolf. Wolfbane is the name of a flower and the original curse is: "when the wolfbane blooms and the moon is high, even the pure of heart can become a werewolf." We know this happens. Ministers abuse their power by taking sexual advantage of parishioners; messages of guilt and shame are laid upon those deemed "outsiders" — gays, lesbians, the divorced, the homeless; we all know of times when we have become tired and cynical. And we know that this happens even though we try to be pure of heart.

Adolph Guggenbuhl-Craig in his book *Power in the Helping Profession*⁵ explains this abuse of power as a time when we "split" off one of the central archetypes in our lives. He uses as his example the myth of the "wounded healer."

Mythologically, the original wounded healer was Charon, the centaur, who, as he traveled throughout the countryside healing others, bled from a small wound in his left heel. Eventually, in his desire to heal others, he himself bled to death.

Craig suggests that when we split this archetype, identify with only the healer part of ourselves and not the wounded part, we will become cold toward others. The division will result in a lack of empathy, such a strong belief in our personal power to heal that we lost contact with the other person.

The truth is there is not a helping person in the world who at one time or another will not be seized by the curse of the werewolf. The wolfbane

does bloom, the moon is high and even though we are pure of heart we often fail. If we can remember this we will stay in touch with our own wounds and will be able to act out of the *dynamis* of mutuality. If we forget it we will be limited by the *exousia* of our roles and, despite our best efforts, find ourselves abusing others.

Finally, I would like to suggest to you that an appreciation of "ministry" involves a willingness to live in a certain amount of tension or not knowing. There is value in Matthew 25: 31-46. When we speak about ministry as though it were a service or job it sounds like we actually know when it is occurring. If we are to take this text seriously we learn that we will be surprised about our actions. Even though we are good people we will have to ask when we "ministered." "Then the just will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness. When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?' The King will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least sisters or brothers, you did it for me.' I submit to you that this is as it should be. It is extremely dangerous to know the workings of "ministry." If we knew how to "do it" we would try to control it and would come to believe that it is we not Christ who is involved in making up the fullness of time.

So — I have just delivered a talk without giving a definition of ministry. Obviously this is on purpose. The best I can offer you is my belief that to understand ministry is to be involved in an attitude of mutuality towards others. Bernie Loomer, the process theologian, says it best:

"We must concern ourselves with size. Size is the stature of a person's soul. The range and depth of her/his love. Their capacity for relationships. The volume of life you can both take into your being and still maintain your integrity and individuality. It is the interest and variety of outlook you can maintain without being defensive or insecure. Size is the range of your limitations. By size I mean that strength of spirit to encourage others to become freer in the development of their diversity and uniqueness. The power to sustain more complex and more enriching tensions. I mean the magnanimity of concern to provide conditions that enable others to increase in stature."⁶

* * *

The following questions were used for discussion after the presentation:

1. A person's understanding of "vocation" often affects their understanding of "ministry..." "... I have a vocation therefore what I do is ministry." What would happen to a sense of personal vocation if people understood ministry as an attitude rather than a function?
2. How do we violate our power as formation directors?
3. Defining an action as "ministry" rather than as a "job" helps elevate

one's sense of importance and contribute to a we/they split. How can we help those in formation to be more honest about naming their work for what it is?

4. How can formation programs help develop a "spirituality of tension" that allows students to live in the real world and not rely on "acts of ministry" as the basis for self-esteem?

5. Mutuality is the point where an "exchange of grace" occurs. How can formation programs help students learn to appreciate and experience the value of relationship/friendship?

Endnotes

¹San Francisco Chronicle, December 3, 1980.

²Oakland Tribune, no date, circa 1984.

³Hayward, Carter. *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982.)

4. Ibid., p-g. 46.

5. Guggenbuhl-Craig, Adolf. *Power in the Helping Profession*, (Dallas: Spring Publication, Inc., 1971.)

6. Loomer, Bernard. "S-I-Z-E Is the Measure". *Religious Experience and Process Theology*. Ed. Harry Cargas and Bernard Lee (New York: Paulist Press, 1972.) Reprinted from *Criterion*, Spring 1974, pg. 70.



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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDel: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLact: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum Commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Blessed Be the Caretakers

ANNETTE SICA

Introduction

There is no greater role model than St. Francis for hospital ministry. He spent the last two years of his life blind, suffering, and in pain from carrying the crucified Lord's wounds in his body. The heat of the sun hurt his eyes and he was no longer able to view creation. He was so overcome with love for the Savior, a song burst forth from his heart, and the words can be found in his beautiful writing, "The Canticle of the Sun." In it, he exalts God by praising all of creation. He could not contain his love for God as he waited to enter into his presence. He strove daily to walk in the footsteps of the Lord. May his total devotion fill us with the desire to serve others, and our serving become an uplifting song to the Lord.

Blessed be the Caretakers

Blessed be Brother Sun, whose rays warm the earth and awaken all creation. We rise, refreshed and renewed; full of energy and eager to start the day. Bathed in sunlight, may we journey through life following in Jesus' footsteps a life of dedicated service. May we reflect His Light that shines forth from us on others as we fulfill our destinies.

The author has published articles in various Catholic periodicals and newspapers. She is a wife, mother of seven, and grandmother of three. Presently she works as a counselor at Birthright in Baldwinville, New York. This piece was composed for a prayer service attended by Health Care Employees at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, New York.

Blessed be Sister Moon, whose calming light prepares us for a restful night's sleep, bringing with it the silent peace that restores our tired minds and bodies. May its glow remind us that He is always watching over us, always present, never leaving us alone.

Blessed be Sister Stars, who light up the heavens with their precious twinkling jewels, and invite us to dream dreams, ponder and wonder, and search out life's truths. We find an unending and unlimited universe, incomprehensible in size, but secure. To search the heavens is to find infinity. To find infinity is to discover The Finite, and His burning, unending, but all encompassing love. In Him, we will find the answers. He is Truth.

Blessed be Sister Fire, a strong and burning light. Powerful and majestic, it brings comfort and warmth, and restores light where there was total darkness. May the fire of the Holy Spirit instill in us a desire to serve and restore health to others who suffer from sickness. May he enlighten and open our minds to find cures that will heal illnesses and put an end to suffering.

Blessed be Trees, so strong, sturdy, and dependable, yet pleasing and soothing to the eyes of all who delight in their beauty. As green umbrellas in the sky, they offer us the security and shelter from wind and rain, and shade us from the sun's burning rays. We hear their musical serenade as the winds rustle their leaves. We are cooled by the captured breezes the leaves send down to fan us with. Let them remind us of God's outstretched arms wrapped around us, covering and protecting us from all harm.

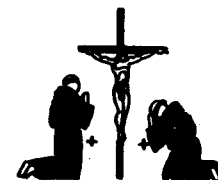
Blessed be Flowers, God's delightful gifts. They uplift our spirits, perfume our senses, and dazzle us with their exquisite colors, textures, designs, and beauty. An earthly gift, He shares with us His promise of a future in heaven. We get a glimpse into the delights and beauty of everlasting life. We can learn a lesson from the flowers. Though their colors fade and petals fall... there is a seed inside each flower that contains a future blossom. Our bodies are frail and fragile, and succumb easily in age and illness. Like flowers, some of us are longlasting. Some of us blossom for a short time. But each serves a purpose, and contains a soul that cannot be destroyed. It yearns for its Creator and eternal life, where it will be planted in the place he has prepared for us.

Blessed be the Doctor who is filled with love for all humanity. He seeks to cure the hurts and illnesses that plague mankind. He searches, explores, removes, replaces, and renews injured flesh and bones. He brings new life into the world and is dedicated to the care and treatment of his patients. Lord, bless his hands that heal, use his educated mind to find cures, give him peace and rest when he is tired and overscheduled. Help him when he loses a patient to an incurable disease. Protect him from burnout, giving up in despair, and neglecting his patients. Let him be

aware of the responsibility he has when serving Your people, his brothers and sisters in Christ. Let them be more to him than a name on a prescription, and let him be more to them than a name on a medical bill. Let him knowingly and joyfully take Your healing place on earth.

Blessed be the Nurse who lovingly gives a cheery smile along with the required medicine, food and water, her patient needs. Let her say a bright hello to all the lonely, frightened, and sick patients. Lord, let her hands and tongue be gentle as she takes down vital statistics. Bless this dedicated, highly skilled and trained professional, who knows the latest technological and medical advances, but lovingly performs with dignity the most demeaning and offensive of jobs. Protect her from becoming cold, clinical, and uncaring, as she emotionally suffers from seeing patients rejected and abandoned, and overcome with despair and anger caused by our fear of infectious and death-causing diseases. Comfort her when she is overworked, overwhelmed, burned-out, and emotional from daily viewing death and life's tragedies, knowing there is nothing she can do about it. Remind her how You also reached out and touched the outcasts and the undesirables of society. The world needs her kind and loving touch.

Blessed be the Volunteer, truly an angel of mercy in disguise. She sees the special need in everyone she visits, whether delivering flowers, papers and magazines, or just spending a few minutes visiting. She takes the time to read a story, tell a joke, or just listen to a patient. Her special caring is a medicine that brings comfort and solace, peace and joy... all a form of inner healing. While machines and instruments surround her, and she views the treatments and therapy given to patients to heal them, her presence, warmth and touch, feeds the spirit and soul of someone isolated and alone in a strange room surrounded by strangers. She is totally committed. She is concerned, and has a deep understanding of human nature and its needs. She has no special skills or training, just a burning desire to ease the pain and suffering she sees. She freely gives her time, energy, and talent without payment — in this life!



Drinking from the Wells of Canberra

ANSELM MOONS, O.F.M.

In February, 1991, Canberra welcomed more than 3000 participants to the "Land of the Spirit," Australia, where 950 official delegates of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, during two weeks, grappled with the theme, "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation."

To no one's surprise, the Gulf war caused sharp divisions early on in the process of the Assembly, and consumed much energy to overcome them. A surprise occurred with the creative interventions from the Third World which challenged traditional positions of Eastern Orthodox and Western Evangelicals. Shocked by these views, some older churches wondered about their own future membership of a Council which grew from 147 in 1948 to 312 very different churches. The Roman Catholic Church is not one of them because it never joined the Council.

Franciscans, preparing themselves for their own world council in San Diego, can learn a lot from this Christian "General Chapter." The way Emilio Castro, their general secretary, summed up the Canberra Assembly shows what goals Franciscans ought to choose and how to go about it.

Fr. Anselm Moons is executive director of Franciscan Mission Service in Silver Spring, Maryland. A member of the Dutch province of Friars Minor, he served for several years as a missionary in Pakistan. Prior to his present ministry, he served on the General Council in Rome where he was active in promoting several of the more recent missionary enterprises of the Order. The title of this article is inspired by the book of Gustavo Gutierrez, WE DRINK FROM OUR OWN WELLS. The Spiritual Journey of a People (Orbis Books, New York, 1984). Data on the Canberra Assembly were taken from information in the TABLET (2 March, 1991), the reports of Pat Windsor in the NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER (vol. 27, nrs. 17, 18 and 19), the introduction to the theological theme of Canberra by Ms. Chung Hyun-Kyung, Ludwig Kaufman's article, "Vorschau auf Canberra," in ORIENTIERUNG (vol. 55, pp. 23-24), supplemented with non-published articles of Jan Hoeberichts on Franciscan Mission.

Castro observed a deep sense of spirituality; a liturgy with a marvellously multi-cultural variety of symbols, ritual and language; an eagerness to listen to one another, especially to the voices of indigenous people; and a sincere attempt to learn from the "underside of history."

The general secretary of the Franciscan chapter, an Australian himself, will be happy if he can list the same results at the end of the San Diego chapter. He would do well to take a closer look at what it took Canberra to arrive at such an outcome.

Kenosis

Ms. Chung Hyun-Kyung, a young Korean feminist theologian, invited all participants to take off their shoes as a mark of respect for people's holy ground, and as a first act of humbling themselves to encounter the spirit of God. With a humbled heart and body, people can hear the cries of the victims of oppression. A truly empty heart will also be able to hear the cry of the Spirit in them. Franciscan evangelizers-in-chapter may pause to hear the cries of those who suffered from their missionary zeal, impatience, insensitivity and short-sightedness. Victims of oppression and exploitation are not on the margin of the Kingdom; rather, they are the "icons of the Holy Spirit," Ms. Chung told the World Council, as she burned their names, including the ones of Oscar Romero and "our brother Jesus, tortured and killed on the cross." Our solidarity with these icons, and our protest on behalf of the materially poor are the very reason and meaning of our voluntary religious poverty.

According to Ms. Chung, it is meaningless to invoke the coming of the Spirit if we refuse to change the direction of our lives. The renewal of the whole creation — a theme which Canberra and San Diego share, — demands a radical kenosis (emptying out/ conversion) which begins with the recognition of the priority of the earth as source of life. Human beings are only a very small part of it, and surely not above it. Do we not witness today the revenge of the earth against our exploitation, refusing us clean water, air and food...

A radical kenosis also demands that we not indulge in polarizing dualisms; immanence / transcendence; women / men; body / spirit; emotion / mind; black / white; poor / rich, with the second one of the alternatives being the more valuable! As if we are divided against ourselves. Instead, we have a common source of life and "the webs of our life are interconnected." Only if we see others as objects, can we erect walls and separate others from ourselves, control or fight them. Separation breeds hostility, sickness and death. The winds of life, on the other hand, breed harmony and bonding.

Kenosis introduces us into yet a third change which is the option for a

culture of life replacing a culture of death. It is the non-violent option for peace and the rejection of war in which mostly the young, the poor, and often people of colour, are made to destroy the opponent in favor of a peace based on the power and wealth of the rich. We must also abandon patriarchal structures which take a heavy responsibility for the tears shed by women when men go out to shed blood. Ms. Chung saw in the Gulf war a clear example of this culture of death. The life of the opponent simply did not count.

The women's tears are the compassion which builds a bridge from death to new life. Only if we "suffer with," do we unite in a new creation of peace and justice. The wisdom and compassion of the Holy Spirit then enlightens us and fills our emptiness with her energy unto a new communion and a new creation.

Ms. Chung would make a good Franciscan. This is all the more exciting because she relates very forcefully a religious experience from the Third World where many young Franciscans have the same message. Francis himself "suffered with" the lepers, because Assisi's thirst for more wealth and more power separated the rich from the poor, causing sin and death. Opting out of the system of greed, Francis built an alternate economy in which sun and moon, wind and water, fire and flowers were all brothers and sisters, equals coming from a common source, sister mother earth, and receiving new life from the redeeming power of their common brother Jesus.

The Footsteps of the Aborigines

For many years the World Council of Churches has taken its agenda from the problems of the world. This became painfully concrete at the Canberra Assembly when the organizers of a peace march asked the Aborigines "to step aside and allow the children to lead." The slight reflected a long history of similar offenses that have brought tears to many indigenous peoples. Others have walked over them, ignoring their basic rights, very much in the way humans walk on mother earth and hurt her constantly.

But in this incident the Aborigines sang "we shall not be moved," and the subsequent public apology and grace-filled forgiveness by the aborigines were among the most moving experiences of the Canberra Assembly.

The significance of the incident goes beyond the local scene of Canberra, and the Franciscans at San Diego ought to take note. The choice of San Diego as venue of the chapter is a clear reference to the fifth centennial of the Christian and Franciscan presence in the Americas. In view of the growing resistance against any kind of triumphant celebration, the friars

may, understandably, be tempted to pass the event over in awkward silence and painful embarrassment. Such an attitude, however, would not be inspired by the Canberra experience and not find favour with Francis of Assisi either.

At Canberra the organizers ate their humble pie and apologized in public. Centuries before, Francis made up for the sins of the crusaders by his going humbly "among" the muslims. He discovered their religiosity, learned from them to pray better, and urged his brothers to serve them in fraternal minority. Francis was not told by any pope or bishop to adopt this different approach but claimed to have it from "divine inspiration." The brothers-in-chapter at San Diego can help us all if they will share with us their "divine inspiration," stepping in the footsteps of Francis and the Aborigines!

*More than one million followers of Francis,
dedicated to peace, never raised their voice
in unison when many thousands of Iraqis
were being sacrificed on the altar of per-
sonal pride and economic benefit.*

The Wells of San Diego

The present drought in California will not affect the waters of the Franciscan wells at San Diego. That better be the case because, when Franciscans send 200 delegates from over 85 countries to a general chapter for extensive evaluation and future planning — which they do only once in six years, — they are thirsty and want to drink from the wells. They expect results.

The agenda of the Canberra Assembly centered around a prayerful invocation: "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation." Francis himself would surely feel at home with such a theme! Therefore, even whilst taking cues from Canberra, San Diego can also draw much water from its own wells.

At its conclusion, Canberra displayed a surprising harmony without

imposing artificial agreements. New trends versus traditional viewpoints, evangelicals versus advocates of religious dialog, doctrinal theories versus social priorities, North versus South, feminism, ethical issues, ecological concerns, all of these and other matters strained the solidarity of the council members but did not prevent them from arriving at a report approved by the entire assembly. Ms. Chung's appeal to the delegates to move from the divisive spirit of Babel to the unifying Spirit of Pentecost must have encouraged many delegates to practice solidarity. They voted to liberate the victims from the oppression by "mammon," to combat the division of human communities, and to stop the destruction of the fragile earth.

Although the San Diego chapter will last twice as long as the Canberra Assembly did, it may not find the time to deal with all these issues. Internal business matters will take time and energy away from the larger issues. But Franciscan evangelization remains the major theme of the chapter and this must show up in the conclusions. Fortunately, the 1991 chapter need not invent the wheel as much spadework on "Franciscan Evangelization Now" has been done in the last 25 years. On the other hand, objectives and strategies must always be tuned to the changing conditions of time and place.

Franciscan Evangelization Now

The Spirit, according to Francis our real minister general, inspires us to go "among" others to serve them and to learn from whatever they offer their guests. In return we share with them our living experience of minority and fraternity. With them we work for a new society in which the King of peace and justice is recognized and all our needs are met. Hence, Franciscans are committed to ban all greed and undue appropriation from this earth, and to share the privilege of God's Kingdom with all people of good will. Through our style of life first — and only through preaching and baptizing when called upon by God, — we proclaim the Gospel Message that Jesus is one of us and his Father the "All Good God" of all people. Together with them we care for the whole of creation as God's gift to be rendered back to Him. We praise and glorify Him who, in Jesus' humanity and in simple bread and wine, reveals the deepest essence and concern of his own Divine heart: humility!

The practical applications of this way of life in today's world are simply overwhelming, and the brothers-in-chapter at San Diego face a daunting task to spell them all out. In many cases it may suffice to encourage efforts being made already, but — also in view of the decrease in numbers and resourcess — definite priorities have to be formulated. This is another

way of saying that the list submitted here is neither exhaustive nor definitive in any form or fashion.

A major concern of any chapter is to keep the brothers together without sacrificing the enriching pluriformity in prayer, viewpoints, cultural expressions, future plans and actions. From the earliest days of their brotherhood Franciscans have been tempted to break away from the larger group of friars for the sake of their own preferences. In our time when the global family is about to recognize this common origin, Franciscan ought to be wise and make their common heritage a priority in action. More than one million followers of Francis, dedicated to peace, never raised their voice in unison when many thousands of Iraqis were being sacrificed on the altar of personal pride and economic benefit. Will a Franciscan presence at the United Nations be helpful in future cases? If so, San Diego should support this presence.

The option for the poor, within the dynamics of Franciscan poverty, is another priority of mission in the nineties. The Sermon on the Mount may have been a clear choice for Lady Poverty in her days. Today its application is difficult and complex. Friars need money to study and do their apostolate. In Eastern Europe they want to buy back the houses they once owned. Franciscans in the Third World have to spend on formation to build up their new entities. Meanwhile, they must protest against the exploitation of the weak, combat the disastrous consequences of the Third World debt crisis, repaid already many times over. They must tell basic communities that their power lies in themselves and not in money. To complicate matters further, Church authorities often prefer that friars make their option in silence and say nothing at all.

Silence had its own attraction for Francis too. Disputes reminded him somewhat of the violent methods of crusaders whose efforts in subduing the muslims remained fruitless anyway. His friars were to be mostly laypeople speaking through their way of life. His own non-violent contact with the sultan gave birth to a new silent method of mission which is still the essence of all Franciscan evangelization. Re-inforcement of the Franciscan presence among muslims will be but one of the concerns at San Diego in this area of the religious dialog.

Mission today cares for the earth. Any need to tell Franciscans? But they may have to learn how to do this in this day and age. Shouldn't the chapter support the "earth charter 1992" to be presented at an U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil, and tell the friars about it? Besides, Franciscan ecology has a theology of its own and is something else than just romanticism about flowers and birds...

Finally, Mission today is, more than ever, a crying and suffering [compassion] with those who were in the past and are being today ill-treated, ignored, exploited, humiliated, raped, sold, tortured and killed. They are

men, women and, shamefully, even children. They are people of many cultures, living in many parts of the world, at different times in history. The friars at San Diego should recall some of those whose names we still know. They should also remember their own friars who became victims of violence since they last met in chapter six years ago. These heroic friars are our "icons of the spirit," and we should hear their cries if we want to hear the cry of the spirit in our global fraternity...

These are some of the lessons from Canberra. Drinking from the wells of Canberra, it would seem that the friars at the San Diego chapter can draw much water also from their own wells. □

* * *

The Awakening

A gargantuan gray hand
grasps the sky
from bed of leaves and loam,
Adam
from earth
newly birthed.

Fragile forsythia fingers
grasp gray wall
as Spring takes hold
in bright new bursts,

A cold gray tomb
once burst asunder
as glorified hands
grasped life anew
in white-gold splendor.

And from gray murk
I, too, seek birth.

Awaken me!
Oh, set me free!
Give me light —
make it right —
Easter me!

Christine Diensberg, O.S.F.

The Centrality of Scripture

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

In the Church

At least in theory, holy scripture always held a central place in the life of the church. Indeed without scripture, there is no church: "The People of God is formed into one in the first place by the word of the living God" (Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 4). As Augustine said: "[The apostles] preached the word of truth and the church was born." A Christian church without the bible is simply unthinkable. Unfortunately, in the *consciousness* of the faithful, clergy and laity, the bible has not always been given its proper and central place, even in the missionary work of the church.

Vatican II

One of the major contributions of the Second Vatican Council was to restore the bible to its rightful place. One of the council's most important contributions was surely the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* (DV), on divine revelation, in which the council

exhorts all the faithful, especially religious, strongly and especially (vehementer peculiariterque exhortatur), that they learn "the eminent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine scriptures (25).

The Council expressed the hope that as the church had grown so much because of devotion to the Eucharist (so zealously promoted by the Council of Trent), so now "a new impulse of spiritual life" would come to the church from "an increased veneration for the word of God 'that remains forever'" (DV 26).

This is the third in Fr. Charles' series on the very important theme of Franciscan Evangelization. He raises some important pastoral-spiritual questions regarding scripture which should resonate deeply within our Franciscan hearts.

Some now regard the rediscovery of the centrality of God's word as the most fruitful outcome of the council, an opinion shared by Cardinal Pellegrino, Cardinal Martini, Cardinal Etchegaray and others. (See references in "The Centrality of the Word of God" by Enzo Bianchi in *The Reception of Vatican II* (ed. Alberigo et al), p. 115, note 1).

We Catholics needed to rediscover the centrality of the bible. In spite of attempts before the council to promote a greater awareness among Catholics of the importance of scripture, the bible often remained an unused treasure. This had been the case for some centuries. Especially after the protestant reformation in the 16th century, with its emphasis on "the bible alone," many Catholics came to see the bible, perhaps unconsciously, as a "dangerous" book. Thus, in catholic countries, the bible was often not translated into the language of the people until surprisingly late. The entire vernacular bible was not printed in Spain, for example, until 1793, largely because of opposition from the Spanish inquisition. The first translation in Portuguese was the work of a Calvinist missionary in the Orient, who completed the New Testament in 1681. The first vernacular New Testament appeared in Brazil in 1864 — more than 350 years after the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries.

In this respect Catholics in Protestant England were more fortunate. They had an approved Catholic translation of scripture, the Rheims-Douay version — the New Testament translation done at Rheims in 1582 and the Old Testament at Douay in 1609 - 1610. Both were done by Gregory Martin. From 1749 on, revisions were made by Bishop Challoner.

Even in the work of evangelization, Catholics did not play a prominent role in getting the scriptures into the hands of the people in their own language. As Stephen Neill writes in *A History of Christian Missions*:

The first principle of Protestant missions has been that Christians should have the Bible in their hands in their own language at the earliest possible date. The Roman Catholic method has been different.... For the most part such literature as had been produced [by Catholics] was made up of catechisms and books of devotion.

Neill cites some examples:

It is a fact that although Roman Catholics had been on the Fisher Coast in South India since 1534, the first translation of the New Testament into Tamil was that completed by the Protestant Ziegenbalg in 1714. The first Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in the Philippines in 1565. In three centuries almost the whole population had become Christian, yet it appears that the first translation of any part of the scriptures into any language of the Philippines, the Gospel of Luke in Pangasinan language, was made only in 1873 (p. 177).

Similarly:

At the end of the eighteenth century the Bible had been translated in whole or in part into not more than seventy languages; at the end of the nineteenth, complete bibles numbered more than 100, complete New Testaments another 120, and languages into which at least some part of the Bible had been rendered roughly 300 more. Owing to differing policies of missionary work the Roman Catholics had played little part in this tremendous effort of translation, which was almost wholly a Protestant achievement (p. 216).

We Catholics needed to rediscover the centrality of the bible.

Likewise here in the Americas, the first translation of the bible into a native language (Algonquin) was done by the Puritan missionary John Eliot (+ 1690).

It is true of course that from very early times, long before the unfortunate divisions in Christianity, there were vernacular translations of the bible. As early as 250 A. D. there is evidence of biblical translations into various dialects of the language we know today as Coptic. The Arian bishop Ulfilas (+ 383) translated the bible into the language of the Goths. The translation of the New Testament into Armenian was completed in 410 A. D., largely the work of the Patriarch Mesrob. In the 8th century Venerable Bede completed his translation of the gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon as he was dying. St. Cyril translated the bible into Slavonic in the 9th century, and the Franciscan Archbishop of Peking, John of Monte Corvino, translated the New Testament and the psalter into the Ongut language, in the 13th century.

Interestingly, the first translations of parts of the bible into Italian were done in the early 13th century, as a result of the widespread popular religious movements fostered by the friars. (The clergy and learned laity read the bible in Latin).

The unfortunate truth, however, is that for centuries the polemics of the Reformation/Counter-reformation period allowed little enthusiasm for bible translation or bible study by Catholics. Until the 13th century the bible occupied the first place in theological study. To some extent Scholasticism broke with tradition and introduced an ever more speculative theology. The Protestant reform reacted against that and insisted on a radical return to Scripture. In response, Catholic theologians withdrew even more from the bible, using it often for its "proof texts." In the early

decades of our own century, the excesses of the anti-modernist repression brought Catholic scholarship to a halt, for all practical purposes, especially in the areas of biblical and historical studies. Similarly, pre-Vatican II Rituals did not provide for scripture readings during the celebration of the sacraments. Although the Church never celebrated the Eucharist without scriptural readings, the liturgy of the word was not considered one of the "principal" parts of the Mass. (Pre-Vatican II catechisms generally listed the "offertory, consecration and communion" as the "three principal parts of the Mass.") As late as the 16th edition [1961] of Jone-Adelman's popular *Moral Theology* (n. 195), the authors dismiss as "unimportant" (sic!) the entire liturgy of the word!

Salutary Influence of Vatican II

That situation — and this is one of the great graces of our times — no longer obtains. All celebrations of the Sacraments have assigned scriptural readings in our ritual, even if, in the case of penance, the readings are optional when there is no communal celebration. Again the bible is seen as absolutely central for Catholic life. "Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ," said Vatican II (DV 25), quoting St. Jerome.

While the biblical restoration among Catholics began before Vatican II, thanks largely to the 1943 Encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of Pope Pius XII, it was surely the Council which most effectively promoted it. Vatican II's first document, the Constitution on the Liturgy, required a "more ample, more varied, and more suitable reading from Scripture" in liturgical celebrations (n. 35). One result of that important decision was the Lectionary of the Mass, approved in 1969, introducing a three-year cycle of Sunday readings and a two-year cycle of weekday readings. This lectionary is an enormous improvement over the previous arrangement of bible readings, where the same Sunday readings, with a strong predominance of Matthew, were repeated year after year.

Very importantly, the council taught that Christ "is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the scriptures are read in the church" (*Liturgy*, 7), and as Paul VI pointed out, that presence is a *real* presence (*Mysterium Fidei*, 39). This teaching seemed novel, even strange, to many Catholics, who had grown accustomed to thinking of Christ's real presence as an exclusively Eucharistic reference. Important too was the teaching of the Council on the parallelism between the scriptures and the Eucharist. In spite of a good deal of opposition the Council affirmed that "the church has always venerated the scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord ("Divine Scripturas sicut et Corpus Dominicum semper venerata est Ecclesia") in so far as she never ceases... to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the

Word of God and the Body of Christ (DV 21). In a similar vein see *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 18; *Ad Gentes*, 6; *Perfectae Caritatis*, 6). Actually the parallel in DV 21, while disturbing to some Council Fathers, is very traditional and can be found in Ignatius of Antioch, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine and the medieval Cistercians, through whom it found its way into the *Imitation of Christ*. As we shall see, the parallel between Scripture and the Eucharist was dear to St. Francis; he would have felt very comfortable with the conciliar teaching.

Francis and Scripture

As mentioned in the first essay of this series, Francis discovered his vocation with clarity not through the extraordinary mystical phenomena with which he was favored by God, but in hearing God's word, and specifically on hearing the mission discourse in the gospel. The gospel for him is not a matter for speculative study; it is his life, and the life of those who join his venture. He introduces his rule with the important words: "This is the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (R NB 2). His rule is "the life of the Gospel."

[Francis] was never a deaf hearer of the gospel, but committing everything he heard to his remarkable memory, he looked with all diligence to carry it out to the letter (1 Cel. 22).

Francis would have found it easy to agree with Soren Kierkegaard: "[We] forget or ignore the fact the truly simple way of presenting Christianity is — to do it."

Francis hears the Gospel not as good news only for other people, or as a saving word addressed only to people who had lived over a thousand years earlier, but as addressed very personally to him, here and now. His response was immediate and enthusiastic: "This is what I want, this is what I am looking for, this is what I long to do with all my heart" (1 Cel, 22). So convinced is Francis that God's word is a living word, addressed to us, here and now, that he sometimes changes the tense of the verb in the gospels from the past to the present. In his writings, Francis uses the expression, "The Lord *says*" ("Dicit Dominus") some 50 times. He hardly ever writes, "The Lord *said*." In this too Francis anticipated the teachings of Vatican II: "In the liturgy God speaks to his people, and Christ is still proclaiming the gospel" (*Liturgy*, 33). (See also the Council's notion of revelation, as God's loving self-communication, taking place here and now, in DV 2).

As he approaches death, Francis insists one last time that it was God Himself Who revealed the gospel life to him: "And after the Lord gave

me brothers, no one showed me what I should do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the Holy Gospel" (Test 14). Francis' zeal in living out this divine revelation is well described in 1 Cel 84:

[Francis'] highest intention, his chief desire, his main purpose was to observe the holy gospel in all things and through all things, and with perfect vigilance, with all zeal, with all the longing of his mind and the fervor of his heart, "to follow the teaching and the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In his *Major Life of St. Francis* (XIV, 5) St. Bonaventure records Francis' advice to his friars as he was dying: they are to hold on to "patience, poverty and the faith of the holy Roman church, *while putting the holy gospel above all other norms* (Ceteris institutis sanctum evangelium anteponeas)."

Francis was graced with the gift of hearing the scriptures at a very deep level of his being. He heard the word with enormous fervor. He made a home for the word in his heart. The only sources he ever directly quotes in his writings are biblical sources. As 2 Cel (102) says:

Although this blessed man had received no education in human culture, even so, instructed in the wisdom that comes from God, and radiant with rays of eternal light, he had the highest understanding of the scriptures. His intelligence, pure from any stain, penetrated the deepest mysteries, and that which remained inaccessible to the scholarship of the masters, was opened to the affections of the lover.

It comes as no surprise to learn then, that as Francis was dying, he wanted to hear one last time that word which was the most precious of all words to him, the holy gospel. He asked that the text of John's gospel be read beginning with the words "Before the feast of Passover..." Francis celebrated his death as a Passover liturgy, and died with the word of God (psalm 141) in his heart and on his lips. (Cf. 2 Cel 217).

Francis' Teaching

As noted earlier, Francis alludes to the parallel between the word of God and the Eucharist — a parallel that is given emphasis in the teachings of Vatican II. In the second version of his Letter to the Faithful, Francis writes: "And let us, all firmly realize that no one can be saved except through the holy words and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" (34). God's word saves, just as does the Cross and the Eucharist! In his Letter to the Clergy (3), Francis writes: "In the world we have and see nothing corporally of the Most High except His Body and Blood, and the names and

words through which we have been made and have been brought from death to life (1 Jn 3:14)." We are made by God's word and given new life by God's word.

"We have and see the Most High *corporally* in His words," wrote Francis — an astonishing statement at first glance. "Corporally" means *really*, as opposed to *figuratively*. In his Testament (12) Francis again uses the word *corporally* to describe the presence of Christ in the Eucharist — a *real* presence. (Theologians in the 12th century began to speak of Christ being present in the Eucharist "corporaliter" to distance themselves from those who spoke of a "spiritual" presence — a teaching considered suspect). Francis uses the same emphatic word "corporaliter" to speak of Christ's presence both in his word and in the Eucharist. *Both* are *real* presences.

Francis is aware that the word of God is a *creative* word. The great mystery of the Eucharist is realized by the power of Christ's word, without which there can be no Eucharist (Ep Ord 37; Ep Cler 2); things are made holy by God's word (Ep Ord 37). The chronicler Odo of Cheriton reported an unusual insight of Francis; he claimed that Francis "used to say that he was a woman whom the Lord impregnated by his word and thus he brought forth spiritual children." The Franciscan movement was called into being by the seed of God's word!

Conclusion: Some Gospel Texts

In the gospels Jesus often speaks of the power and crucial importance of God's word. "Not on bread alone does one live but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). God's word is *life-giving*. In a similar vein Jesus says to the apostles: "You are clean" [i. e., your hearts are *pure*] *because of the word I spoke to you* (Jn 15:3). Not "because you have no sin or weaknesses" but "because of my word!" God's word purifies us at the core of our being. The other side — the tragic side — of that truth is the verdict that Jesus is compelled to pass on those who reject Him: "You do not have God's word abiding in your hearts" (Jn 5:42). And again, even more forcefully: "You cannot bear to hear my word. The father you come from is the devil, and you gladly carry out his wishes" (Jn 8:43f). And again: "Everyone who is of God hears every word God speaks. The reason you do not hear is that you are not of God" (Jn 8:47).

The great task of evangelization is to serve God's holy word to people, so we and they together can hear that word at an ever deeper level, and eagerly put it into practice.

Questions for Reflection (preferably in common):

1. Are you accustomed to think of Christ as being "really present" in his words?
2. The revised (1981) Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, 10, states: "The Church has honored the word of God and the eucharistic mystery with the same reverence, although not with the same worship." How do you understand that?
3. Can you think of ways to make the Scriptures more central in our lives, both as individuals and as communities? Are you aware of any efforts being made to make scripture more central?

★ ★ ★

Do you understand
what I have
done to you?

John 13:17



Co-Dependency and "Poverty" The Relevance of Recovery for the Vow

GUY FRANCIS NOONAN, T.O.R.

"There is a real need for some discussion of what poverty means practically for those Franciscans (I think the majority in the case of my community, and I suspect the majority in most American communities), whose mindset is so thoroughly white middle class and who continue to see an 'option for the poor' as somehow not their call.

For some, I'm afraid, the various trends (I hesitate to call them fads) such as 'co-dependency,' holistic education, and even global ecology, are a comfortable way of avoiding confronting themselves and others with whom they work concerning their attitudes and behaviors toward marginalized groups, particularly the economically poor."

(— Letter from a Sister to the Justice, Peace and Ecology Commission)

"We must also deny ourselves and place our bodies under the yoke of service and holy obedience, as each one has promised the Lord."

(— Francis of Assisi,
Second Letter to the Faithful, No. 40)

Two simple letters and both touch on poverty. But simple poverty is no simple thing.

We know that our friaries and convents are divided in quiet desperation with varied understandings regarding the vow of poverty. We are also divided regarding poverty's contribution to our evangelical witness within the community and to the world at large.

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We know the tension within ourselves and our Order. In all places we have met the many faces that turn at once toward and against what might be an authentic response to this vow.

We all know persons whom we have judged as Hallmarks of poverty and who have intuitively inspired us in their witness as men and women who seem poor.

Then again we all know others who appear externally poor and perhaps even stoic about these things, yet they seem also rich in the power they wield over our local communities. They hold our communities captive because of the flint of their egos and their will. In our own mistake we allow them this for the sake of peace.

Poverty. To define it simply is no simple thing. What looks poor is not necessarily truly poor. What is on the lips is not necessarily in the heart.

The vows are meant to help us in our common and evangelical lives. They compliment one another and commingle in such a manner as to defy a clear separation of one from another. In the Franciscan tradition, Poverty is a benchmark in at least three ways. It helps us become a new person because we are transformed from one who is totally self-reliant, into a person totally dependent on God. Second, we are transformed from one who is proud to one who is humble and capable of hearing when the Lord speaks. Third, through poverty we are transformed from interior selfishness into men and women who are generous and willing to share what we have.¹

These three aspects form one integrated process of growth from a false surface - self entailed in ego-centric cover-up to a more deeply centered self which is freed for evangelical otherness at large. It is the grace of "Trinification": one is awakened to one's identity as mere creature under the Creator; one becomes effectively conscious of the inner transcendental principle ['Word'] implanted deep within; one is born again of a new spirit.

The entire self is integrated. Feelings, thoughts and will — one's entire character — are rearranged around this center.² The superficial self acknowledges its own insufficiency and becomes a humble servant of a more profound and vital consciousness.

Francis and Clare:

Within this threefold outline Francis and Clare are situated as font for our own wisdom. In them we see persons who have surrendered a separatist ego. We see the exultation of humility and a resultant identification of one's creature self in union with all other creatures of the earth.

Their mystic spirits imply the abolition of individuality, of that hard separateness, that "I, ME, Mine" which makes of us an isolated, finite thing.³ Francis was exemplar: From his self-stripping in the village square

to the denudation by his friars at death, he sought to remove whatever cloaked him from identifying with all creation as part of simple, 'basic stuff,' the dirt and clay of God's own hand.

Francis and Clare PARTICIPATED in the common unity of Trinity and the community of creation and the human family. They had that wonderful gift of seeing all reality as one in the One — God. Their lives became a sacrament to the world of self-simplification and purgation, of setting aside self-interests and tangled motives.⁴ In stark relief they emphasized the stance of poverty, the "demolition of the verb 'to have' in every mood and tense." And in that process, particularly for Francis as seen in *The Canticle*, the Cosmos itself came unto them. They escaped the heresy of 'separateness,' and merged through this grace into a greater life with all.⁵

The fundamental Trinitarian mystery was enfleshed again. Humanity realized its potential to reflect the inner relational life of God.

This realization is most starkly revealed as the pure graciousness of God when nothing else seems to warrant it. When the poverty of creation is accepted as the fundamental 'given' and quite simply filled with the fullness of God.

It is precisely in this outpouring (the Word of God choosing poverty amidst human poverty) that human dignity is clearly grounded in its source Who is God. Any other status which is built on the accidents of race, color, creed or finance becomes insignificant. Just as the persons of the Godhead participate in each other's life and co-respect one another, so also humanity is given the same call. The core of vocation becomes mutual respect both because of the same poverty in all and the same grace-given for all.

I Have Done My Part; You Must Do Yours:

In the journey toward more authentic poverty each person hopefully comes to know what we must balance between the inner spiritual way and the outer expression of the vow so that we too might become one. It is not a question of one or the other or of one before the other. They march hand in hand.

Our inner spirit expresses itself externally and the external expression further intensifies the fire of the inner spirit. "Possessions can well interrupt this process. Claims, desires and attachments become centres of conflicting interest in one's heart. They complicate the mind because they easily enchain the spirit."⁶

And that's the point: "Poverty perhaps consists in giving up those things which enchain the spirit, divide its interests and deflect it on its road to God. It is attitude, not act that matters; self denudation would be unnecessary were it not for our inveterate tendency to attribute false value to

things the moment they become ours. It is the poor in spirit, not the poor in substance, who are spiritually blessed."⁷

Our Original Sin:

Perhaps the common thread of sin against the spirit of the vow is *control*: Holding on to our own self-will and what we want. This interferes with common life, common sharing of goods and common witness. It prevents true PAR-ticipation. (Pars + capere: to take part in with other persons, places and things). It certainly makes mute the Good News which we and the rest of our world need to hear.

Control is manifest by a self-will run riot, what Freud calls the exalted state of the child wishing only for itself. His or her majesty the child! It is the antithesis of a participative mentality:

Willfulness is a setting of oneself apart from the fundamental essence of life in an attempt to master, direct, control or otherwise manipulate existence.

Willingness, in contrast, implies a surrendering of one's self separateness, an entering into, an immersion into the deepest processes of life itself.⁸

Willfulness and control set in motion a number of reactions, none of them helpful for our goal of common life. To understand this better it is helpful to consider a relatively new insight into human behavior — the phenomenon of co-dependence.

Co-dependency — the Parent of Control:

Copedependence is not a trend or fad; it is a systematic problem and disease within our society. Co-dependency may be understood as outer-referenced behavior. It is manifest in varied ways: letting someone or something control how we think and act; controlling another person's behavior; striving to control the world of things at large.⁹ The common thread in all of this is that an outer stimulus determines the actions from our own inner source.

We can track our controlling path rather well. For example, we wish for something and fear not having it and so we plan and seize it when we can. Having stretched for what we coveted we then project the blame for any failure on another and continue our own cover-up of innocence. Like our mythic parents, we blame it on the snake! Of course this alienates us from our true self and from other persons for the outer world to see. A split personality occurs on progressively deeper levels of our consciousness.

It is probable that both individual and pan-human shame results as we conceal ourselves within ourselves and yet feign our self-reliance. In our

great mythos of Adam/Eve we see ourselves isolating, no longer participating. We become self-indicting as naked and then need at least some camouflage of cover to hide behind.

Such behavior arises from and re-enforces grandiosity. It becomes a weak imposter of strength. It is the foe of humility which alone will foster the participative mentality of which we have already spoken. It breeds the ground for otherness, not in a healthy 'my self' and 'your self' way, but in the sense of foe and 'have' versus 'have not.'

As we become entrenched in this cover-up we feign even more shamelessness, hiding our mistakes with more fig leaves of perfectionism, control, blame and other forms of projection.¹⁰ This becomes pandemic in ourselves and others. The world at large becomes our oyster as we assume it is all there for us.

It is power and control — self will run riot — that cause the haves to want for more than they need at the expense of the have-nots. It is power and control that cause men (mainly gender specific men) to fight war games of dominance as opposed to nurturing relationships with the same firmness and force. It is power and control that cause a brother or sister to hoard to himself or herself one's own will, the car, the house horarium, etc... And it is control that allows the superior to rely on his or her post to manipulate the group in ways that ultimately hurts progress in the life and the growth of the community as a whole.

Another Path:

Conversion — this is the primary focus of the vows — would entail turning from this path and its anxiety. The way to peace entails releasing our mental and physical hold on 'things.' We need to savor things within the unified theme of the whole creation story as narrated by Francis and Clare — life is gift given and received.

'Control is the obstacle to our full conversion.'¹¹ To the degree that we are actually and healthfully working on a program to deal with our own co-dependence, we will be seeking to address this control honestly.

Twelve Steps to Sanctity:

The movement to address co-dependence could serve sister Poverty very well. Through the Twelve Steps of growth (originally of AA) the friars and sisters could seek to recognize that on their own they are powerless. The conversion call begins with an awareness that each must surrender to other persons or a group beyond one's self in order to be restored to true spiritual health. (This does not give license for one to

control another!) In this process of relating powerlessly to others one also learns to turn their will consciously over to THE OTHER, God (Steps 1-3).

These same persons then begin working toward concretely giving up control. They make an inventory of themselves (Step 4), share it with significant others (Step 5), and bring it into prayer by asking and becoming ready for God to remove these defects of character (Steps 6, 7). They also strive to repair damage where it had been done by literally making a list and making direct amends (Steps 8, 9).

At this stage of the conversion process we become more aware of our own minority. We are but particulate in the whole of things. And yet, this diminishment offers the grace of clarity ('Clara': Clare) and speaks more frankly ('Frankum': Francis) about life than most others would dare.

We come to the awareness that in our smallness is also our particularity — we are of particular importance to the Creator God as a part of the whole. Francis and Clare clearly show no doubt as to this gift of the Lord.

A Life Time of Conversion:

This graced awareness cannot come easily. It is the final verse of a song written slowly throughout life. The lyrics speak of the mask of grandiosity and the feigned role of 'learned and the clever' (Mt 11:25) which are betrayed for what they are. Progressively one commits to continue to reflect (Step 10), and to improve conscious contact with God (Step 11) while practicing these principle in all affairs (Step 12).

There is a saying in Twelve Step recovery circles: 'To your own self be true.' However, this is far from the self-centeredness depicted in our opening lines. Persons on this conversion-way have realistically acknowledged shortcomings and strengths to themselves, others and God and have developed and changed along the way. The medium is the message. The results are exchange, breakthrough and love (Reuther). There is a gift-grace dimension here that is undeniable.

On-going Formation:

There seems to be significant data to suggest that many religious, Franciscans well situated among them, are caught within a cycle of control that draws them down another path. It is the old struggle of the spirit versus flesh, so notably recorded by the Apostle Paul. We state our values as self-giving and yet often act in quite another way:

It is clear that young religious are being pulled in opposite directions. They proclaim and strive after values of deferent service, obedience and shunning of competitive control yet in the latent self, present a picture of greater

Perhaps the common thread of sin against the spirit of the vow is control...

aggression, domination of others, autonomy and emotionality. They proclaim values and a readiness to sacrifice for a better world while, at the same time, demonstrating conflicts in the areas of aggression, domination, avoidance of criticism, etc....

Research shows that these central conflicts exist after four years of religious formation and that only 2% of male and female religious grew in affective maturity. At entrance 86% of male religious and 87% of female religious were ignorant of their central conflicts. After four years of religious formation, 83% of the men and 84% of the women were still ignorant of their central conflicts.¹²

Does your personal experience state that older religious are much different from what is described above?

Religious do not have the market on either spiritual growth or regression. Like the rest of humanity we strive to grow where we happen to be, making decisions as best we can along the way. It is helpful for us to not pretend that we have an added-edge over the rest of our brothers and sisters of the world, or even that we are of a higher state.

What might be true is that we have more to our advantage because particular resources (spiritual directors, counsellors, etc.) are perhaps more available to us than to the average population. Also, the theological mysteries (e. g., Trinity) are more highlighted in our way of life.

But I would guess that at least initially we are hardly better off than the rest of the church within which we live and wherein we are called to serve. For the most part, after initial formation, life becomes our teacher as with the rest of humankind. Throughout life we are slowly stripped of our garments.

Original Blessing:

We could serve that church well by putting on the table the many human frailties that prevent the healthy breaking of bread and sharing of cup at our daily table of the Lord. Clericalism, superiority, passive aggression, and all our other forms of control are deeply within every sinew of our selves. These are symptoms which show that we hold by far too tightly the bread and cup we are called to share.

Francis and Clare remind us to 'let go', participate and go more with

the flow of life than we tend to do. Within this context human solidarity is born out of the Triune solidarity of God. Poverty highlights the graciousness of our situation and the need to foster constantly an awareness of this gift dimension — the original blessing — of life.

For Francis and Clare this is none other than the originating grace of Trinity, experienced on every level of creation and personal or communal life. The implications for social justice and solidarity with the poor are frankly clear. So convinced are Francis and Clare on this path that Francis speaks for both when he says:

Whoever shall observe these things shall be filled with the blessings of the Most High Father in heaven, and on earth with the blessings of his beloved Son, with the Holy Spirit, and with all the virtues and saints.

And I, Brother Francis, your little one and servant, in so far as I am able, confirm to you within and without this most holy blessing.

(— Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters, Third Order Regular, No. 31)

Endnotes

¹Jordan, Hite, "Franciscan Penitential Themes," *Analecta*, Rome: 1981, p. 867.

²Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, New York: New American Library, 1974, p. 64.

³*Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁸Gerald May, *Will and Spirit*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982, p. 6.

⁹Melody Beattie, *Co-Dependent No More*, New York: Harper and Row, 1987, p. 31.

¹⁰John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, 1988, p. 126.

¹¹Jordan Hite, "Franciscan Penitential Themes," *Analecta*, Rome: 1981, p. 871.

¹²David B. Couturier, OFM, Cap., "Life in Minority: From Trans-Cultural To Trans-Economic Trinity," *The Cord*, (November, 1988), Vol. 38, No. 10, pp. 302-303. Luigi M. Rulla, *Depth Psychology and Vocation*, Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1971; Luigi M. Rulla, *The Anthropology of Christian Vocation*, Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1986.

Book Reviews

A Question of Values: Six Ways We Make the Personal Choices That Shape Our Lives. By Hunter Lewis. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990. Pp. 282. Cloth, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Richard J. Mucowski, O.F.M., Ed. D., Executive Vice President, Professor, Community Counseling, St. Bonaventure University.

As the United States prepared to go to war in the Mid-East under the guise of barring further aggression from a militant Iraqi opportunist, it was interesting to note the chatter. Congress appeared to give initial support to sending troops, now the American people hear grumbling in Congress about our nation's true, stated purposes. The President who sent those troops to the Mid-East also promised "no new taxes" and found himself backpeddling on that promise because the climate in the country and the economy had changed. It is interesting that someone should write a book about personal choices and values in such a climate. No matter what, significant decisions each of us make, whether we like it or not, involve values.

Hunter Lewis creates a framework in which personal values can be defined, compared and contrasted. His purpose is to study the process of how Americans take their private value systems into the public forum in the context of a society within which many, often conflicting values vie for the attention of the majority.

The framework which the author builds provides a system for understanding and comparing the various ways people can think about decisions. Decisions which they make, and which effect them and others is what this book is all about. The six ways of thinking which he proposes are these: Authority, Logic, Experience, Emotion, Intuition, and Science. As one reads his compelling presentation, he or she would be very hardpressed to think of choices and decisions which fall outside the author's tight framework. All of the possibilities which come to this reviewer's mind, in fact, form a fabric of one or more combinations of positions out of the six ways of choosing values. Lewis then goes on to explore, from his perspective, the human and misleading dimensions involved in each of the six schemata.

This reviewer particularly enjoyed Lewis' critique of the debate between the "value-neutral" position in education which was posited by Richard Cohen and that of Gary Bauer who maintains that it is impossible to teach without teaching values. Concerning his own desires and purpose, Lewis maintains: "If you express even one belief before you have heard from your listeners, you become an advocate, not — for want of a better word — a guide. I have been an advocate, and I will want to be an advocate again, but in this book I want to be a guide... offering critiques from alternative perspectives, with no blanket condemnation of any one ap-

proach (p. 187)." Has he done this? I believe he has. Is he clear? I am not always sure that he is clear. For instance, I found that his epilogue — Values in the Classroom continued — to be so filled with conflicting values systems which he then tried to reinterpret within his own framework, that I began to get confused. Perhaps I was searching for his choices, his values with which to fight what he was putting forward, but that argument managed to elude me.

The book certainly deserves consideration in courses which focus on moral behavior, ethics, political theory and senior seminars involved in the study of values. It is the kind of text that can be used to spark discussions in capstone courses at the college or university level.

Other aspects of the book which make it appealing are a chapter titled "How to read this book" which sets out a format to satisfy the needs of different kinds of readers. He also lists a section on sources and provides the reader with his address if the reader wishes to locate key sources for the various sections of the text. For this feature alone, the book could be an invaluable resource for serious discussion of values and their influence on American society today.

Women in Church History. By Joanne Turpin. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati, OH 45210. 1990. 173 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by April Oursler Armstrong, SFO, Ph.D. (Fordham), author, retired Assoc. Prof. Theology, Sacred Heart University, CT.

Joanne Turpin believed that Church history was always written by men. She

wanted to show us that, in every century, there is always a great woman who could do so much for the Church. She picked one for each century, using martyrs, mystics, missionaries, founders. She said: "Jesus made no secret about his feelings toward women." For the 21st century she emphasizes the need for "full participation . . . by laypersons." She likes Franciscan Fr. Leonardo Boff's line: "At critical moments it is always the women who show the most courage." My response would be to agree: for Mary, pregnant, who conceived by the Holy Spirit and knew she could be stoned to death, did have courage. Franciscan St. Maximilian Kolbe used to speak of "God's conception" of perfect love and courage.

In Church history certain women come instantly to mind. There are martyrs like Perpetua (2 c.) and probably Prisca (1 c.). There are abbesses, teachers, communicators, and planners, like Macrina of Cappadocia (4 c.) and her brother Gregory of Nyssa. Brigid of Kildare (6 c.), was a sort of "publisher," and Hilda of Whithy (7 c.), wisely gave us Caedmon the first English poet.

One does realize though that for the not-so-well known women of other centuries many are not likely to inspire others because it takes tremendous explanation of dogma and inner politics in Europe and the Byzantine world. One needs a good historical novel to make men or women get excited by them. Such would be Adelaide, Empress of the Holy Roman Empire (10 c.) or Pulcheria of Constantinople (5 c.).

But when it comes to the better known autobiographers and mystics, readers are more at ease. Turpin uses Clare (13 c.) who taught those in the

church the value of "a life of absolute poverty." Like Francis, she was to teach the Church that many men unfortunately were "contradicting the very gospel values" they spoke of. And Turpin shows that for Clare it was an "achievement" to be an example of "pure and perfect friendship" with Francis.

In the 14 c. Turpin points to Catherine of Siena as both a secular and spiritual diplomat of mystical power. The 24th child of a wool dyer, Catherine not only worked for the sick and the poor, she got the vacillating Pope Gregory VI out of Avignon and back to Rome. She died at 33, worn out after her amazing writings and letters. (She did not die of strokes, as Turpin says, but of weak veins in her legs from traveling.)

But, as I read the 15 and 16 c. writings of Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila, I suddenly realized there were unusual underlining thoughts in Turpin's book.

She writes of Catherine of Genoa's Treatise on Purgatory, saying it "is only part of . . . (her) larger doctrine on the" goodness of God which "will be emphasized . . . because of a controversy involving Martin Luther." That seems odd to bring in Luther with Catherine's Dialogue with God, our Father. Yet, in the very next chapter, in the background remarks for Teresa of Avila Turpin again talked about Luther. Luther had only minimal influence in 16th c. Spain. Could there be some semblance of an anti-magisterium problem?

I looked back to the beginning. Personally I had thought the first woman in history should have been Mary. But Turpin actually kept Mary out of the entire book, except for one page on the disagreements at synods, ending up in Ephesus. It has not occurred to me that

she may have a dislike of Mariology. I had not wanted to point out a mistake, but I studied the beginning chapter.

Turpin began with "background" material on "the house of Mary" in Jerusalem: Mary "the mother of John . . . Mark." She says: "Within decades, Mary's house church was to be duplicated in communities across the Middle East and Europe." Mary's a very common name. But we know that John Mark's mother Mary, who may have owned the house in Acts 1, was not the same Mary so important in Acts 1:14. Praying together for the Holy Spirit only one woman is mentioned by name — Mary, the mother of Jesus.

I like Turpin's style, I don't think her too terribly biased as a "woman's lib." But I do know we are desperately in need for real basic teaching of Vatican II. To do that one must include the careful teaching of *Lumen Gentium* — and chapter 8, which treats of Mary, Mother of the Church.

Shorter Notices

by JULIAN DAVIES, O.F.M.

The Catholic Answer Book. By Peter M. J. Stravinskis. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1990. Pp. 192, inc. Index. Paper, \$7.95.

The Catholic Answer Book is an extremely valuable work for two groups of people. Those brought up in the 50's and before who are perplexed about all that has happened in the church, those brought up in the 60's - 80's who unfortunately may not be aware that there are *Catholic answers* in matters religious. Six areas encompass the scope of this work: Scripture, Doctrine, Moral-

ity, Sacraments, Divine Worship and Catholic Practices. A detailed index makes reference to the many questions posed and answered an easy matter. The answers are to the point, neither too long, nor too short, and they cover most of the questions/complaints I hear as a priest. I recommend this book highly. Would recommend that all parishes had it on their book rack.

Saint of the Day. Lives and Lessons for Saints and Feasts of the New Missal. By Leonard Foley, O.F.M. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1990. Pp. xi-353, inc. Index. Cloth, \$19.95.

Homilists, catechists, and CCD people have undoubtedly made good use of the first edition of *Saint of the Day*, published 14 years ago. Since that time a number of saints have been added to the universal calendar of the Saints and Blessed such as Maximilian Kolbe, Brother Andre Bissette, and Marie-Rose Durocher to name a few, and these are in this new edition. In addition, reflections on several Feasts of Our Lord, such as the Sacred Heart and Presentation, descriptions and reflections on Marian feasts, feasts of angels and of dedications of Churches are new. The only saint "dropped" from this edition is St. Camillus, whose feast on July 14 is perpetually impeded in the United States and Canada for the commemoration of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. Like many others I look forward to the appearance of this work in paperback.

St. Francis at Prayer. By Wolfgang Bader, Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990. Pp. 108. Paper, \$6.95.

This small work is something valuable

for Franciscans of any sort. After a brief introduction describing Francis' spirituality, the author gives a fresh English translation (from a German work) of prayers that Francis prayed, whether found in his writings properly speaking, or in the writings of Francis' biographers, Celano, *Mirror of Perfection*, etc. The book concludes with Celano's "Portrait of Francis" and a chronological table. Highly recommended.

Breaking Open the Gospel of Luke. By Gerard P. Weber and Robert Miller. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1990. Pp. 101, inc. bibliography. Paper, \$5.95.

This is a book containing information, written for inspiration. Outlining a five-fold process of bringing life to Scripture (not just reading Scripture and applying it), the authors treat of the Christian Vocation, Jesus as storyteller, healer, fellow at table, the Kingdom, and the Journey of Faith. The chapters have sub-sections, with questions for reflection. Religious communities who are becoming aware of faith-sharing will find this a very useful tool, as will homilists. Although it is Luke's Gospel that the authors primarily concentrate on, what they say has application to understanding the New Testament. Though clearly written, *Breaking Open the Gospel of Luke* is a profound book, and a valuable asset to any personal and community library.

Leisure a Spiritual Need. By Leonard Doohan. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1990. Pp. 100. Cloth, \$4.95.

A good deal of material about prayer and the spiritual life is compressed into this timely book. Leisure is necessary

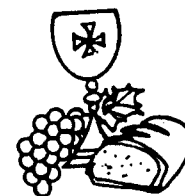
for a prayer-life — but what sort of leisure? Certainly not the type of leisure that has made the leisure industry a 180 billion dollar a year business in this country. Such leisure too often has all the characteristics of work, and often is possible only because of overwork to make the necessary money's. Nor can leisure be part of a pre-packaged spirituality, since faith is a risk, and programmed spiritualities, as Charismatic, Marriage Encounter (my examples) prayer groups tend to promote security. Leisure involves integrating work and free time, it involves creativity, play, community, wonder at the universe and openness to God.

The heart of the work contains chapters on Sabbatical Living, Leisure and Spiritual Development, Leisure and Aids, Blocks to a Leisured Approach to Aids, What to do and not do in Leisure Time. The author is well aware of the workaholic mentality that so many religious — and laypeople too — have gotten themselves into. He has some valuable suggestions and insights, but I don't think they are an outcome of anything that Vatican II has to say, or a new ecclesiology in the Church, as he suggests. An important observation he

makes is that leisure is something personal, and has to be approached in an individual way. If individuals do start bringing leisure into their lives (but not working at doing so) then society at large may be cured of the work ethic that often inhibits genuine relationships with God.

Answering a Fundamentalist. By Albert J. Nevins, M. M. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1990. Pp. 142, inc. Index. Paper, \$5.95.

The title of the book aptly describes its purpose. Sixteen major fundamentalist objections to the Catholic Church — as taken from their literature — are discussed in a coherent, clear, and easy-to-read fashion. Among the topics are the Bible, Tradition, the Church, the Papacy, the Eucharist, Mary, Saints and Images, the Inquisition, Confession, the Sacraments, the Papacy and Infallibility. An index of names and themes and a bibliography make this a handy reference point for Catholics who meet at work and school these objections and for parents whose children may have gone in the direction of fundamentalism.



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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

REFLECTION:

On War and Peace. The Story of a New Creation

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

And God saw how human beings throughout the earth, from East and West, from North and South, without distinction of race, religion or sex, began to weave close bonds of friendship. Nations chose their best men and women and sent them to that famous glass palace on the island of Manhattan which is open to all the nations on the earth. There they began to listen to one another, to learn from each other's history, to understand each other and to elaborate common projects.

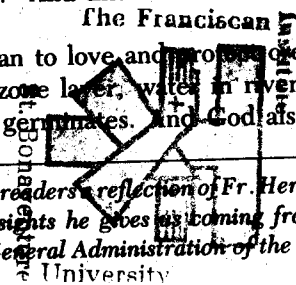
And God said: "It is good that it be so". And this was the first day of a new era.

And God saw how the soldiers of peace separated armies of the nations still at war; how disagreements were healed by prudence and negotiations, rather than by arms; how the leaders of the nations began to listen to the voice of their people and how all jointly began to prefer the good of the whole universe and the peace of a united world to private and national interests.

And God said: "It is good that it be so." And this was the second day of the new planet.

And God saw how human beings began to love and protect the creation rather than exploit it, the air and the ozone layer, water in rivers and oceans, the earth and all that lives and germinates. And God also saw

The CORD is privileged again to share with its readers a reflection of Fr. Hermann Schalück. We are grateful to him for the insights he gives us coming from his remarkable experiences as a member of the General Administration of the Order of Friars Minor.



that human beings no longer dominated or exploited one another but, seeing themselves as children of one Father, treated each other as equals.

And God said: "It is good that it be so." And this was the third day of the era of new thinking.

And God saw how human beings throughout the earth began to search out and eliminate the causes of hunger, sickness, ignorances, suffering and debasing poverty; how they began to share in common that which belongs to all; how, in view of the common good and of life at world level, they began to see the positive aspects and the points of convergence of all races and religions.

And God said: "It is good that it be so." And this was the fourth day of the new creation.

And God saw how, with an admirable sense of responsibility and without the thirst for power, human beings began to utilize the natural resources which had been entrusted to them, particularly combustible material taken from the earth and atomic energy; how their conscience was always alert and prompted them to consider whether all the new projects were in accordance with service of God and of humanity and especially of the poor; how they abandoned arrogance for sensitivity, greed for unselfishness, egoistic individualism and nationalism for the spirit of a new and lasting solidarity.

And God said: "It is good that it be so." And that was the fifth day of a more human world.

And God saw how human beings of all the continents set about dismantling and destroying their rocket launching ramps, their arsenals of bombs and munitions, their chemical and biological arms of destruction as well as their spy satellites and detection systems; how they disbanded their armies and, consequently, initiated in all their schools and education systems a pedagogy of peace so evident and logical that conflicts could be solved by peaceful means.

And God said: "It is good that it be so." And it was the sixth day of a new heaven.

And God saw how human beings finally began to recognize him as the God in love with life; how they considered the struggle for peace, justice and the integrity of our wounded creation of true worship of the living God; how, each time that one of their ideologies failed, on proposing a new constitution they would write: "Let us never lose sight of the one God, because he is the beginning and the center of a just and human world. And as human beings, alive and free, peaceful and without arms, let us be signs of his healing presence in history."

And God said: "Now all is well." It was the seventh day of the creation of the universe which, for the future, belonged completely both to a new humanity and to the one God of all mankind. □

The Role of the Imagination in Franciscan Discernment

RAMONA MILLER, O.S.F.

Leo was the beneficiary of the extant letter written by St. Francis assuring him that whatever he would choose to do it would have Francis' blessing: "In whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprints and His poverty...."¹ Franciscans discerning ministry choices, community living situations, educational improvements, choices in relationships or faced with dilemmas of conscience are often bewildered by what exactly is their next step in "his footprints." Our imagination has the potential for supplanting "bewilderment" with hope and confidence in choosing direction(s) for our lives. The role of the imagination in Franciscan discernment will be reflected upon in this article in a fourfold manner: 1) the imagination, 2) discernment, 3) Francis' self-image in discernment and 4) a process for Franciscan discernment.

Imagination

Perhaps the first stumbling block in recognizing the importance of the imagination is overcoming the childhood prejudice against its positive role because of the response given to us when we expressed fears like fear of the dark night; "it's just your imagination." According to the contemporary author, Kathleen Fischer, the Age of Enlightenment is to blame for putting aside the use of the imagination in order to place all trust in reason for leading us to truth.² In recent years the scientific world

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has been discovering that we have more than one center in our brain that directs our actions. Jean Houston has developed an exercise for "awakening the brain" to stimulate the fuller use of our reason and imaginative powers.³ Her work is indicative of a larger effort at recovering the loss of the power of imagination to assist us along with reason on the mythic journey toward oneness. It is the imagination that bridges the inner core of a person — the mystery that is a share in the divinity — with the outer reality, the sharing in the life of creation sometimes referred to as "the world." The Christian imagination is fueled by unlimited source of energy, the spirit of the Lord. "We are only earthenware jars" holding the overwhelming power that comes from God (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7). Francis' terminology was not that of an inanimate object, a jar, but rather the term "spouse" of an intimate relationship: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to Our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴ Intimate relationships are the desire of every human heart so Francis' terminology has universal appeal and holds the promise that our souls joined by the Holy Spirit to Jesus contain the unlimited source of Life that is the life shared with Jesus.

It has been the psychologist, Jung, who has found a way of helping people make contact with their depths by active imagination so that by paying attention to images from dreams, fantasies and reflection they can come to channel their energies more directly toward wholistic living. The imagination deepens one's connectedness with the Mystery at the center of human life and in so doing empowers the person to journey toward full achievement which is complete identification with Jesus Christ, the exemplar of a mature human person. St. Paul's description of this state of being is being able to say: "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Attaining maximum human potential requires vivid images that will act as a motor-drive producing physical conditions through released emotions and external acts to fulfill the desired goal. Nothing is achieved without first imagining it.

Scripture offers images for Christian identity and even more so for Franciscans who profess to live the form of life of the holy gospel following Jesus Christ after the example of St. Francis. It is of utmost importance that we discover the biblical images that evoke a positive affective response if we are to "move along" on our spiritual journey. Perhaps the pre-discernment process work is to re-image God. When Celie of *The Color Purple* re-imaged God "freeing herself of the image of God as those who have oppressed her, white and males, she is able to acquire some respect for herself, and it is only by growing in a sense of self that she is able to be open to a God who is full of promise for the future."⁵ Is our image of God one that evokes an affective response? Vivid images that evoke affective responses are guiding symbols in the discernment process.

Jesus' imagination was fully operative when after proclaiming the Scripture in the Nazareth synagogue he affectively proclaimed "This text is being fulfilled today" (cf. Luke 4:167-21). He so identified with Isaiah's words that he became the very person described: the one sent to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give sight to the blind.... We first need to have an affective link with the image before we live it out. Franciscan women would perhaps find it easier to relate to female biblical images evoking their combinatory imagination. Kathleen Fischer has provided suggestions in *Women at the Well* such as the Samaritan woman at the well who becomes a disciple when she put her jar down and hurried back to tell the people... (cf. Jn. 4:28). Another woman preacher is Mary at the tomb who is commissioned by the Lord to "go find the brothers and tell them" (cf. Jn. 20:17). Modern day women disciples will have a healthier spirituality when they can focus the imagination more clearly on self-images that participate in bringing about the reign of God that is "the human situation in which the love and justice and mercy of God will control all relationships and govern all human affairs."⁶ Perhaps this dearth of female images that engage the combinatory imagination is why Clare of Assisi is becoming so important to all Franciscan women today, not only the Poor Clares. Clare represents a response to God's initiative to leave secularistic goals for counter-cultural living solely for the honor and glory of God. Our cultural addiction to materialism is in sharp contrast to this noble woman whose spiritual power in poverty withstood invading armies. One wonders what image empowered her when she made the sign of the cross on the sick. Did Clare image herself as the disciple that Mark describes would lay hands on the sick and they would be healed (cf. Mark 16:18)?

Discernment

Discernment may be more properly identified as the virtue of prudence at work in making judgments about proposed choices in life. Christian discernment is being conscious while making decisions of being God's children. St. Paul outlines what consciousness is operative in discernment: "You must try to be like him. Your life must be controlled by love just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God" (Eph. 5:1-2). At various stages of life the concerns for discernment will vary according to one's roles and responsibilities. Bonaventure gave guidance to ministers that discernment was the "foresighted consideration of things to be done."⁷ Generally speaking a discernment moment is not about making a list of things to be done but rather choosing the direction of one's life for increased authenticity as one of God's children striving to be like Christ. In discernment we evaluate

certain forms of conduct and imagined choices against our self-understanding and basic values.⁸ The goal of discernment is to free us from falsehoods so that becoming more conscious of our intentions and guiding symbols we will be more free. This freedom is the freedom of the spirit which "produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness..." (Gal. 5:22).

The role of the imagination here in discernment is to keep us conscious of our guiding symbol(s). The discerning person will reflect upon their image of who they believe they are becoming in the eyes of God and identify feelings associated with different choices being considered in the discernment process. Are these feelings of increased freedom prompting gleeful shouts of grateful joy of God? (cf. Romans 8:15-17). This increased freedom as children of an All-loving Parent (God) is an ongoing process. Like Francis in prayer we ask "Lord, who are you and who am I?" for continually assessing who we are becoming.

Francis' Self-Image in Discernment

Franciscan discernment presupposes a desire to make a conscious choice in life's journey to follow Jesus Christ after the example of St. Francis. In Francis' conversion process he prayed: "O great and glorious God and my Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten, I beseech thee, the darkness of my mind. Give me a right faith, a certain hope, and a perfect charity. Grant that I may know thee, Lord, in order that I may always and in all things act according to thy most holy and perfect will."⁹ This prayer contains the kernel of effectively uncovering the hidden purpose for which we are created. First, there is the humble acknowledgement that God has the loving power to cast out the darkness of the mind and to bring to consciousness the direction of one's life. Happiness in life comes from being authentically one's self which is manifesting the full potential that God so intended in creating us. Secondly, there is the expressed desire to do whatever would be pleasing to God "according to thy most holy and perfect will."

Francis' discernment begins when "the humble *servant* of God, filled with *agonizing doubt* as well as a *spirit of detachment* and obedience, turns to *trusted friends* in the Lord to seek the road that leads to *peace*."⁷ [Emphases are mine.] The specific situation that is the reference story for "Francis, a humble servant of God, in agonizing doubt,...." is #16 Story in the *Fioretti* which tells how Francis sent a messenger to his two trusted friends, Clare and Sylvester, asking them to prayerfully consider what God's will was for him and to send back a response.¹¹

Let us reflect further about Francis' self image as a humble servant of God. We know Francis identified himself as "servant" from his writings and he used "servant" in his *Admonitions* to describe the spirituality of the friars.¹² Recalling Francis' pre-conversion stage of life we can speculate

on his memories of servant when he was the aspiring knight with servants. His transformation in grace was such that he became a servant who was "lesser" than even the outcast lepers. Francis' life was turned around by a vision on his way to Apulia when he heard a voice ask, "Who can do more for you, a lord or a servant...?"¹³ Francis' natural response was to seek that lord who would "do more" for him.

Francis' conversion was directed by the word of God and he came to revere the Gospel because it was the Gospel that directed his way of life. It is the Gospel that gave Francis his understanding of "servant" as we can recognize in his writings, particularly the 1221 Rule: "Let the ministers and servants remember what the Lord says: I have not come to be served, but to serve" (Mt. 20:28).¹⁴ And in the same Rule, Chapter V, we read: "The rulers of the peoples have power over them, and their leaders rule over them (Mt. 20:25); it shall not be like this among the brothers (cf. Mt. 20:26a). And whoever among them wishes to become the greater should be their minister (cf. Mt. 20:26b) and servant. And whoever is the greater among them should become like the lesser (cf. Lk. 22:26)."

Francis has appropriated for himself Jesus' use of the name "servant." Jesus could proclaim in that Nazareth synagogue "this day the text is being fulfilled" because his own imagination connected his true inner self with the Word of God He has just proclaimed. Francis lived with an eschatological consciousness that each day "the kingdom of God is at hand" (cf. Mk. 1:15) and his guiding symbol of being servant of the Lord meant that for him each and every moment was a birthing of the reign of God that would be visibly obvious by the love shared with others and indeed with all of creation. Francis' poverty was a necessity for the quality of servant he aspired to be. The interior poverty stripped Francis of any false notions that he was the originator of the good he would do "in service." Francis imaged himself as the "footwasher" whose manner of relating to others would announce and indeed bring about God's love, mercy and salvation.¹⁵

Evaristo Acosta Maestre in his study "The Discernment of Spirits According to St. Francis of Assisi"¹⁶ identifies that the qualities of Francis as servant who is able to discern the will of God are: interior poverty, humility, and minority. These qualities disposed Francis, the discerning person, to become childlike in imaging himself as a recipient of all good that is from God. In this image the discerning person is not fortifying themselves for a burdensome task that is "God's will" but rather enthusiastically looking for the increased way of participating in God's love being outpoured in the present time.

The servant as an eschatological person recognizes God's outpouring of goodness in each and every moment and desires to die to their own

egoism in order to be interiorly poor so as to more fully participate as a partner in God's goodness being shared. Now we can better understand the freedom of Francis in his advice to Leo because Francis and Leo have been bonded as brothers in their desire to live the form of life they sought approval for from Pope Innocent III, i. e. to live according to the form of the Holy Gospel. "In whatever way it seems best to you..." is advice being given to a companion who is already sharing in the mission of Jesus by living the Beatitudes. What is the best way to serve, i.e. to participate in the announcing and the co-creating of the reign of God?

Process for Discernment

Having considered the potential power of our imagination to bring to our mind the guiding symbols for our expression of loving response to God's call and having reviewed Francis' own example of discernment, I now propose a five step process for making the best creative decision within a given set of circumstances: 1) Clarify one's guiding symbols, 2) Identify the "doubt" and proposed change, 3) Compare the possible choices with one's guiding symbol and be attentive to accompanying feelings, 4) Share with trusted friends and 5) Seek confirmation.

First, clarify the images that are one's guiding symbols for every day activity. Earlier I mentioned Celie of *Color Purple* as an example of someone who needed to shift her image of God before she could become free and able to discern how to develop her full potential. Persons who have not given this much thought may find it helpful to spend some time in solitude pondering, "Lord, who are you and who am I?". A helpful suggestion to take into prayer is the Rule that we profess. Brothers and sisters of the Third Order regular have had an opportunity to refocus their images with the interiorization processes of the 1982 Rule these recent years. Each person must spend time with the Rule and the Gospel to name their own guiding symbol that resonates so deeply within them that they no longer can separate the reality of the symbol from their own self-image. This was the case for Francis whose answer to "Who am I?" is "servant of the Lord."

Second, name the "doubt" that is in consideration in this discernment process and the possible response(s). What is the source of the call to make a change in one's life? By this we mean that we identify what is happening that gives indication that change is necessary in one's life. A call from superiors? from the community? from the Lord in prayer? or from increased consciousness of the world? Since the close of the Second Vatican Council all Christians are faced with new responsibilities to live out the teachings of the council Fathers inspired by the Holy Spirit that all the joys and sorrows of others are the joys and sorrows of the church.

Franciscans are a special group of disciples because, like Francis, their cloister is the world. Their perception of their social, political, economic and religious environments will evoke images of ways to respond so that the reign of God is increased in this world. Discerning persons will become more sensitized to the images in society that corrupt human progress from achieving God's purpose and will discover their imagination directing them to become "prophetic image-crafters" who discover the means for bringing about an illumination for action to change complex social problems.¹⁷ Like Francis who experienced an agonizing doubt about what his ministry should be, the discerning Franciscan is often faced with making choices that are between two goods. In this stage of the discernment process the Franciscan identifies "doubt" about the adequacy of their present response to God and names the possible choices that can be made.

The third stage for discernment is to compare the possible choices with one's personal guiding symbol. The imagination can be very helpful here in allowing one to image the proposed choices and compare the accompanying feelings about a given choice with the guiding symbol in their life. If imaging a given choice evokes feelings of less freedom or of restraint on ministering God's love and mercy according to personal talents then this needs to be given serious reconsideration. A choice for following in the footsteps of Jesus in the example of Francis would not put one in conflict with their basic values, but instead would increase one's capacity for having and sharing the fruits of the Spirit.

The discerning person will feel a surge of energy and insight that empowers them to further involvement in bringing about the reign of God when the choice for the "next step" on life's journey is coming from the dwelling place within. New insights about one's relationship with God do not necessarily require a change in ministry. Sometimes one receives further illumination of the meaning of life in order to be buoyed up along the way of the faith journey. An olive wood statue of a Jewish girl carrying a water jug on her head reminds me of such an insightful moment in my retreat experience in Nazareth. This young woman — Mary — in doing the ordinary household tasks made it possible in her ordinariness for the Word of God to become a human being and to live with us. Co-creating with God is as ordinary as fetching the water for the household and as extraordinary as channeling redeeming grace in the process.

Uncomfortable feelings of anticipated suffering that would be a consequence of a choice for extending God's reign are not to be confused with the feelings of restraint and oppression that some choices would result in. An example might be that a person feels called to leave a professional job to serve the street people in an inner city soup kitchen context. The suffering anticipated in leaving a secure position to risk living and working in an "unsafe" neighborhood may be such that imagining this casts doubts

on its authenticity as a call from God. However, if the discerning person resonates in an affective manner with their guiding symbol in the choice to serve the poor then the anticipated sufferings are minimized by the confidence that this call is from God who will always be present with us and who can only love us.

A contrasting example is a woman who has great hopes for what she could accomplish in a new position but feels the tension within herself that she would not be respected for being a woman in that role and fears the oppression would limit her effective ministry. Such imaging should not be quickly dismissed but rather shared with trusted friends for further discernment.

The fourth part of a discernment process is to take the reflections of the process thus far and share with trusted friends. These friends might be a local community council or Leadership Team or a circle of intimate friends that are concerned for each other's spiritual welfare while together advancing the reign of God. Such trusted friends through "discourse" will provide for illumination on the decision-making process. The scriptures offer us promise about the importance of speaking the truth to one another: "By speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ" (cf. Eph. 4:15).

The trusted friends within my own congregation are the Leadership Team that has recently promulgated "Criteria for Ministry" outlining five values to guide our discernment: 1) Our ministry acknowledges our primary relationship to one another in this Franciscan congregation, 2) Our ministry is rooted in the mission of Jesus, 3) Our ministry provides opportunity to respond to the call to justice and peace, 4) Our ministry enables the empowerment of people and 5) Our ministry challenges us to acknowledge our personal and congregational gifts and limitations.¹⁸ Conversing with these trusted friends would clarify the nature of any choice I would make and its relatedness with the common criteria of the congregation.

Fifth, we seek confirmation of the discerned choice. Brother Leo had gone to Francis to talk over his choicemaking and after their conversation Francis wrote "do whatever seems best." The Franciscan recognizes that the exterior manifestation for placing oneself ready to do God's will is to share one's discernment process with the recognized authority of the faith community and to wait for confirmation.

The internal confirmation of the rightness of a choice is the increased joy a person has in imaging the carrying out of the decision. This joy is rooted in the awareness that all good comes from God and that the Franciscan is a co-creator with God for the extension of the reign of God. The virtues of interior poverty, humility and minority that Franciscans reveal in their lives demonstrate the belief taught by Francis that we can claim

nothing for ourselves since all good is from God. We are ministers of the good that is from God. Francis wrote that "a servant of the Lord may be recognized as possessing the spirit of the Lord in this way: if the flesh does not pride itself when the Lord performs some good through him..." (*Admonition XII*).¹⁹



The role of the imagination in Franciscan discernment is that of an effective facilitator. The imagination brings forth from the dwelling place of God within us guiding symbol(s) that allow us to image the projected future. This guiding symbol empowers us to evaluate proposed choices in comparison with our deepest aspirations and to make a decision for a

direction in our life that will increase our freedom as children of God. Witnessing this freedom by lives that are recognizably "alive in the spirit" will bear fruit for the reign of God.

Endnotes

¹Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady, trans. *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 48.

²Kathleen Fischer, "The Imagination in Spirituality," *Way* 66 (Autumn 1989): 96.

³Jean Houston, *The Possible Human* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1982) 60-77.

⁴Armstrong & Brady, 63.

⁵Carolyn Osiek, "Images of God: Breaking Boundaries," *Spirituality Today* 4 (Winter, 1988): 335.

⁶Sandra Schneiders, "God is More Than Two Men and a Bird," *U.S. Catholic* May (1990): 23.

⁷Bonaventure, *The Works of Bonaventure*, Vol. III (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966) 171.

⁸For a fuller discussion of the interrelatedness of the imagination, discernment and the political scene, see William C. Spohn, S.J. "Discerning the Politics of the Imagination," *New Theology Review* 1 (1988): 5-19.

⁹Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. *The Prayers of St. Francis* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1987).

¹⁰Cf. Anthony M. Carrozzo, "Francis of Assisi at the Crossroads: Elements of a Franciscan Process of Discernment," *Review for Religious* 41/4 (1982): 551-556.

¹¹*English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972) 1334 - 1335.

¹²Armstrong & Brady, 31. See footnote #8 for a fuller explanation of "servant."

¹³*Omnibus*, 366.

¹⁴Armstrong & Brady, 112-114.

¹⁵Cf. Sandra Schneider's interpretation "The Foot Washing (Jn. 13:1-20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 76-92.

¹⁶Evaristo Acosta Maestre, O.F.M. Cap. "The Discernment of Spirits According to St. Francis of Assisi," *Greyfriars Review* 2 (1988): 49-76.

¹⁷Cf. Spohn, 17.

¹⁸"Criteria for Ministry" is available from the Director for Communications, Assisi Heights, Box 4900, Rochester, MN 55903.

¹⁹Armstrong & Brady, 31.



Chastity, Poverty and Worship

A Homily of Bonaventure's on Inner Cleanliness

GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

This sermon for the Third Sunday after Epiphany¹ is of special interest not only because it is one of several in which the Seraphic Doctor develops the axiom, *Each action of Christ is an introduction for us*, but because it links poverty with chastity and highlights the connection between inner cleanliness and worship. First, we glimpse that christian idea of following the Master that dawned afresh in the dynamism initiated by St. Francis' following the *vestigia* of Christ and his realizing the Lord's 'aromatic' words.² Also, in the scheme of things chastity, far from being merely 'the customary other vow,' is viewed as a form and expression of the evangelic life's poverty base; not alone of poverty's negative aspects (dispossession and singleness) but of its positive aspects too (*heirs and kings*, and dowry for espousal with the spirit). Moreover, both chastity and poverty are here twinned, and they merge with the humility of adoration, and form the predispositions for a worship which truly acknowledges the 'one mastery' of Christ and adores God in singlemindedness (*Who are You ... and what am I?*).

A superficial reading of this sermon might show it to be totally concerned with purgation, repeatedly mentioning greed, arrogance, and 'sins of the flesh' and urging their avoidance. A closer examination, however, reveals a portrayal of Christ as Healer of humankind and a spelling out of the conditions for approaching Him in worship. If it was preached, in one form or another, 'by Brother Bonaventure to the Friars of Lyons,'³ it is unlikely that it was simply a sermon against sins of impurity, pride and avarice, aimed at that immediate audience. Subtler lines were drawn by

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Bonaventure when he was called on to 'set the seed of the word which preaching is.'⁴ The text before him postulated the treatment of uncleanness; to do so thoroughly, theologically, was to deal with the message of Scripture and of the liturgy of the day. The groundwork of *purgation*, in any case, never leaves off serving the *illumination* that comes with an evangelic imitation of Christ or the *perfection* which is achieved in mystical union with God. The word of God, moreover, even when preached to a special audience, is for the people of God and is proclaimed 'to the whole of creation.' And these men, to whom he spoke, were themselves breaking the bread of the word and engaged in a healing ministry in places where the leprosy of sin afflicted people; they were aware of being sent forth, above all, to 'bring good news to the poor' and to 'heal the brokenhearted.'⁵ The sermon presents, therefore, an aspect of the biblical-moral theology of sin and of the biblical theology of worship as leading to perfect spiritual healing.

Just at the point where one thinks the great preacher is straying from his theme one sees the original text analysis reappear. He is like a honey-bee, assiduously extracting every fragment of meaning from the flower of his texts, to share them with all who hear.

The sermons of Bonaventure, even if we today were to regard many of them as time-bound from a strictly homiletic standpoint, are important in another perspective.⁶ They are undoubtedly the product of *lectio divina* and thus offer a lead in the performance of that venerable exercise, the analysis of a biblical text, during which 'the mind is in the heart.' They can help us to derive enormous profit from meditatively entering into the core of a word or phrase ('given us through Christ and written through the power of the Holy Spirit'),⁷ provided we enter with humility and faith and 'bending the knees of our heart.'⁸

THE SERMON

[Theme] *Behold, a leper came and knelt before him, saying: Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.* Matthew 8:2.

[Introductory call for prayer]

[Protheme] *The children begged for bread, and there was no one to give them any,* Lamentations 4:4.

Humankind, in the pitiable condition brought upon it by its first sin, is forever lamenting its threefold misfortune. Its retreat from the height of grandeur made it weak and powerless in action; its retreat from the height of bounty⁹ meant it could make no progress, due to want and destitution; its retreat from the height of compassion left it a heart cruel

and hard. And that second quotation, which we have taken from the lamentations of Jeremiah, tells us about these three misfortunes: powerlessness and weakness in *efficiency* with the first word, children, those frail and defenceless ones; indigence and need in *proficiency* in the next phrase, *begged for bread*, for every petition presupposes a lack and a need in the petitioner; hardheartedness and inhumanity in *affectivity* with the words, *and there was no one to give them any*.

We therefore, wishing to present some useful ideas to the congregation here, must first direct our minds to that Source from which mercy originally springs, asking It to keep the work we are to get through from being weak and poorly by lending it vigor; to keep the development of the ideas from being deficient and slack by giving it wide scope; to remove from our heart what is inhuman and hard by directing our feelings aright. Thus fortified for the work in hand, given the freedom to press ahead and the guidance our heart needs, we should be able to give a sermon that will redound to the praise and glory of His blessed name and to the consolation of our souls. Amen.

[Sermon] *Behold, a leper came and knelt before him, saying: Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.*

Since 'each action of Christ is an instruction for us,'¹⁰ today's healing of an external leprosy — a disfigurement of bodily splendor — is teaching that points out internal leprosy — a spoiling of spiritual beauty. And so, for our instruction the text uses the metaphor of leprosy cured by God, to describe a sinner's condition, first disfiguring his soul as long as he is in a state of committed sin — when it says, *Behold, a leper came*; then involving his soul in an act of due subjection — when it says, *and knelt before him, saying*; and, thirdly, lifting up his soul to a prayer of desire — when it says of his discerning and humble entreaty, *Lord, if you will, you can make me clean*. For the man brought much discernment to bear on his entreaty. He did not say, *Come down*, or *Come*, as if the Lord's presence could be missing from any place; nor did he say, *Say the word*, as if His power were tied to uttering words. What he said was: *If you will*; he knew what the Psalm says: *The Lord does whatever he wills* (113, 11).

The first thing, then, to be noted in that text is the condition of the sinner in the state of sin which he has committed, a sin that disfigures the soul: *Behold, a leper*. And *leper* is a word that well bespeaks the sinner. Leprosy is a disease that renders the one who has contracted it similar to that which produces it, deforms the body's natural beauty, and makes one live separately from everyone else. Sin, especially when it increases, has these three effects on the soul. In the first case, the sin of

pride and ambition renders the soul similar to the maliciousness that engenders it; secondly, the sin of lust and fornication defaces the soul's natural beauty; thirdly, the sin of avarice and hoarding segregates the soul from where the community lives, that is, from paradise. Hence, hatred is the response to be made to the sin of pride, on account of the maliciousness which it resembles. Abhorrence is the answer to the sin of lust, on account of the corruption it brings on. And one must run away from the sin of avarice, on account of its causing separation from God.

In the first place the sin of pride and ambition acts like leprosy in rendering the soul similar to the maliciousness that engenders it. In this sense read 3 Chronicles, chapter 26 [16.19]: *When he was strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God*, and what follows: *Leprosy broke out on his forehead, in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord*. This was Uzziah, a man of proud and haughty heart, destined for the *destruction* of eternal death since he was *false to almighty God*, he copied every manner of diabolical depravity. And so, just as in the highest heaven there appeared on the spiritual forehead of the devil the marks of pride in the presence of the angels that stood up to him, so *in the house of the Lord there broke out leprosy on the forehead of Uzziah*, the imitator of ancestral maliciousness, as the sign of his pride; for puffed up he was and corrupt in soul *in the presence of the priests* who stood up to him.

In the second place the sin of lust and fornication acts like leprosy in defacing the natural beauty of the soul. In this sense read Leviticus, chapter 13 [45.46]: *He shall cry, 'Unclean, unclean'... as long as he has the disease*. And well ought one infected with the vice of lust cry, *'unclean, unclean'*, because he has become so dirtied and contaminated from impure desires, uncontrolled movements of passion and illicit acts, that he is much more abominable in the sight of the angelic spirits than a leper would be to the eyes of healthy human beings. *Nor will the gracefulness of the Holy Spirit ever dwell in a body enslaved to the sin of lust*. We should surely strive to acquire, above everything else, this beauty attached to purity and chastity, for thereby we are exciting the Holy Spirit to a love and desire of us. So, we should make every effort to rid ourselves of inordinate desires and impure thoughts. Just as when in the body a major build-up of rotten fluids produces a scab, a fester, and sometimes a leprosy, destroying the body's purity; so do uncontrolled attachments, unclean thoughts and corrupt motions of the flesh produce the scab of incontinence and the leprosy of lust and take away the purity of chastity and modesty. And it is thus that the body becomes a stinking dwelling for the Devil, not the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

... it links poverty with chastity and highlights the connection between inner cleanliness and worship.

Thirdly, the sin of avarice and hoarding acts like leprosy in secluding the soul from the home of the paradise community. In this sense read 4 Kings [= 2 Kings], chapter 5 [27]: *The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you, and to your descendants for ever. So he went out from his presence a leper*. It is because the fire of avarice incites Gehazi, and any greedy person, to accept material goods that *the leprosy of Naaman* (a name which means 'disturbing' or 'excitement') is said to *cleave to him* and also to anyone copying his example. Moreover, as a leper is expelled from where healthy people dwell as a community, so the greedy one, who chooses to live in the ground with the mole and fixes his covetous eyes on the earth, deprives himself of a habitation in the fellowship of holy people. So it is that the *leper* is said to have gone *out from the presence of Elisha*, that is, from the company of any holy man whose dwelling and whose *home is in heaven* where he longs for the company of the angels.

The next thing said is: *he knelt before him*. He displays here the subjection he owes, since by thus adoring he is expressing the worship of *latria*, which is rendered to God.¹¹ He was rendering to Christ the worship of divine *latria*, or *adoring* Him, firstly in respect of His creating power with awe and reverence in a humbled heart; secondly, in respect of His guiding wisdom with an expression of noble homage of his lips; thirdly, in respect of His redeeming and glorifying clemency by showing a genial love in the way he acted. It is thus on account of these three properties that to God alone and to none other is due the worship of *latria*.

First, then, *he knelt before him* to respect His creating power with a humble heart of awe and reverence. *I bow down before your holy temple, filled with awe*, says the Psalm [5, 8]. Now, nobody can adore God perfectly unless he has the greatest possible reverence for the divine Majesty. Who can fix the gaze of his mind's eye upon the greatest possible good in the Lords greatness and His severity of judgment; when he is not fixed upon his own smallness? Here, then we must learn to dread and be astonished at the excellence in the power which Christ possesses, if we wish to excite the beauty of wisdom to a love and a desire of us. For *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* [Prov. 1:7], a beginning that prepares and beautifies the lips of heart and mouth for the kiss of divine wisdom.¹²

Secondly, *he knelt before him* with an expression of noble homage on

his lips, to respect a guiding wisdom. As the Psalm [137,1] says: *In the presence of the angels I will sing psalms to you, I will adore before your holy temple.* One sings psalms to God in the presence of the angels — and not to be seen by mortals — when one sings not for empty praise for the sake of temporal profits, but solely to praise and glorify the Creator with a pure and right intention. *I will adore before your holy temple.* The *holy temple* of God is a body clean and spotless, in which the soul adores God and gives thanks to His name. Its doors are the five senses, which are to be guarded with all care, lest death, the companion of fetid sin, enter by them. No king can stomach a wine drawn from a dirty cask, through an aperture whose outside only has been burnished; neither has Christ any taste for prayer or praise which proceeds from an unclean heart, through lips that are devout merely on the surface.

Thirdly, *he knelt before him*, showing, in the way he acted, a love that was genial, to respect a clemency in Him that is redeeming and glorifying. Of the Wise Men in the second chapter of Matthew [10-11] it is said: *They, when they saw the star, were glad beyond measure; and so, going into the dwelling, they found the child there, with his mother Mary, and fell down to worship him; and, opening their store of treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.* You see there what the wise men had as they rendered their worship of *latría*; they had the fervor that goes with love and friendship. They did not *sell* anything, from some greedy motive; they spontaneously *offered* gifts to the little child as a sign of their love and friendship, not as signs of apprehension or of expiation. For this is the charity, the love, without which no good gift is accepted approvingly. It is the charity that gives one a jovial disposition over one's own good fortune; that is why it is said: *They were glad beyond measure.* It also makes one harmoniously disposed towards one's neighbor; hence: *going into the dwelling.* Again, it makes one generous with what one has to give; hence: *opening their store of treasures, they offered him gifts*, as a sign of the interior faith they were expressing.

Next comes that prayer of entreaty spoken with discernment: *Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.* That leper was, in fact, so discerning about the request for the cleansing of his *body*, as to set the pattern for any other person, infected with *spiritual* leprosy, to go and ask for the sanctification of his own soul, in the way he himself did. So, whoever is infected with some leprous defilement like that must, depending on the form of the disease, wisely ask for the specific remedy. A proud person, then, should ask to be cleansed of the tumor of pride by means of a filial and reverential love; a lustful person of the stink of lust by means of the gracefulness, the fragrance, of chastity and purity; a greedy person of the fiery flush of avarice by means of the balm of spiritual gladness.¹³ Thus, the soul that is directed away from the Father through the tumor of pride,

from the Son through the stink of lust, from the Holy Spirit through the fiery flush of greed, will be set on course towards the Father by means of a reverential fear one finds in sons, towards the Son by means of the dazzling whiteness or the fragrance of chastity and blamelessness, towards the Holy Spirit by means of the balm of spiritual gladness.¹⁴

In the first place, therefore, we are cleansed of pride's tumor with the reverential fear one finds in sons. Hence we read in Second Corinthians, chapter seven [1]: *Let us purge ourselves clean from every defilement of flesh and of spirit, achieving the work of our sanctification in the fear of God.* Just as the foul smell of lust is a defilement of the body, so is the tumor of pride a defilement of the spirit. Bodily sin is mentioned first, then spiritual sin. The God who cleanses the body of lustful defilement by the love that is in chastity and purity is not happy till He also cleanses the spirit of pride's defilement by the love that is in filial reverence. It is for this the Apostle says: *Let us purge ourselves clean from every defilement of flesh and of spirit.* But we shall never be able to complete the sanctification of our lives, unless fear of the Lord is at the forefront of our effort to improve, unless it also accompanies this and follows it up. *He who is lacking in fear will not be made righteous;*¹⁵ which is why the passage above continues: *achieving the work of our sanctification in the fear of the Lord.*

Next, we are purged of the stink of lust with the gracefulness of chastity and purity. We read in Chapter Two [21-22] of the Second Letter to Timothy: If anyone purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to his Lord, ready for any good work. So shun youthful passions. Whoever, then, *purifies himself* from these lustful defilements through the compunction of contrition and penance *will be a vessel for noble use* on account of the beauty given him by celestial grace, chastity and purity. *And useful to his Lord, ready for any work* that satisfies the divine will. A soiled and unpurified vessel gives no pleasure to Christ the most noble of kings; nor is it welcome in the work of the ministry. *Shun youthful passions;* he did not say, 'Stand up to them,' but 'Shun them.' The voice of lust is better overcome by getting away from it altogether than by standing up to it.

Lastly, the fiery flush of greed in us is cleansed by means of the balm of spiritual gladness.¹⁶ On this we read in the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel [25]: *I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols.* The thought of wealth in different shapes and forms seethes in the brain of the avaricious person; he is ablaze with earthy fantasies; by day he gets no respite from the useless things that divide his attention, nor by night from all manner of planning. So the Lord says: *I shall pour over you*, who are sunk down

to the level of the earthy, *clean water*, which is the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that you will be refreshed after the heat of the fires of greed. A taste of this will have such soothing effect on the soul it refreshes, the soul on fire with earthy hankerings, that all this fierce earth-clinging appetite will seem so silly: *and you will be cleansed of all your defilement and all our idols*. The sin of covetousness is called total wickedness, since *the love of money is the root of all evils* [I Tim. 6:10]; it nevertheless also goes by the name of *idols*, because, according to the Apostle, *covetousness makes one an idolater* [cf. Eph. 5:5]. And touching this the Lord, in the eleventh chapter of Luke [41], was giving extremely good advice, when he said: *But give alms out of the store you have, and at once all that is yours becomes clean*.

Concluding prayer] Let us therefore ask the Lord & c.

Endnotes

¹J. G. Bougerol, *Sermones Dominicales* (Grottaferrata, 1977) 192-198; *Opera omnia* IX, 183 - 186.

²Cf. *Letter to the faithful* (2nd version), 2.

³See rubric to the sermon's outline (*schema*) in IX, 1896. The sermon was probably preached Jan. 25, 1265 — J. F. Quinn, "Chronology of St. Bonaventure's Sermons", *AFH* 67 (1974) 170.181; Bougerol, *Sermones*, 27 — and revised at Paris as a model sermon 1267 - 1268 (Bougerol, *Sermones*, 29).

⁴*Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, VI, 90b.

⁵Cf. Prologue to *Commentary on Luke*, VII, 3-4.

⁶See **THE CORD** 1987, Nov. 302-312; Dec. 334-342; 1989, Mar. 71-81.

⁷*Commentary on Luke*, prologue, VII, 3b.

⁸*Breviloquium* prologue, V, 202a; cf. *The Works of Bonaventure. II The Breviloquium* (Tr. J. de Vinck, Paterson, 1963) 4.

⁹Literally, 'goodness' (*bonitas*). The old-fashioned word 'bounty' has the sense of resource supplying a want and therefore suits the context better.

¹⁰This is followed in the *Opera omnia* edition (IX, 183b) by: *as the blessed Augustine says*. Aug., in *On the True Religion* (c. 16, n. 32). wrote: 'All His life on earth was a training in human conduct,' &, in *Treatises on John* (15, n. 2): 'In every single thing he did as a human being, He proffered an example to those who would believe in him.' Elsewhere B. attributes the dictum to St. Gregory (in whose *Homilies* appears the gist of it). The proximate source would appear to be Alexander of Hales, who had used the statement in his *Disputed Questions & Glosses*, carried it into the Paris O.F.M. School, where it harmonized with Franciscan Exemplarism. Alexander's more immediate source was possibly Peter Lombard, who wrote: 'Christ's prayer is instruction for the faithful, as His every act is a lesson for the christian' (*Gloss on Ps. 85*); 'His every action is an instruction for believers' (*Gloss on Heb. 5:7*).

B. Himself emphasises a distinction between instruction & imitability: All Christ's actions are 'instruction' while *not all* are for 'imitation' (miracles & c.); *IV Sent.*, d. 3, pt. 2, a. 3, q. 1, ad 3 (IV, 84).

¹¹For 'knelt before,' the Vulgate has 'adored,' the general scriptural word for 'reverenced' or 'bowed down before,' which, in the Church, acquired the restricted meaning of worship of the divine. *Latria* (*latreia*) is the technical term for the service or worship (exclusively) of God: SB, *III Sent.* (III, 199-221); (cf. *dulia* designating the veneration of saints — 'the honor or reverence due and rendered to a rational creature' — III, 220, & *hyperdulia* the special veneration of the Blessed Virgin — III, 206).

¹²Here the language is *nuptial*. Wisdom, for Bonaventure, is the ideal of the human search for ultimate peace. In its highest form, wisdom is knowledge of God by experience, mystical union with God, which is knowledge by *tasting*.

¹³In the *schema* of this sermon (IX, 186b) the specific cure for avarice is given as 'the attainment of spiritual opulence,' *adeptionem*, substituted for *dulcorem*, and *spiritualis opulentiae* for *spiritualis laetitiae*.

¹⁴This note of return to a proper relationship with the Persons of the Trinity is redolent of St. Francis' trinitarian 'collect' with which the *Letter to the Entire order* concludes; there the grace of being 'inwardly cleansed' is given priority — see R. J. Armstrong, I.C. Brady, *Francis and Clare. The Complete Works* (1982) 61.

¹⁵A literal translation of the Vulgate reading of *Eccli* 1:28.

¹⁶See note 13.



Our Lady in the Writings of St. Francis

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND, O.F.M.

It may be said at the beginning of this essay that Francis wrote little about our Lady, but paucity of writings does not mean paucity of insight or devotion or love. Both Celano and Bonaventure attest to the profound love he had for her¹ and Bonaventure sees a central role of our Lady in the conversion of Francis when he writes about Francis' discovery of the Gospel life at the Portiuncula:

He prayed to her who had conceived the Word full of grace and truth.²

This essay does not intend to trace the historical development of Medieval Marian Piety;³ but it suffices to say that Francis made a significant contribution to both its spirit and content, and in many respects surpasses it.

Francis was no theologian in the sense that he wrote a *summa* of theology, nor did he write any great treatises. But he was nevertheless a theologian in the wider sense that many of his writings contain profound and perceptive theological insights into the mystery of God.⁴ At the same time while admitting to this, it must be admitted that the theological insights of Francis are secondary to the initial experience of the God he is attempting to write about. In many instances while he does write about his experience of God, the words simply fail to convey adequately the reality of what he has experienced — which is, of course, the essence of mysticism.⁵

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The experience of God for Francis was always a gift of prayer: but even here the word 'prayer' fails to adequately describe the import and deeper meaning of what it was he experienced as an inexpressible and ineffable mystery of his life. Francis' prayer is firmly rooted in scripture and liturgy⁶ and the visual imagery these evoked is further enriched by his own tendency towards the dramatic.⁷ The same is true of his devotion to our Lady: grounded in scripture, actualized in the liturgy and expressed in the way only poetry and mysticism can do as the "salutation to the Blessed Virgin" shows (AB p. 149-1509).

It is not anachronistic to say that Francis' vision of our Lady as it comes through his writings is quite in harmony with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council⁸ for Francis' vision of our Lady has two dimensions each one inextricably bound up with the other: Ecclesial and maternal. As with the Fathers of the church, the very fact of its scriptural and liturgical base gives the 'mariology' of Francis a surprisingly modern character.⁹ We may firmly locate Francis within the church of his time, to do anything else *would be* anachronistic and unfair. But it is fair to say that his writings on our Lady avoid much of the more excessive aspects of medieval Marian piety because for Francis the ultimate source for any of our Lady's graces or gifts is the Trinity. This is expressed in the context of our Lady's Divine Motherhood, which is Christocentric in Francis' devotion and writings.¹⁰

While this is true, the Christological dimension is not the only one, for Francis realizes intuitively the Trinitarian source and it is this which forms the basis of his own devotion to, veneration and love of our Lady; but in Francis' case its *experiential* context is the Divine Motherhood. Celano writes

To the Mother of Jesus he bore an ineffable love because she made the Lord of Majesty our brother (2 Cel 198)

And Francis himself grasped the reality of the significance of the Trinity in our Lady:

Chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven consecrated by Him with His most beloved Son and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. (AB p. 149)

This same dimension of our Lady's divine Motherhood is found in the antiphon for the "Office of the Passion (AB p. 82) where Francis writes:

You are the daughter and handmaid of the Most High King and Father of Heaven; you are the Mother of our Most Holy Lord Jesus Christ; you are the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Here the profundity of Francis' mysticism comes through for he uses a term for our Lady which had not appeared in any of the litanies he would have known, and much of his prayers on our Lady are litanic in structure. The term is "Spouse of the Holy Spirit." Francis was the first to use this title¹¹ and here he reveals an astounding and remarkable theological precision. The uniqueness our Lady enjoys [Mother of Jesus] with respect to all other creatures is set down in the same Trinitarian terms. Christ is in the middle position between Father and Holy Spirit [although there is no implication of any kind of subordinationism] and it is this fact that she is mother of the Son of God which elicits our love for her.

So she is not the "Spouse" understood in the sense of "wife"; rather she is the daughter because she is God's perfect handmaid in that he accomplishes his will most perfectly in her *let it be*. Her *fiat* brings to completion the work of God in creation with its highest perfection — the Incarnate Son. So our Lady is at once handmaid and mother because she is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Francis has summed up in one phrase what it would take many later mariologists (particularly the Scotists) tomes and volumes to discuss under headings belonging to the complexities of Trinitarian theology in virtue of her being predestined to be the Mother of God.¹²

But this is not all, for the ecclesial dimension is also prevalent here in the term Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Francis writes in the "Letter to the Faithful":

A person is the bride of Christ when his faithful soul is united with Christ by the Holy Spirit. (AB p. 62 n. 5).

In her Divine Motherhood Mary is an image of the church and Francis grasping the essence of this mystically writes of how we as members of the church become "divine mothers":

And we are mothers of him when we enthrone him in our hearts and souls by love with a pure and sincere conscience and give him birth by doing good (AB p. 62 n. 8).

This image of our Lady as archetypal image of the Church is even more explicit in "The Salutation of the blessed Virgin Mary" when he says of her:

You are Virgin made Church.

This is certainly beyond its time¹³ and while images of our Lady and the church are linked together in Medieval Marian devotion they are not as striking or explicit as this.

But this is not mere piety on the part of St. Francis. By linking both *Spouse of the Holy Spirit* and *Virgin made Church* with what he says concerning our bringing Christ to be in our hearts, Francis is speaking

... Francis' vision of our Lady as it comes through his writings is quite in harmony with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council...

of the Divine Motherhood which is actualized mystically in the hearts and souls of all the faithful. So what was realized in the Divine Motherhood of our Lady in existential terms: the making of *the Lord of Majesty our Brother*, is to be actualized in mystical, though no less existential and real terms in the hearts of all believers, who constitute the Body of Christ, the Church; and most especially in the hearts and lives of the Friars.

Again this close relationship between our Lady's Motherhood and the Church can be seen in some of the titles which Francis uses of her, particularly in the "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin":

Hail, His Palace
Hail, His Tabernacle
Hail, His Home,
Hail, His Robe.¹⁴

These nouns which Francis uses are also Biblical images and types for the Church which are attested to in the Fathers of the Church. They can be seen not only as metaphors or symbols, but as extensions of the insight which lies behind *Virgin made Church*, for we ourselves become Church when we incarnate the exhortation of Francis in the "Letter to the faithful."

Francis considered himself illiterate and uneducated but the depth of his insights is remarkable. In his writings on our Lady he has intuitively grasped, as only a mystic could, the whole economy of Salvation and the Incarnational process by keeping firmly in the forefront of his heart both mystically and experientially the essence and context of our Lady as Mother of Christ.

Francis understands affectively rather than cognitively that our Lady is CHOSEN without any merit on her part: she is CONSECRATED i. e. made holy by the fact that she is the Mother of the Son Incarnate [it may not be grasping at theological straws here to see an unspoken acceptance in his heart of the Immaculate Conception]. But this can only take place within the context of the causal modalities of the Trinity: she is chosen BY the Father, consecrated WITH the Son and comforted IN the

Holy Spirit. This expression of love and veneration can only come from an experience of that same Trinity in mystical prayer and not theological study.¹⁵

In this respect the question of the "centeredness," not only of his devotion to our Lady, but also of his spiritual life, i.e. whether Trinitarian or Christocentric, is an irrelevancy. The writings of Francis attest to his experience of the Three-in-Oneness that is God, yet he saw and grasped, as much as the early Fathers, the dynamic inter/intra-relatedness of each Person of the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The question, I feel, misses the point about the nature of Francis' prayer: God is for Francis all at once Most High Almighty Father, Saving Son who is brother, and Comforting Holy Spirit — the finest example of which in Francis' writings is the "Praises of God." Francis also sees the significance of our Lady in other areas, most especially when he speaks about Poverty:

So in all the poor he read the Son of the Poor Lady, bearing naked in his heart Him whom she bore naked in her hands (2 Cel 83) ... whenever you see a poor man, brother, a mirror of the Lord and of His Poor Mother is set before you (2 Cel 85).

So Francis' love of our Lady formed one whole with reverence and love for the poor Christ. While Francis sought literally to observe the poverty of Christ and his Mother, it must be remembered that the underlying idea of this spiritual poverty is the Poor of Yahweh, the Anawim. The poverty of the Anawim is perceptive and open to the Holy Spirit of God and it recognizes that all goodness and grace come from Him. Material poverty, therefore, is the sacrament of total dependence on God. This is most perfectly expressed in the Magnificat where our Lady is the link between the Old and the New Testaments because she personified in herself the openness of all those who wait on God. Without such openness material poverty is unbearable and meaningless.

For Francis, our Lady personified this Gospel life of poverty for her material poverty was its sign:

I, little Brother Francis, wish to live according to the life and poverty of Our Most High Lord Jesus Christ and his Most Holy Mother and to persevere in this to the end. (AB p. 46).

And it was fitting that he should do this in the Church dedicated to Mary of the Angels, where he had prayed to our Lady at the beginning of his pursuit of the Gospel life.

Endnotes

¹The references in Celano and Bonaventure are numerous.

²Bonaventure, LM 3, 1; cf. also "Introduction" to *Francis and Clare*. The Complete Works. Ed. and trans. by R. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM, pp. 16-17.

³cf. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 335 ff.

⁴See Eric Doyle, OFM, "St. Francis and Theology" in *The CORD*, January, 1982, p. 19.

⁵See Happold, F.C., *Mysticism: A Study and Anthology*. London, 1984. Chapters 7 and 12.

⁶Cf. Peter Fehlner, OFM Conv., "Our Lady and St. Francis" in *The CORD*, May 1982, pp. 142-148; also D. Scotto, TOR, "St. Francis and the Spirit of the Liturgy" in *The CORD*, January, 1982, pp. 13-15.

⁷See my article, "St. Francis as Poet and Dramatist" in *The CORD*, April, 1990.

⁸Doyle, op. cit., p. 18.

⁹ibid., 18-19; Armstrong/Brady write: "Francis' view suggests the Mother of God as the model of his spiritual growth, and in his devotion to her the Poverello seems to have intuited the teaching of the Second Vatican Council" (*Francis and Clare*, p. 16).

¹⁰See E. Doyle, D. McElrath, "St. Francis of Assisi and the Christocentric Character of Franciscan Life and Doctrine" in *Franciscan Christology*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., pp. 8-9.

¹¹W. Lampen, "De S. P. Francisci Cultu Angelorum et Sanctorum" in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, Vol. 20 (1927) pp. 1 ff.

¹²Fehlner, op. cit., p. 144.

¹³See Armstrong/Brady, p. 149, esp. fn. 2.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 159; also "Introduction", p. 16.

¹⁵Ibid., "Letter to Anthony," p. 79; also "The Later Rule," Ch. 5. n. 2, p. 140.



A Universal Canticle

Microscopic and cellular beings,
Bless the Lord.
Invertebrates and vertebrates,
Especially honey bees and hoot-owls,
Sing a new song to the Lord.
Planets and constellations,
Praise the Lord in all your splendor.
Astronauts, cosmonauts, aquanauts,
Exalt Him above all forever.
Ruralists, suburbanites, city-dwellers,
With thanksgiving, glorify the Lord.

All nations, bless the Lord.
Landscapers and manicurists,
In your perfection, bless the Lord.
Cartographers and truckdrivers,
Bless the Lord.
Equestrians and pedestrians,
Enjoy the Lord.
Mountain climbers and spelunkers,
In all your explorations, praise the Lord.
Maitre d's and hash-slingers,
Be gracious to the Lord.

Cloistered and boisterous,
Call to the Lord,
Fruits of the field,
Glory in the Lord.
Carriers of the cross of Christ,
Be strong for the Lord.
Architects, engineers, draftsmen,
Build for the Lord.
Miracle workers and mechanics,
Heal for the Lord.
Prophets and Evangelists,
Laud the Lord.

Linguists and lexicologists,
Extol the Lord.
Word processors and computer analysts,
Invoke the Lord.
Cyclists and marathon runners,
Exert yourself for the Lord.
Ecologists, biologists, zoologists,
Praise the Lord in all His majesty.
Grape pickers and wine makers,
Toil for the Lord.
Seculars and non-seculars,
Keep faith in the Lord.
Activists, dissenters, and risk-takers,
Suffer for the Lord.
Lovers of God,
Lovers of angels,
Lovers,
Sing praise and poetry to the Lord.

We praise You, O Holy One, in all efforts
and undertakings constantly thanking
you for the GIFTS of life and faith.

Joan Schlueter, S.F.O.

Book Reviews

The Faith Community, One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic. By Rev. Edward K. Braxton. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press. Pp. 196. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Stephen Lynch, Guardian of the Friary Community and a campus minister at Siena College.

Rev. Edward K. Braxton presents an engaging periscope of the American Catholic church and how it reflects the worldwide community of faith. **The Faith Community** brings together a series of lectures in which an African-American priest, starting from a main-line Catholic perspective as the point of departure, lucidly explores the implications of the four marks of the church: one, holy, Catholic and apostolic.

Citing transformation in Christ as the heart of the spiritual journey, Fr. Braxton cogently argues that the church can not be truly Christian nor truly Catholic until it more fully integrates the truth and goodness of minority people, their cultural diversity, their racial and ethnic traditions. Inculturation and inclusivity are bedrock for an authentic faith community.

In this chapter "African Americans and the Church," Fr. Braxton lucidly moves from the general to the specific, arguing that true catholicity must be more inclusive of the black Catholic experience as representative of what it means to be truly catholic, i.e. inclusive of all human beings. Using historical documents in an informative and chal-

lenging way, Fr. Braxton then connects the specific crisis of Catholic African-Americans in the US to the analogous general crisis of all minorities, especially Hispanics, Asians and women. His positive message points out that one can be specifically an African-American Catholic and at the same time be authentically Roman Catholic. Ethnic expressions of catholicism in no way diminish one's Roman Catholicism because unity does not necessarily mean uniformity.

The chapter on "Ministry and the University" challenges the church to reach the souls of the students, faculty and staff of the educational community. But Fr. Braxton leaves more questions than answers on how to make this ideal a reality. Institutional goals of diversity and affirmative action complicate the ministry of religious and ethical value formation by even the most competent spiritual guides and companions.

In his chapter "Pluralism and the Church," Fr. Braxton makes complex theology understandable and shows how change is a force to be contended with in both science and religion. He sees change in the church in terms of paradigm shifts.

Citing Thomas S. Kuhn's book **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**, Fr. Braxton explains the church in transition by looking at the concept of the *paradigm* in the scientific, natural order to see how the idea of paradigm works in the theological order. Just as there are periodic shifts in the basic scientific world view or paradigm, so periodic

shifts occur in the basic theological world view. By showing what is going on in the scientific community, namely the shifting of paradigms, he is legitimizing what is going on in the theological domain. Just as there are changeless elements in a changing world, so, while the basic faith of Christianity is immutable, doctrinal explanations may change. The reality of change explains the development of the faith experience and is essential to the process of conversion. He cites three paradigmatic shifts in church theology: the Augustinian paradigm, the Thomistic paradigm, and the Vatican II paradigm. He points out that the Thomistic paradigm is an historical benchmark that is changing. Failure to mention the Council of Trent's role in the shifting of the theological paradigm, leaves this chapter somewhat incomplete. All in all, Fr. Braxton combines an articulate, scholarly tone with a very readable style as he takes you through the combat zone of unchangeable truth colliding with a changeable world reality.

Without being paternalistic or ultra pedantic, Fr. Braxton wants you to feel comfortable on your faith journey.

* * *

Does God Hear Us? Reflections on Christian Prayer Today. By Andre Seve, S. S. New York: New City Press, 1990. Pp. 109. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English and Campus Minister of the University.

What an interesting book! Every believer prays to God and almost every believer sometimes wonders if God hears the prayers that are prayed. In a short book of just over one hundred pages, Father Andre Seve, a French Assumptionist priest, presents encouraging words of support.

In the first of five chapters, the author recognizes that the old style of praying, using memorized formulas, is on the wane, and new types of spontaneous prayer are on the increase (page 7). The writer lists a variety of types of prayer, from Sunday Mass and the Rosary to oriental styles of prayer and pilgrimages. He points out some positive and some negative benefits of each type.

In the second chapter, the writer reminds the reader of the way that Jesus prayed and the way Jesus teaches us to pray — as a Son prays to his Father (page 27). Jesus' prayer and his teaching about prayer serve as a model and a foundation for our prayers. In his third chapter, Father Seve emphasizes that union with God is the most essential foundation as well as the ultimate goal of all prayers (page 56).

In claiming, in the fourth chapter, that all prayer should be apostolic, the author means that prayer should not be selfish or self-centered (page 69). The author concludes his treatise on prayer by explaining struggles prayers often experience (chapter five).

Does God Hear Us? is a great little book. The reader can learn a lot about the nature of prayer and the kinds of prayer and the problems of praying. This reviewer recommends this book to all believers in God. It will help all of us in our prayer life.

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Three Perspectives of Francis of Assisi: A Reflection

FATHER GABRIEL B. COSTA

I first met Saint Francis when he was a minstrel. He fiddled with branches; he spoke with that wolf of Gubbio. He was the Saint Francis of The Crib at Greccio. He was the "More Christian" Uncle Remus of Chesterton.¹ You could find his statue in most any birdbath. In fact, he even spoke to birds. Lots of them. And they listened.

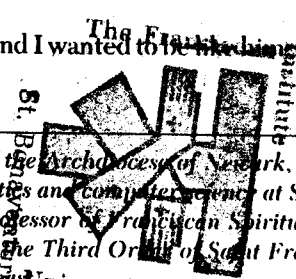
This Saint Francis was anything but scary. He was nice and sweet and communicated with crickets and rabbits. He smiled a lot: he laughed with Brother Juniper. His cord was always clean; his brown (or black or grey) habit always neat and pressed. His beard smartly trimmed.

This was the hippie Saint Francis; the ecology Saint Francis. This was the Saint Francis of the "Peace Prayer."

And, of course, there was Clare. He loved her. He converted her. He taught her. He dined with her. They walked through life, hand in hand, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, smiling and laughing and praying. A New Adam and a New Eve. Everything was so together. Everything was so integrated. The message was so positive, so right, about everything. Felix Timmermans² had it right: there was a "perfect joy" about this Saint Francis. Everything fit.

This is how he was when I first met him. And I wanted to be like him.
It was a beautiful spring morning.

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As the years passed, though, he began to change. He didn't smile as much. Not to me, anyway. I was starting to feel uneasy. This wasn't the same Francis. He wasn't as groomed or clean as he once was. The thorns in the rose bush made him bleed; the ashes on his food made for a horrible meal. He was hard. And sloppy. This Saint Francis had spoken of a "perfect joy" that included being ignored, denied and beaten.

And he wept. A lot. Too much.

He didn't see Clare nearly as much as I originally thought he did. He wasn't that same joyful, easy-going soul I first knew. There was starkness to the "New Madness" that I had never realized. I tried not to believe the changes at first, but, after a while, I just couldn't ignore them. It was difficult to admit but this Saint Francis was really beginning to scare me.

Kissing lepers. Living in the cold. Not eating. Sleeping with a log as a pillow. Constantly going back to the Gospel... to the Rule. Literally. Without interpretation.

And The Passion. The Cross. The Stigmata. The Wounds. The Seraph. Mount LaVerna. For all the ecstasy, there was a lot of agony.

He seemed to be so negative. No women. No money. No cell. Only the tunic and the drawers. This was the Saint Francis of Kazantzakis:³ everything was a struggle. I mean everything. Push push push.

If I had dared to be with this Saint Francis, I would have been so cold. So hungry. So tired. I don't think I would've enjoyed meeting this Saint Francis, much less want to be like him. This Francis was so different from the one I first met years ago. He talked a good game with regard to the "goodness" of life and creation and incarnation, but it seemed to be only talk; his actions were quite another story.

How could I have been so wrong? So misled? Here I thought I had found the Mirror of Perfection and, now, he seemed to have gone crazy: no joy; no laughter. Just plain negative. Had I been duped by an 800-year-old man?

To stop at the second Saint Francis would mean that I never really had a Seraphic Father. It would mean that what I perceived Franciscan Spirituality to be was nothing more than asceticism, penance, and the like. That and only that. And, worst of all, I started to wonder if Francis might have been a "closet" Manichean.

It was a stormy winter's night.

I looked deeper. There had to be another Saint Francis. And I found what I was looking for. I saw Saint Francis in a different light. I realized that with this Saint Francis it is necessary to look at his actions from the perspective of his motivation. This is the Francis of the *Canticle* and *The Praises* (see *Omnibus*⁴).

Because he was a mystic, he was in communion with God. To this

I looked deeper. There had to be another Saint Francis.

Francis, God had revealed Himself as Father, Creator. Hence, all creation had to be good. The crowning point of creation is incarnation. Hence, all flesh had to be good. And while Original Sin is a reality, so is Jesus Christ. The Incarnation.

Saint Francis was convinced of all this. He was neither a philosopher of positive thinking who looked at the world through rose-colored glasses, nor was he a sour, bitter pessimist who happened to be into masochism. He understood quite well the ideas of sacrifice and penance. He knew how lethal sin was; he believed in the infinite power of God's healing and forgiving love. And he knew himself.

This Francis has things in perspective. By the grace of God he is focused. He understands human nature in such a clear, healthy way, that the message of this spiritual master is not only valid today but is much needed. This Saint Francis has a joy that only comes after communion with God.

Because of this, I am not afraid of this Saint Francis. This Saint Francis is not my hero, not my idol; he is my guide. He is a teacher of the things of God. This Saint Francis teaches me not to fear, not to despair. He teaches me to be honest with myself, to know my weaknesses and to face them, as he faced The Leper so long ago. He encourages me in my celibacy. And he witnesses to the fact that there are struggles in life... but that these, too, are part of life.

He exhorts me to cast my cares on the Lord in the certain hope that He will sustain me.

I have found my Seraphic Father.

All weathers are good.

Endnotes

¹Chesterton, G. K. *Saint Francis of Assisi*, Doubleday (Image), New York, 1957.

²Timmermans, Felix. *The Perfect Joy of Saint Francis*, Doubleday (Image), New York, 1955.

³Kazantzakis, Nikos. *Saint Francis*. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1962.

⁴*Omnibus*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1973.

The Friendship Between a Certain Pope and a Certain Saint

RICKY MANALO, OFM CONV.

Few people are recorded to have shared a personal and unique friendship with Saint Francis of Assisi. Among the many people who came in contact with Francis, Saint Clare and Lady Jacoba certainly established their place in this unique list. In a deeper spiritual context, Thomas of Celano records that Francis entertained an intimate relationship with "Lady Poverty."¹ When referring to particular male friends, on the other hand, Francis, for the most part, would single out few men. Brother Leo, for example, was perhaps Francis' closest friend. In essence, Francis seemed to have treated all brothers in Christ as one unit: whether pertaining to any brother of his growing fraternity or to any priest towards whom he was quick to show an immediate display of respect.

There was, however, another friend with whom St. Francis shared a special relationship. It was a friendship that proved to be fruitful for both men on a personal as well as on a practical level. Cardinal Hugolino, who later became Pope Gregory IX, was this person. Their initial acquaintance evolved into a friendship that endured. Taking a closer look at this relationship, we can discover the elements that are found in a relationship grounded on the teachings of our faith. The friendships we establish throughout our lifetime are significant gifts given to us by our Creator. Depending on how we value them, they can contribute towards a deeper relationship with the greatest friend we have, Jesus. From the initial acquaintance of "The Cardinal of Ostia" and "Francis of Assisi," to the lasting friendship of "The Bishop of Rome" and "Saint Francis of Assisi," a friendship emerged of profound subtlety and wisdom.

This rewarding study directed by Fr. Claude Jarmal, OFM Conv., was completed by the author while a student at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary in Granby, Massachusetts. He is at present a novice of the St. Anthony of Padua Province living in Ellicott City, Maryland.

As Christians, we are called upon to recognize our Savior in the people we encounter and those with whom we share our lives. Our insecurities and prejudices often cloud our vision keeping us from seeing more clearly the gifts found in those around us. Our Savior calls Himself "the Light of the world" (Jn 8:12). If we are ever to see this light, we must first recognize His presence in the people around us. In His goodness, God continues to speak to us through all of creation, especially through those whom He made in His own image. Francis was able to recognize and see traces of his Savior in all of creation and consequently in those he knew. It is in this light, then, that his initial meeting with the Cardinal of Ostia turned out to be a meeting of mutual recognition.

It was during the summer of 1217, the first year of Hugolino's legation to Northern Italy, that he first met Francis in Florence. Francis was journeying towards Southern France with his early followers with the intention of combating the heretical movements. Before reaching France he entered the city of Florence and he made it a point to meet the cardinal. According to Celano, "they were not joined in that extraordinary familiarity, but only the fame of Francis' blessed life joined them in mutual affection and charity" (1 Cel 74). After receiving Francis with "humble devotion," the lord bishop, out of respect for the work Francis had done with the poor, gently asked him the reason for his coming. "When he saw that Francis despised all earthly things more than the rest, and that he was alight with that fire that Jesus had sent upon the earth, his soul from that moment knit with the soul of Francis" (1 Cel 75).

In this passage we witness two souls united in the Light of our Savior: "that fire that Jesus had sent upon the earth..." The biographer undoubtedly refers to the gifts of the Holy Spirit whose presence enlightened Hugolino's vision enabling him to see our Savior working in Francis.

Francis, in his own simple but perceptive way, recognized our Lord working through this cardinal. Even though they met without any "extraordinary familiarity," it is quite extraordinary that such a simple acquaintance stirred the Poor Man of Assisi to establish an "unofficial" bond of brotherhood with his newly found friend:

... seeing such a venerable lord conducting himself so kindly, giving such a warm affection and such efficacious advice, rejoiced with a very great joy; and then, falling at his feet, he handed himself over and entrusted himself and his brothers to him with a devout mind. (1 Cel 75)

The result of this initial encounter was more than just "the beginning of a beautiful friendship." The love of Jesus became the binding force in their relationship. The evolution of this Christ-like relationship becomes even more evident with the passage of time as we consider additional sources.

It was during 1220, three years later, in the presence of Pope Honorius III, that Hugolino was *officially* appointed Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order (the difference between this event and their previous encounter was the presence of the Pope Honorius III). In November, 1220 the cardinal had returned to Rome to take part in the coronation of Frederick II. Francis was visiting Rome "because the interests of his order demanded it" (1 Cel 73). Francis felt the need to speak to Pope Honorius III concerning a problem his order was experiencing. The fraternity was currently in need of protection against certain elements which "plotted to destroy the new order." In addition, Francis' fraternity of brothers was growing in numbers.² The increase of missionary activities beyond the territory of Italy surfaced among Francis' concerns. The broadened scope of the fraternity led him to realize the protective and motherly role of the Catholic Church. His acquaintance with Hugolino secured for him a meeting with the pope.

Francis knew that the prestigious cardinal of Ostia, Hugolino, was a person whose talents would perfectly suit the role of Cardinal Protector of the Order. The recognition of each other's gifts three years earlier in Florence pointed toward the public acceptance of their commitment to each other in Rome. After preaching before Honorius III in the presence of the cardinals among whom was Hugolino, Francis asked:

"Therefore, I beg of the kindness of your holiness that you give me the lord of Ostia as my pope, so that, saving always the dignity of our preeminence, the brothers may go to him in the time of need and obtain from him the benefits of his protection and rule." (2 Cel 25)

The pope was pleased and granted the petition. Hugolino graciously accepted this office of Cardinal Protector. In *Legend of Three Companions*, his reply reads: "I offer you myself, and am ready to help, advise and protect you as you may wish" (61).

What began as a relationship founded on recognition and mutual support in Florence resulted in a friendship in which admiration and respect were the guiding principles. In *First Life*, Celano elaborately describes the admiration of both men for each other:

The Lord gave him (Hugolino) a learned tongue, with which he confounded adversaries of truth, refuted the enemies of the cross, brought back to the right way those who had gone astray, made peace with those in discord, and bound together with the bond of charity those who lived in accord. He was a lamp burning and shining in the church of God and a chosen arrow prepared in a seasonable time. (1 Cel 99).

Not surprising, Hugolino's admiration for Francis was equally great:

The Lord bishop... was often deeply affected even by the mere sight of

In all these encounters, there is a stronger and deeper conversion experience with the Lord.

him... every mental cloud would be dispersed and serenity returned, melancholy would be put to flight and joy breathed upon him from above. He ministered to the blessed Francis as a servant to his master: and often as he saw him, he showed reverence to him as to an apostle of Christ, and bowing down both the inner and the outer man, he would often kiss his hand with his consecrated mouth. (1 Cel 101)

As is evident, both men displayed a high degree of admiration towards each other. However, there was a difference in the way each one perceived his own admiration. From the later passage, we may assume that Celano was describing Francis' admiration for Hugolino's "active attributes" towards the Church and the order ("... he confounded... he refuted..., he brought back..." etc.). Hugolino was a man of action. His position as a Cardinal of the church greatly influenced the early history of the order.

On the other hand, Hugolino's admiration for Francis stemmed from his friend's "passive aspect" (just by "the mere sight of him..." was Hugolino deeply affected). This is not to infer that Francis was a person who was "primarily passive" in nature. Rather, it is safe to assume that Celano and the other biographers were attempting to relay a spiritual message. Francis is usually portrayed in the light of holy humility, with the result that people who came in contact with him were often edified. Hugolino's recognition of God working through Francis marked the beginning of a conversion experience for the cardinal.

In addition to admiration, both men displayed a good deal of respect for each other with regard to their own roles. Hugolino was not only the Protector of Francis' growing fraternity; his position as a cardinal of the church was also respected by Francis. Francis may have been reluctant to have any of his brothers take any hierarchical position in the church. St. Bonaventure, in his *Major Life*, records Francis' words to Hugolino:

"My Lord, my friars are called Minors so that they will never think of becoming superiors. If you want them to bear fruit in the Church keep them strictly to their vocation and never let them take any office in the Church." (PLM V:5)

Respecting the different vocations which existed in the church, Francis envisioned his fraternity as faithful to it. By recognizing the position that God had called Hugolino to exercise within the Church as Cardinal, Francis was able to recognize and live out his role of obedience and *minoritas*. This was an important facet of their relationship at a time when heretical groups, such as the Cathari and Waldensians, were excoriating the teachings of the Church. Francis and the Order became an outstanding example of a healthy bond between a religious community and the Church.

Let us now consider Hugolino's respect for the fraternity. Celano records another event, the meeting of the two men in the city of Rieti. The manner in which the brothers lived the life of evangelical poverty clearly had influenced the cardinal:

This lord (Hugolino) conformed himself to the ways of the brothers, and in his desire for sanctity he was simple with the simple, humble with the humble, poor with the poor. He was a brother among the brothers; and he strove to conduct himself in his life and manners, in so far as it was permissible for him, as though he were one of the brothers. (1 Cel 99)

The Legend of Perugia records that Hugolino, upon visiting the friary of St. Mary of the Portiuncula, was moved to tears at the sight of how the brothers were sleeping at the time... "on poor and miserable pallets covered with a little straw." The author recorded the immediate and dramatic reaction of the eminent cardinal:

"See where the brothers sleep! And we, miserable creatures, who concede so much superfluous comfort to ourselves, what will happen to us?" He was greatly edified and so were those with him. (LP 33)

In all these encounters, there is a stronger and deeper conversion experience with the Lord. It is a consistent theme in this relationship. A story found in the *Second Life* of Celano relates how Francis' respect for and humble obedience to Hugolino pointed to his higher obedience toward the Lord. Having been invited for dinner at the cardinal's home, Francis went out to beg for alms. Upon his return, he placed on the cardinal's table scraps of black bread, an act which embarrassed the cardinal. Conscious of Hugolino's feelings, Francis answered:

"Rather I have shown you honor, for I have honored a greater Lord. For the Lord is well pleased with poverty, and above all with that poverty that is voluntary. For I have a royal dignity and a special nobility, namely, to follow the Lord who, being rich, became poor for us." (2 Cel 73)

Hugolino's answer was characteristic of his paternal love: "Son, do what seems good in your eyes, for the Lord is with you." Notice the term of endearment, "Son," indicating the "paternal" role of Hugolino. The

friendship shared between these two men resulted in the shared support they freely bestowed upon each other.

St. Bonaventure did not hesitate to call "the bishop of Ostia... a great friend" of the Seraphic Father (LM VII:7). It is not surprising to note, then, that Bonaventure and so many in the Franciscan Order were well acquainted with their friendship. One could assume that Francis and Hugolino were not the only ones who reaped the benefits of this relationship. Their respect and admiration for each other was never exclusive: the needs of the brothers and the Church took precedence over their own needs.

Recall their first encounter in Florence: Francis "handed himself over and entrusted *his brothers* to him with a devout mind." Francis was never thinking of himself. When he went to Rome to obtain a Cardinal Protector it was not for his own benefit but for the benefit of his brothers who needed protection during their missionary activities. Hugolino became the *father figure* of the Order "so that the brothers may go to him in the time of need." The Poverello always spoke on behalf of his brothers: recall the meal at the cardinal's home when he began with "My lord, *my friars* are called Minors..."

On the other hand, Hugolino's love for Francis overflowed to the fraternity and continued to overflow throughout the world with the establishment of this new religious order. His ecclesiastical intervention was significant in the foundation and later development of the Order. From the time of Pope Innocent III's oral approval of Francis' way of life in 1209, many concerns had arisen within the fraternity. "Regulations which might be sufficient for a few saintly heroes would neither be numerous enough nor practical enough for the numbers of men..."³ The need to modify the original Rule led to the Rule of 1221. However, as a document, the *Regula non Bullata* was lengthy and not well organized, and thus, "unsuitable to be erected by papal decree into a legal constitution."

It was in the planning of a more orderly and succinct Rule that Hugolino assisted with his services because of his friendship with Francis. Once again, this cardinal provided the invaluable assistance of which Francis was in need. Not only did Hugolino possess a great love and respect for the fraternity, but he was well gifted with the ability to identify the needs of both the brethren and the church. Satisfied with the contents of this document, now called *Regula Bullata*, Pope Honorius III issued his formal approval of the Franciscan rule on November 29, 1223. Hugolino's intervention in this matter was critical.

A friendship existing solely for its own end soon dies. The love shared between Francis and Hugolino overflowed unto those who wished to follow the Gospel life. This is true in all relationships that are grounded on Christian faith: the Love of the Father begets the Son through the

working of the Holy Spirit; Mary, in her Immaculate womb, conceives our savior whose message would reach the ends of the earth.

Prelude to a New Stage

On the eve of October 4, 1226, while lying on the ground of the Portiuncula, the Poverello's "holy soul was freed from his body and assumed into the abyss of God's glory" (LM XIV:6). Approximately six months later, on March 18, 1227, Pope Honorius III also passed from this life to life eternal. While the brothers of Francis were anticipating a new phase of leadership for the Order, the cardinals assembled in Rome to elect a new Pope. Crucial decisions concerning the future of the Church and the Franciscan Order were about to be made.

The cardinals did not waste any time, for it was on the very day that they assembled, March 19, that Cardinal Hugolino of Ostia became Pope Gregory IX. "Unusual energy and an inflexible will were united in this Pope with a certain violence of temper, which was, however, softened by an innate sweetness of disposition."⁴ Two months later, on May 27, 1227, Brother Elias, exercising his new role as Vicar of the Order, convoked a Chapter of all of his brothers. Appointed by the newly elected Pope Gregory IX, Cardinal Raynaldo of Segni became the new Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order.

The friendship of Francis and Hugolino now entered a new phase. With the death of Francis and the election of a new pope, a deeper dimension of their friendship emerged. One became a symbol of the Kingdom of heaven; the other became a symbol of God's Kingdom here on earth. As a result, the relationship between these two men took on a more spiritual significance. Hugolino continued to respond to the fruits of their friendship. Francis continued to be the exemplar he had always been in the eyes of his friend. By far, the best example of the fruits of this relationship is found in Hugolino's acts of paternal benevolence towards those whom the Poverello had left behind, his brothers.

Pope Gregory IX and Saint Francis of Assisi

The fact that Gregory IX was no longer Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order did not prompt him to end his friendship with the brothers of Francis. Within the first year of his pontificate, on April 29, 1228, Gregory issued the Papal Bull "*Recolentes qualiter*."⁵ The pope, in this document, expressed his approval of Brother Elias' personal endeavor to build a church in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. Addressed to "the universal Christians" throughout the world, this bull granted an indulgence of forty

days to all who donated alms towards this project. In his own words, Gregory wrote:

It appears to us both worthy and just to the glorious memory of St. Francis that a church be built in which his remains might rest. However, since the assistance of the faithful is essential, by virtue of the present Brief, we grant to all the Christians who assist in contributing alms an indulgence of forty days.

It is most interesting to note the date of this bull: April 29, 1228, three months before Francis' canonization on July 16, 1228. Along with the vast majority of Christians, Gregory IX must have exceedingly approved of the holy life of Francis in order to have promulgated such a presumptuous decree.

Gregory's lasting friendship with Francis became even more evident in the years to come, reaching its culmination on July 16, 1228, when he canonized his friend and raised him to the altars. It was a day marked by glorious celebration on the part of the people of Assisi. It is a shame there does not exist a document giving us a detailed description of this momentous event. However, no writer comes closer in giving the details concerning Francis' canonization than Thomas of Celano, his first biographer, who was an eyewitness to this event.⁶ In his *First Life*, Celano writes:

First Pope Gregory preached to all the people, and with a sweetly flowing and sonorous voice he spoke the praises of God. He also praised the holy father Francis in a noble eulogy, and recalling and speaking of the purity of his life, he was bathed in tears. (1 Cel 125)

In his homily, Gregory IX compared Francis to a light which "shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as a moon at the full. And as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God" (1 Cel 235). The recitation of the miracles attributed to St. Francis soon followed and the Poor Man of Assisi was inscribed into the catalogue of saints.

Two papal bulls followed this illustrious celebration, both of which continued to show Gregory IX's unbounded attachment to Francis' brothers. The bull, "*Mira circa*," dated July 19, 1228, three days after the ceremony of canonization, officially announced the canonization of St. Francis. In addition, this bull proclaimed that his "birth be celebrated worthily and solemnly by the universal Church on the fourth of October, the day on which he entered the heavenly kingdom, freed from the prison of flesh."⁷ Within three weeks Gregory promulgated another bull, "*Sicut phialae aureae*," in which he commanded all peoples "to solemnly celebrate each year his feast on the fourth of October." Undoubtedly, Francis could not have chosen a more powerful friend.

The benevolence of Gregory IX again made itself evident at the transfer of Francis' body on May 25, 1230. The remains were being transferred from the Church of St. George, where they rested temporarily, to the new basilica being constructed in his honor. Before this event took place, Gregory IX once again promulgated a bull whose significance is evident from the fact that thirteen cardinals signed it. The bull entitled "*Is qui ecclesiam*" was issued on April 22, 1230, about one month before the transfer of the body of St. Francis. "*Is qui ecclesiam*," addressed to the friars living next to the church of St. Francis, bestowed many privileges upon the church and the Order: the church was to be immune from ecclesiastical censures; divine liturgies could be celebrated behind closed doors even under general interdict; the church had the right of asylum; and the church was entrusted *in perpetuum* to the Friars Minor. It was proclaimed the "Head and Mother" ("*Caput et Mater*") of the Order. Probably the most important privilege was that this church would be directly subject to the Pope, immune from any and all lower ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

On May 16, 1230, nine days before the transfer of the remains of Francis, Pope Gregory IX issued the bull "*Mirificans misericordias*" addressed to the friars who were gathering for a chapter that month. "*Mirificans misericordias*" not only approved of the transfer of Francis' body into the new church, but granted an indulgence for those people who were able to attend this ceremony: three years for those who came across the sea; two years for those who crossed the Alps; and one year for all others, also applicable to anyone visiting the church until the feast of the Birth of the Virgin on the eighth of September.

What makes all of these bulls so significant in the light of the friendship of Francis and Gregory? It is more than a story of a certain pope showering gifts on a certain saint. Both in his eulogy at the time of Francis' canonization, as well as at the beginning of each bull, following his greetings and apostolic blessing, Gregory IX praised the memory, deeds, and life of his friend. Not only did he call St. Francis "our father and your father," but he even went so far as to call Francis "my father even more than yours" in the bull *Mirificans*. Recall that previously, in the eyes of Francis, Cardinal Hugolino was considered a "father figure": now the roles were reversed and St. Francis became a "father figure" to Pope Gregory IX.

Gregory IX wanted to share the memory of his friend with the entire world. The words of these bulls are the words of a man devoted to and committed to promoting one of history's greatest saints. This is notwithstanding the fact that he was a powerful man, and I may add, a person who had to be taken quite seriously.⁸

The bulls of Pope Gregory IX clearly show evidence of a friendship

grounded on selfless charity. It was a friendship which began with a mutual recognition of the presence and working of God through both of them. Their admiration and respect for each other contributed to their spiritual growth and finally resulted in acts of charity which benefited not only the Order but the whole Christian world as well.

As a friar once told me: "A friend is a gift from God." In turn, I was quick to respond, "... and it is in the recognition of the fruits that come out of these gifts that you are able to recognize who your friends are." The friendship of St. Francis and Pope Gregory IX continues to provide a good example of a friendship based on our faith, for it was in the recognition of their Creator in each other that they were able to recognize the gift of each other.

Endnotes

¹See *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972): 1 Cel: 70, 72, 93, 215; and Francis and His Lady Poverty.

²See Cel 24: The Vision of the "Black Hen." Francis is described as a mother hen attempting to gather and protect her chicks who are "multiplied in number and in grace, whom Francis' strength does not suffice to defend them... I will go, therefore, and I will commend them to the holy Roman Church... and the children will enjoy full freedom everywhere unto the increase of eternal salvation."

³Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1925), p. 184.

⁴Francis Seppelt and Clement Löffler, *A Short History of the Popes* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1932), p. 182.

⁵All information and translations of the following bulls in this article come from unpublished notes by Claude Jarmak, OFM Conv.

⁶It is important to note that it was Pope Gregory IX who commissioned Celano to write the first biography of St. Francis: "I have tried, at the command of our Lord, the gloriously reigning Pope Gregory, to set forth as well as I can, though indeed with unskilled words, at least those things which I have heard from his own mouth or that I have gathered from faithful and trustworthy witnesses" (prologue).

⁷For a more indepth look at this bull, see Regis Armstrong's work "*Mira circa nos: Gregory IX's View of the Saint Francis of Assisi*" in *Laurentianum* vol. 25, 1984, pgs 385-414.

⁸The following month, on June 16, 1230, Pope Gregory IX wrote *Speravimus Hactenus*, a bull which condemned the podestà, the Council and the people of Assisi for their disorderly conduct on the day of the transfer. In essence, they attempted to seize the body of Francis and, as a result, desecrated the ceremony. The wrath of Gregory IX is vividly seen in the threat of excommunication of the podestà and the council and the retribution demanded of the people of Assisi. Fortunately, this bull was never promulgated thanks to the proper explanation made to the pope.

Penance and Minority

FR. SERAPHIN CONLEY, T.O.R.

In the *Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis*, besides the basic charism of continuous penance lived out in fraternity, we also find the characteristic of "minority." This quality of minority is something shared by all brothers and sisters of the Franciscan movement although it is so characteristic of the first Order that it forms part of the name. Many religious communities, founded or guided in their origins by friars of the first Order, perhaps more readily recognize themselves in this quality than in that of "penance" which is still somewhat unfamiliar to them. In what does this minority consist?

The ordinary understanding of "minority" considers it as a state of dependency or inferiority. Certainly, if not an evil, it is thought to be something undesirable or to be avoided. So why would someone choose to embrace minority as a permanent way of life? It is here that we find the connection of penance and minority in the Franciscan vocation.

St. Francis is undoubtedly acknowledged to be a person who didn't just preach about minority, or involve himself in the occasional humble action, but really embraced minority as the way of life for himself and his Friars Minor. In the second version of the "Letter to the Faithful," Francis gives the key ideas for understanding the deepest meaning of minority:

The Son of God DESCENDED from heaven and assumed the weakness of our human flesh; CHOOSING poverty for Himself and His Mother; near the time of His PASSION He celebrated the Passover together with His disciples: Take and Eat, this is My Body... and then the cup: Take and Drink, this is My Blood shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Then He PRAYED: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. And His sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground. He PLACED

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His will in that of His Father... Father, let it be Your Will, not as I will but as You will.

And the Will of the Father was that His glorious and blessed Son given and born for us, should offer himself for us as a Sacrifice and Victim on the Altar of the Cross, not for His own good, but to liberate us from our sins, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE SO THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.

Only against this background can we really understand the meaning of our Franciscan vocation to a life of evangelical penance lived in minority: it consists in allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us as Francis was led into what Fr. Henri Nouwen refers to as "The Way of Downward Mobility"¹ to follow in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to participate in His Way of the Cross. Our ministry, our "bringing forth the fruits of penance" is possible because we do not belong to the world just as Christ did not belong to the world. So, in his "Letter to the Faithful" (Penitents) Francis recalls the "Priestly Prayer of Jesus" in which He asks the Father not to remove the disciples from the world but to protect them from the world. With these same words the Poverello asks God to protect his followers from the temptation to compromise their vocation to a continuous and radical conversion from the values of our culture to those of the Gospel.

There is a statue of Pietro and Pica Bernardone in the Piazza of the Chiesa Nuova of Assisi. Pica holds in her hand the chains with which her husband tried to bind their favorite son to the way of life he had planned for him, and there seems to be a vacant or puzzled expression on his face. Perhaps, he never came to understand the vocation of Francis... even if he had lived to see the sensational fame of his son. Think about the baffled rage of this father confronted with the "madness" of Francis. Pietro Bernardone did not forbid his son the choice of a more intense Christian life. He was even disposed to invest more money so that Francis could give generously to the poor. As strange and expensive as it might have been, even this would have been acceptable. The prestige of the Bernardones would have grown in the esteem and regard of the "important people," the *maggiori*, of Assisi. The bafflement ... the scandal for Pietro Bernardone was that Francis refused "Upward Mobility" and chose the way of "Downward Mobility"!

Francis publicly chose to turn his back on the world of social and economic security, of moving up to the power and honors dreamed and schemed for him by his father. Instead, Francis chose to descend into the status of the *minori*, the lower class, to share their poverty, their marginal status in society and their absolute unimportance in the eyes of the World. This was a scandal and a tragedy for Pietro Bernardone which shattered the very sense of his way of life, of all that he had stubbornly planned and worked so hard to achieve.

Choosing the "Path of Downward Mobility" makes us true sons and daughters of Francis...

The option of Francis for minority or the "Way of Downward Mobility" formed part of his process of conversion/penance. It was the obvious result of his radical change of mind which now saw minority not as an evil to flee from but a good worthy to be sought out and embraced. It was minority which allowed him to recognize the profundity of the mystery of God, the All High, All Powerful, All Good Whom no one is worthy even to name. Minority allowed Francis to recognize and to unite himself in his daily actions to the descent of the Eternal Word into our fragile flesh without being ashamed of it, or using it only as a disguise, but assuming the real and crude poverty of our humanity.² Minority strengthened his faith in God's saving grace coming through the simple signs of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and allowed him to reverence even those imperfect instruments of God, sinful priests.

It is this option of Francis which is our inheritance as we follow our vocation to penance in minority. Our descent into minority means that we too in our personal lives and in our ministries are to turn our backs on the temptation to be *powerful, spectacular, relevant*.³ These are the values of our culture which promise us and our apostolates a privileged position among the *maggiori*, the VIPs. To be relevant means to prove by our busyness, or by our results, that we are worthy of appreciation. To be spectacular means to deny that anything good can be ordinary or come through simple ways and to hide our self-doubt by seeking to be popular, to be loved, to be praised. To be powerful in a competitive society is the need to be No. 1, The Best, to be in control. Even our ministry/ service can be turned into a Power Base! The Word and Sacraments, or our apostolic skills can be used as our 'professional tools.' They are needed by the people and we control them and thus have power.

The minority of Francis teaches us the Gospel Way, that powerlessness reveals God's mercy. Jesus sent His apostles out with nothing for their journey. They were sent without personal power so that they could reveal God's powerful love. This is what Francis had in mind when he quoted Christ's words in his prayer that his Brothers and Sisters of Penance would be faithful to the evangelical value of minority and remain on the "Path of Downward Mobility." His message was direct and simple: You are not

of the world but of God and so you have no need of the world's methods to validate your call or your service.

There is another aspect to the descent into minority. It opens up a sense of wonder for creation and teaches a respectful courtesy towards our Mother Earth. Like Francis, we learn a new language which makes it possible to communicate with all our fellow creatures (Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Sister Water, etc.). In an age which has witnessed ecological disasters and recently ecological vandalism as an instrument of war, perhaps the gentle language of minority will find a hearing. It is a language which expresses that *pietas* which opposes and rejects any enjoyment of nature reduced to the status of a mere useful and neutral object. For those like Francis who understand this language, the earth and all creatures are mysterious footprints and signs of God's creative love which gives force and direction for continual progress in all that is truly human.⁴

Minority, then, which flows from this new vision of life resulting from the process of conversion/penance supports us in our effort to live in the world but not be of it. Choosing the "Path of Downward Mobility" makes us true sons and daughters of Francis, conforms us to Christ and enables us to witness to Him in the world.

Endnotes

¹Henri Nouwen, Personal notes taken at 2 Lectures on Vocation / Formation at the Virginia Theological Seminary, Oct. 17, 1980.

²Vincenzo Cherubino Bigi, *La Via della Penitenza in Francesco d'Assisi*, pp. 47-53, Edizioni Francescane, Bologna, 1989.

³Nouwen. From notes of his first lecture on Vocation/ Formation.

⁴Bigi, o. c., p. 54.

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Haiku

Flaming morning Sun
Filled with heated energy
Like my seething soul.

Lois Houlihan, F.M.M.

On How the Fraternity Was Invited to Reflect on the Spirituality of the "Third Eye" and of "Pluridimensional Listening"

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

I

During the last decades of the second millennium and in spite of all the progress made in science, technology and theology; while the world witnessed the spending of 1.8 million dollars a minute on armaments; while 1,500 children died every hour from hunger or diseases caused by hunger; while every day the mortal danger of the nuclear threat, of the destruction of the environment, of the contamination of the eco-systems, of the crisis of the so-called foreign debt, and the tension between the privileged North and the deprived South continued to grow and increase, BEHOLD, a certain Friar Michael from the Basque Country, the librarian of the study-centre dedicated to Saint Anthony in the eternal and ever-holy city of Rome, proceeded to index the numerous volumes and dusty manuscripts of his library. He would thus provide a data-bank making the volumes more accessible to researchers, in accordance with the admonition of the Lord Pope to place the computer at the service of evangelization.¹

To his great surprise he came by chance upon a parchment largely devoured by "the rust and the moth" (Mt. 6:19), which bore the mark of the TAU and the signature "Friar Francis." Before this document could be catalogued and confided to the electronic memory it was scientifically examined and analyzed by specialists from the whole world and from the Fraternity. Before continuing with this discussion and what resulted from

This fascinating piece from our regular contributor, Fr. Hermann Schalück, offers remarkable new insights into Franciscan evangelization.

it, let us say that both methodological limitations and Franciscan "minority" constrain us to admit that the results of the analysis are at the stage of a "working hypothesis." If they should succeed in demonstrating its authenticity, this document would shed a new light on the mission of the whole Fraternity and on its missionary spirituality.

It would appear that Brother Francis was an expert in the theology of the "third eye" and of "pluridimensional listening," of which the contemporary Chinese theologian, CHOAN-SENG SONG (+1929), has been the first to speak to us.² This vision of God and of the cosmos permits us specifically, as others have already confirmed,³ to capture the most profound dimensions of reality which can be hidden from the "carnal eye" (Adm. 16) and to which Western theology, greatly influenced by the Angelic Doctor, did not have access until now. These dimensions very clearly show where it is possible to perceive "the seeds of the Word and the sacred presence of God, both in the world as we know it and in other cultures and religions," about which our new General Constitutions so clearly speak (Art 93, 2). What follows will reveal in few and simple words what had been buried under the dust of centuries and what it would appear that the Spirit of the Lord wishes to make known to the Provinces and the Conferences.

II

To their astonishment the experts read: "A painter ought not to paint that which he sees before him but that which he sees within him." Did these words originate, as some people maintain, with the German painter Caspar David Friedrich?⁴ There are others who do not wish to exclude the possibility that here is hidden an authentic intuition of Brother Francis, who had left to others the task of formulating it in this manner. Had he not, indeed, loved every human being, every brother and sister, Christians, Saracens and other unbelievers, the rich and the poor, Europeans and Americans, Thai, Méo, Kmer, Moi, Nung, Nhang and Cham of South-East Asia, as so many creatures of that same God who had placed his image in the heart of each individual? Do not all men and women, no matter what their color or creed, bear within themselves the seeds of the Kingdom to come? Had not Brother Francis, before preaching the "objective truths," himself begun with his own conversion to our "Deus semper minor," the God of the Gospel? Had he not made obligatory a similar conversion for all his brothers and sisters? In this manner could he not come to be the example for all Franciscan evangelization which in all cultures and in Rome as well should have as its starting point a "vital and fraternal dialogue" instead of stale disputes with words (RB 3, 10; RnB 11, 3)?

A young friar from Transylvania, responding generously to the call

from the Minister of that Fraternity,⁵ had volunteered to become a new missionary to the "Celestial Empire" and had made a study of the language. To the amazement of all he succeeded in deciphering some Chinese characters on the parchment which said: "The meek is more powerful than the strong;" and later: "The thickness of your sandals is of no use to you. The hardness of your fists is unavailing. The rapidity of your speech or your pen counts for little." Having read and listened to these words all began to ask what meaning they were intended to convey.

III

A more detailed study of the document, this time on the part of specialists in Patrology, led to a passage of the Protrepicon of Clement of Alexandria: "The Word said to man: For me you are a flute, a temple... The Lord has blown into a beautiful instrument, into man, that is, because he has made him in his image. He is the instrument most finely attuned to the divinity, to supernatural wisdom, to the heavenly Logos."⁶ The document also yielded a statement of St. Ignatius of Antioch, one finally retrieved from the caves of oblivion: "Become absorbed in the melody of God. Together you will all form a choir and, thanks to your concord and harmonious love, the song of Jesus Christ will be raised. That is the song which the Father hears; he will then recognize you as those who belong to Christ."⁷ A certain Brother Theofried, professor of Theology in Mainz and member of the theological commission of the Fraternity, added to these two texts a parallel one from Basil the Great: "When dogma is accompanied by a harmonious melody we embrace the words more readily, thanks to the pleasure which we experience on hearing them."⁸

All were amazed at the perspective which all these thoughts could open up for Franciscan evangelization now and in the future. Did not Francis himself, while speaking of God, use words such as "beautiful" and "melodious" (Praises of the Most High God)? Had he not taught his Brothers to evangelize themselves and others with "sensibility and solidarity"⁹ while getting to know both the ancient and modern melodies of all cultures? Would it not be necessary that alongside the Gregorian chants there should also resound in the choir of the Roman Curia and its imposing corridors other melodies, reminding one of the African proverb: "A sweet melody puts the worst demons to flight"? Could we not realize the possibility of living the truth of the one gospel and the mystery of the one God with tolerance and in "minority" in every culture (GGCC. 100), and in that way unite the most diverse voices and instruments in one magnificent symphony, respecting the diverse cadences which give rhythm to the history of God with men and availing of the flutes and cymbals which

sometimes appear strange, exotic or even strident — all for the beauty of the ensemble? Did not the theology of Urs von Balthasar, highly regarded in Rome, say that truth is a "symphonic"? And had not Brother Ludovicus, on one of his reconnaissance journeys into China, brought the message: "Faith is like the song of a bird when the night is still dark"? Likewise Brother Gwenole from Gaul, President of the commission for dialogue with Islam, was fond of quoting a mystical passage from that religion: "Don't despise the man you see dressed in tatters, for beneath those rags may be hiding a great maestro."

The working groups charged with the preparation of the theme "Evangelization 2000" for the next Chapter of Pentecost made an inventory of what they were able to learn from the discovery made in the Via Merulana and from the "theology of the third eye" so as to include it in their "instrumentum laboris."

IV

Finally, it was also possible to decipher a mysterious refrain which according to results of researches carried out by the Africa Desk in the General Curia, could have come from the natural religion of the Kple of Ghana. It was certainly known to our Brother Francis of Assisi and could cause the gospel priority of care for creation, one which the friars had already promised to uphold, to shine with a new splendour. The refrain says:

Oh man, my brother, you hold in your hand
the power over Earth, our Motherland.
Raise up your eyes to the Lord above,
and thank the Giver for all his love.
The bird who drinks water
Looks up to say "Thanks"
And gives glory to God in the highest.

A certain Brother Bernard from India who worked as bursar in the General Curia found a refrain similar to a saying of a wise man of his country, Rabindranath Tagore:

God is not pleased with the great kingdoms,
But he cherishes all the littlest flowers.

A certain Brother Francis from Mexico, who was an expert in the evangelization of the Americas, was convinced that he discerned a lament which, if it did not come from Francis himself, must surely have come from the high plateau of Peru:

Once upon a time man wondered at the Earth
and wept for joy;

Now the Earth wonders at man
and weeps for despair.

Had not Brother Francis heard in all of creation, even mute and silent creation, the voice and the melody of God, and had he not therefore venerated and protected it? So the friars decided, in holy obedience, to contribute by deed and word so that a saving rainbow might wrap all creation in her mantle; so that creation would be protected with care and healed where ravished; so that the rights of people and of creation would be deemed to be more valuable than economic imperatives; so that "universalism" rather than "eurocentrism" would in the future be the desired goal. They became more aware than ever before that the harm they had done to others and to creation was first of all inflicted upon themselves. By the example of the little Brother Francis, they learned that effective ecology has its origin in a pure and peaceloving heart (Adm 16) and that today's utopias and dreams of a new heaven can tomorrow transform our Earth. Forsooth, "the power of the weak is found in the weakness of the strong" (Vaclav Havel).

V

When the brothers recognized what treasures had been hidden beneath the dust, they resolved to give a new future to their past, to walk as minors, step by step, towards the "great utopia" of the kingdom of God, to review the reality of the world with the "third eye," in accordance with the modulations of "pluridimensional listening," applying good as a remedy for evil, light as a remedy for darkness, while marvelling at the harmony of contraries in the universe, and having utter confidence in the action of the Spirit of the Lord.

A certain Brother Arnulf, a well-known missiologist from the Netherlands, was given the commission of preparing a congress on the following theme:

Whoever beholds the sky in the water
can see fish swimming on the trees.

In distant Chile a certain Brother Ramón Angel of Chilán thereupon set about composing a cantata, which would in due course be played by the "Sweet Flutes" Ensemble in San Diego, on the occasion of the Chapter of Pentecost, taking his inspiration from the words of Martin Luther King: "I have a dream..."

Endnotes

- ¹*Osservatore Romano*, January 26, 1990, p. 6.
- ²C. S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, New York, 1979; A. Camps, OFM, *Het Deerde Oog*, Nijmegen, 1990.
- ³F. Wilfred, *Sunset in the East?*, Hong Kong, 1986.
- ⁴1774 (Greifswald) — 1840 (Dresden).
- ⁵*Acta Ordinis Minorum* 108 (1989), Fasciculum II.
- ⁶J. Barbel, *Geschichte der frühen griechischen und lateinischen Literatur*, Vol. I, Aschaffenburg, 1989, 109-115.
- ⁷J. Bours, *Nehmt Gottes Melodie in euch auf*, Friburg, 1985, p. 40.
- ⁸*Patrologia Graeca* XXIX, 212.
- ⁹H. F. Schalück, *Sensibilität und Solidarität. Impulse zur Franziskanischen Evangelisation*. Bonn, 1981.



The Lesson

A small bird at my feet
Chides crumbs from my lunch.
Not quite a sparrow, unperturbed
He sits there, looking up with open beak,
Confident of kindness from above.

An even trade, bread for a song,
Then he has flown and gone,
This tiny lesson on the providence of God.

Kathleen Collins

On Patience

JOHN HARDING, O.F.M.

There is a story of a young boy who wanted to be a blacksmith. He went to see and to ask the village blacksmith if he could learn his trade. When it was agreed, the boy was invited to come next morning. Next morning the boy came and the blacksmith welcomed him, gave him a piece of iron to hold and asked him to wait where he stood. This the boy did. At the end of the day the blacksmith thanked the boy for holding the iron and asked him to come again the next day. Next day the boy came and the same thing happened: he was given the same piece of iron and asked to hold it where he stood. At the end of the day he was thanked and sent home. This went on for eight days — always the same thing. On the ninth day the boy turned up as usual and was once more asked to hold a piece of iron. This the boy did as usual. However, later on in the day the boy noticed that it was not the same piece of iron. He mentioned this to the blacksmith who replied by telling him: good, you have learned your first lesson.

For everything which happens in our lives there is a reason if we are patient enough to learn. The boy learned his lesson and became a blacksmith. He had patience. Patience is not so easy a virtue to acquire but it is vital in any living situation — which effectively means for all of life. St. Francis saw the necessity of patience, as his 13th Admonition tells us:

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God (Mt 5,9). The servant of God cannot know how much patience and humility he has within himself as long as everything goes well with him. But when

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Patience means to accept the real, and to grow as a result.

the time comes in which those who should do him justice do quite the opposite to him, he has only as much patience and humility as he has on that occasion and no more. [AB, 32]

Even when we think we have acquired something of this virtue things happen which show we have not even begun, or at least show just how fragile our patience really is. Patience often means enduring anguish, danger, and even the burden of life's story. We instinctively seek to be free from those things which so severely try our patience. How marvellous it would be if all could go our way — but how unrealistic and self-centered. Patience means to accept the real, and to grow as a result.

Consider the following from the desert Fathers:

Some robbers came into the monastery and said to one of the elders: We have come to take away everything that is in your cell. And he said: My sons, take all you want. So they took everything they could find in the cell and started off. But they left behind a little bag that was hidden in the cell. The elder picked it up and followed after them, crying out: My sons, take this, you forgot it in the cell! Amazed at the patience of the elder, they brought everything back into his cell and did penance, saying: This one really is a man of God!

[Merton, T., *The Wisdom of the Desert*, A New Directions Book, 1960, p. 59]

There are always the larger events which try our patience to the limit but more often than not it is the small things which daily determine whether we have patience. The patient person is also a wise person. There are two necessary conditions for wisdom: the first is experience and the second is suffering. Without these there is no wisdom or patience.

We can see this in the farmer who labors and suffers. He has the experience to know that without such labour and suffering he will receive nothing. Jesus himself employs the example of the farmer who knows how to wait for his harvest (Mk 4:26-29).

In life we learn the lesson that we only reap what we sow. We are responsible for the quality of our lives. Patience is not the same as resignation or stoicism. Resignation can amount to no more than an abnegation of responsibility, a refusal to be touched by reality, a retreat from the real. Stoicism is flawed, for the stoic becomes the measure of himself, is

concerned only with what he can endure and learns nothing of worth. The stoic ends by despising those less able than himself.

Patience is born of the gradual acceptance of life lived with and for others. It is an asceticism, a training with a purpose. It is interesting that the Lord spent some thirty or so years in preparation for a mere three or less years of public ministry. These thirty years were important, for they were the time for acquiring patience and wisdom. Many of the Gospel parables bear witness to this and can be justly read as autobiographical. His last hour on the cross was the culmination of life spent in wise and patient self-giving.

Jesus learned patience. He knew why he had come into the world and doubtless saw the immensity of the task that lay before him, yet he learned to prepare himself for the favourable time. The Gospel reveals the effect of this, for when he spoke, people remarked: Where did the son of a carpenter get this wisdom?

Jesus was patient with those he called to follow him. They were slow to learn and often disappointed him. They were impatient and more than once he had to reprove them and show them another way. His disciples had to acquire true patience if their own mission was to be fruitful. Jesus could be their teacher because he knew the score. Understanding would be given them in due time, understanding of why it is that certain things happen; for this is wisdom born of experience and suffering.

We think of the great saints, whether canonized or not. What made them saints? It was not that they lacked sin but that they learned that they were in fact capable of committing even the gravest of sins but for God's grace. When St. Francis considered himself the worst of all sinners he was not simply indulging in an excess of humility — he truly knew himself and had learned to be patient with his weakness and trust in God's love for himself. He was wise, for he suffered and experienced the hardship of acquiring true patience. The saints learned to be patient with their own fragility and so could empathize with the weakness of others. True enough, they could be stern in the face of sin in themselves and in others because they knew the fickleness of human intentions to do better. They understood that the virtues must be acquired in the hard school of life's realities.

There are the saints we know: those who toil every day with little or no reward; parents who struggle to feed and clothe their families in the face of sometimes impossible odds. There are those who bear their sickness without complaint; those isolated, reviled, and rejected because they cannot live on falsehood and lies. These, and so many others, are the people whose endurance will win them life. Their story will never be told this side of the grave but they are the real heroes who inspire and who keep the world sane. Patience is possible for those prepared to learn.

Concerning "the look"

when one can see Jesus in the masses of the world
the deeper and more we see him in each person we meet and see
the more Jesus rises to the surface in us

"the look" is a look of lingering penetration of eye to heart
it makes us weep, it makes our hearts especially joyful
there is passion!

the more we can see Jesus in others
the larger he becomes in us

it is then that we begin to look at things the way God does
we see people as *He* does and our hearts are moved as *His* is
we are "one" with *Him* for brief all too fleeting moments

perhaps the idea is to make each experience last longer
so that *all* experiences will connect with one another

and seldom then would come the moments when we are not
in oneness with our loving God

Rev. Tony Longhi

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The Clown Kachina

If you are hungry
then I can feed
you love,
but my blood, or
sex, or the shell and
stripes I wear,
will all leave you
nowhere.

If you are thirsty
then I will pour
spirit into your
home,
but I am not the
body that is bread,
nor the Savior's cup
flowing into eternity.

I am only the
skeleton on the mesa,
the clown kachina,
the voice of
headless John
calling from your plate:
"... that that decrease
I spoke of is true,
and our hunger
and thirst are
for Him."

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

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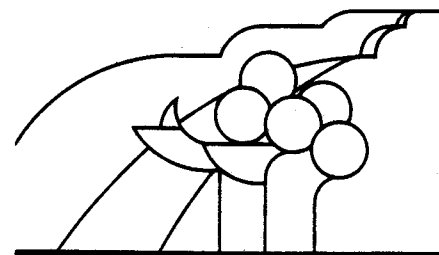
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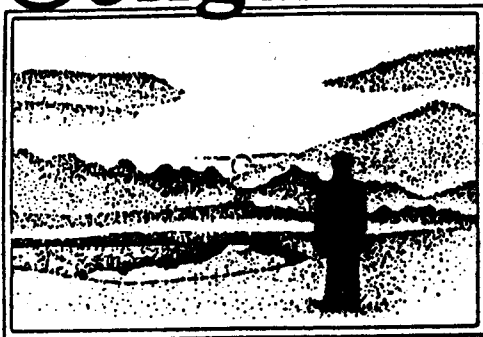
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JULY-AUGUST, 1991

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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**Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD
for Early Franciscan Sources**

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

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Clare's Letter to the Entire Order (1991)

KIERAN M. KAY, O.F.M. CONV.

My brothers, dear to the Lord,

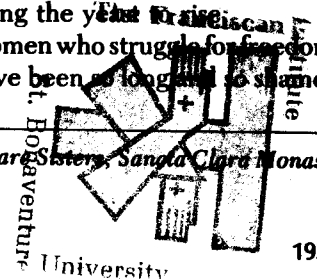
May our gracious God hold you always close to his heart. May he enlighten you as to how you should always be in the world and what you need to do to win that world to Jesus. May he touch and heal you in whatever way you need that touch today, so that you may be channels of healing the monumental gaps between nations and classes and people.

May you continue to be strong in bearing witness to our loving God by loving yourselves as God loves you. Do not be discouraged by the weaknesses within yourselves that the Lord shows you. Rather, exult in those weaknesses so that the power of the Most High may shine through you. Whatever gifts you have, use them to build up the body of Jesus and Francis unto the glory of God, the giver of all good gifts.

Continue to love the Church and be loyal to her, even as you painfully see her weaknesses. Do what you can to love those people who struggle to right the wrongs within her, especially those who mistakenly think that they are its Messiah. Be patient with those who think they must break the bread of the Kingdom instead of assisting the yearning Franciscan

And continue to be understanding with women who struggle for freedom and justice in a patriarchal church. They have been as long as to shame-

Fr. Kieran is chaplain and brother to the Poor Clare Sisters, Santa Clara Monastery, Canton, Ohio.



fully abused and want so desperately to be appreciated and recognized for all they are and have done to bring the Kingdom through all the stages of its pregnancy. Be kind and gentle to them so that they may grow in the strength of Christ who has captivated their hearts, and they may teach you the humble and loving ways of Jesus.

Finally, dear brothers, our Father Francis promised to care for us, your sisters, even as he cared for you. May you continue that loving care for us, as we struggle each day to be faithful to what we have promised the Lord. We, for our part, will continue to love you in the Lord and support you in all your ministries. Together, let us praise God and give him everlasting thanks for calling us to be servants of the Most High after the manner of our holy Father Francis.

The Kiss

The lips that once attracted me
were full and luscious,
shining with cosmetic gloss —
soft to the touch.
The skin I loved
was white as lily,
framing sea-blue eyes
beauty glistening
with awakening;

not lips where skin
flaked like dry stone,
not eyes shrunken
behind suppurating
seeping sores.

I would give much
could I lean to kiss,
lips such as those
but
I lack your trust,
and generosity

to understand beauty
as the inner reality
of humanity.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Clare and The Rule for Hermitages

ANDRE R. CIRINO, O.F.M.

Last fall, I conducted a week's retreat for the Monastery of Poor Clares in Bordentown, New Jersey. The retreat centered on the prayer of Francis and Clare. Towards the end of the week, we examined prayer in the solitude of Francis in light of the Rule for Hermitages. After an explanation of the Rule, we spent the last three days experiencing its rhythm. At the end of the time, one of the Poor Clares, Sr. Rosina Carosa, handed me a sheet of paper with a list of the many quotes from the writings of Clare which she felt paralleled Francis' Rule for Hermitages. I took the list home with me where it sat on my desk for several months until Easter week when I made my own annual retreat at the Monastery of Poor Clares in Stamford, Connecticut. Being alone in the quiet for the week, I was able to pick up on the rhythm of their life. And then Sr. Rosina's list came back to me as well as the parallelism between the Rule for Hermitages and Clare's writings. I will go through the Rule sharing Sr. Rosina's list as well as some commentary from the rhythm I experienced at the Stamford Monastery.

1. THOSE WHO WISH TO LIVE RELIGIOUSLY IN HERMITAGES SHOULD BE THREE BROTHERS OR FOUR AT MOST; TWO OF THESE SHOULD BE MOTHERS AND THEY MAY HAVE TWO SONS OR AT LEAST ONE.*

Andre Cirino, O.F.M., is a staff member of THE ASSISI EXPERIENCE since 1984. He began conducting experiences of the Rule for Hermitages in the Little Portion Retreat House in 1983. Presently he is engaged in Franciscan retreats and workshops in the States and in Italy.

*All quotes from the Rule for Hermitages, the Rule and Testament of St. Clare are taken from FRANCIS AND CLARE, THE COMPLETE WORKS. Armstrong and Brady. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press, 1982.

In the *Mirror of Perfection* 10 we read:

When the friars have received the blessing of the Bishop, let them go and mark out the boundaries of the land which they have accepted for their house, and as a sign of holy poverty and humility, let them plant a hedge instead of building a wall. Afterwards let them erect simple huts of clay and wood, and a number of cells where the friars can pray or work from time to time in order to increase their merit and avoid idleness.

This gives us an idea of the way the early friars lived. Most of the surviving hermitages we see today — Carceri, LaVerna, Poggio Bustone, Greccio — to name a few, are on secluded mountains, and one can still see remnants of caves friars would have used.

Clare writes:

The Abbesses are bound to observe it [poverty] [and] ... are not to receive or hold on to any... property... except as much land as necessity requires for the integrity and the proper seclusion of the monastery; and this land is not to be cultivated except as a garden for the needs of the Sisters. [Reg Cl VI 4-6]. Let both the Sister who is in office and the other Sisters exercise such care and farsightedness that they do not acquire or receive more land around the place than strict necessity requires for a vegetable garden. But if, for the integrity and privacy of the monastery, it becomes necessary to have more land beyond the limits of the garden, no more should be acquired than strict necessity demands. This land should not be cultivated or planted but always remain untouched and undeveloped. [Test Cl 16]

The Stamford monastery on diocesan property is an old house on 22 acres of land. The Sisters make use of the land for prayer in solitude, and for a small garden. The monastery presently has four members, so they almost literally align themselves with this part of the Rule for Hermitages (afterwards Reg Er). On this land, the Sisters are able to experience solitude — a solitude in fraternity — as Francis indicates in Reg Er 1.

Francis uses the term “mother,” a term he uses in Reg B VI 8 and it was used to refer to him in 2 Cel 137. Clare uses the term when she writes: “elect another as abbess and mother...” [Reg Cl IV 5]; also “I who am your mother and servant.” [Test Cl 24]. The term “mother” conveys not only concern and work, but also an attitude that is delicate, sensitive, warm, affectionate, tender. These qualities are evident in Abbesses and also in the Sisters themselves. There is a general “mother” attitude in all to safeguard the solitude of their lives. This will be treated further in Reg. Er 2.

2. THE TWO WHO ARE MOTHERS SHOULD FOLLOW THE LIFE OF MARTHA WHILE THE TWO SONS SHOULD FOLLOW THE LIFE OF MARY (LK 10:38-42). AND THEY MAY HAVE AN ENCLO-

SURE IN WHICH EACH ONE MAY HAVE HIS SMALL CELL IN WHICH HE MAY PRAY AND SLEEP.

We saw above how Clare in test Cl 24 calls herself “mother and servant.” One who assumes the role of “mother” or “Martha” assumes the role of servant, of work. Clare writes: “The Sisters to whom the Lord has given the grace of working are to work faithfully and devoutly [beginning] after the Hour of Terce, at work which pertains to a virtuous life and to the common good.” [Reg Cl VII 1] The Stamford monastery had many works going on each day — cooking, cleaning, raking leaves, cutting wood, spiritual direction, preparing liturgies, sewing and weaving, etc. It all seemed to facilitate the solitude that permeates the monastery. For the most part the work seems to be done in solitude so as to preserve the atmosphere of prayer for each other. And to preserve this solitude Clare calls all the Sisters to “obey their mother... so that seeing the charity, humility, and unity they have toward one another their mother might bear all the burdens [work]... lightly.” [Test Cl 20].

To neglect preaching the gospel would be to neglect one of the essential elements of living the gospel.

3. AND THEY SHOULD ALWAYS SAY COMPLINE OF THE DAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUNDOWN; AND THEY SHOULD BE EAGER TO KEEP SILENCE, AND TO SAY THEIR HOURS, AND TO RISE FOR MATINS; AND LET THEM SEEK FIRST OF ALL THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS JUSTICE [MT. 6:33].

Here Francis begins to delineate a schedule for the friars in hermitage that includes the Liturgy of the Hours. Clare writes: “The Sisters who can read shall celebrate the Divine Office according to the custom of the Friars Minor...” [Reg Cl III 1] The Monastery at Stamford had its Office of Readings [matins] about 11:30 A. M. In the solitude and silence of my week at Stamford, I frequently heard the voices of the Sisters chanting parts of the Divine Office in much the same way I have experienced similar chanting at the Protomonastery in Assisi.

Clare, in writing about silence, almost reproduces exactly the words of Reg Er 3, when she writes: “The Sisters are to keep silence from the

hour of compline..." [Reg Cl V 1]. The silence Francis desires is a profound experience of the Rule for Hermitages, deepening the solitude. Clare says: "They should keep silence continually in the church, in the dormitory, and, only while they are eating in the refectory." [Reg Cl V 2] In my week at the Stamford Monastery — a small building, during the day, voices or noise never broke into my silence, or rather I should say, the atmosphere of silence created by the Sisters.

4. AND LET THEM SAY PRIME AT THE PROPER TIME, AND AFTER TERCE THEY MAY BE FREE FROM SILENCE, AND THEY MAY SPEAK AND GO TO THEIR MOTHERS.

Francis here in Reg Er seems to be laying out a schedule, a time-table for the friars to set the rhythm of the hermitage. Clare approximates this statement of Reg Er when she writes: "The Sisters are to keep silence from the hour of Compline until Terce, except those who are serving outside the monastery." [Reg Cl V 1] Those serving outside the monastery would be the "mothers" performing the "Martha" tasks for the community. Then a few verses down in chapter V, almost as if Clare is seeing them all as "Mothers" to each other, she says: "However, they may briefly and quietly communicate what is really necessary always and everywhere." [Reg Cl V 4] Clare picks up on the silence and the speaking that we find in Reg Er 4.

At the Stamford Monastery the Sisters prayed morning prayer at 7:00 and mid-morning prayer at 9:30, being very much in silence all this time. Both in the morning before 10:00 and in the evening after Night Prayer the Sisters take advantage of silence to be "Mary" to whatever degree they feel called. Around mid-morning (Terce) the Sisters seemed to take up their "Martha/Mother" roles for one another — cooking, cleaning, running errands, etc.

5. AND, WHENEVER IT PLEASES THEM THEY CAN SEEK ALMS FROM THEM AS LITTLE POOR ONES, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.

Francis may have wanted to keep the "Marys" in touch with the rest of the fraternity who went about seeking alms for needs, for food. For the seeker of alms, Clare writes: "Each should make known her needs to the other with confidence." [Reg Cl VIII 9] And for the one from whom the alms are sought, Clare says:

I also beg the Sister who will have the office [of caring for] the sisters... [to] be prudent and attentive to her Sisters just as a good mother is to her daughters; and especially, let her take care to provide for them according

to the needs of each one from the things which the Lord shall give. [alms]
[Test Cl 19]

While alms were not sought for literally at the Stamford Monastery, the people of the area brought "alms" to the Sisters in diverse forms — food and new song books to name two of which I am aware — the people themselves acting almost like "Mothers" to the Sisters to preserve their prayer of solitude, which prayer the people value. People also at times drive the sisters to appointments and run errands so they can remain in solitude.

6. AND AFTERWARD THEY SHOULD SAY SEXT AND NONE AND VESPERS AT THE PROPER TIME.

Francis further delineates a schedule based on the liturgy of the hours. And Clare approaches this suggestion of the liturgical hours when she asks "the Sisters who can read [to] celebrate the Divine Office according to the custom of the friars Minor." [Reg Cl III 1]

At Stamford the Poor Clares prayed mid-day prayer together after the mid-day meal. Vespers is usually 5:00 PM.

7. AND IN THE ENCLOSURE, WHERE THEY LIVE, THEY SHOULD NOT PERMIT ANY PERSON TO ENTER, NOR SHOULD THEY EAT THERE.

Since the brothers were on the road preaching the gospel, engaged in the active ministry, when they returned and spent time in hermitages, Francis wanted to preserve their silence. So he "hedged" them in and spoke of enclosure for them. Clare has much to say about enclosure in chapters V and XI of her Rule. Without getting into the details of grilles, locks, doors, etc., Clare says in XI 8: "The Sisters shall not allow anyone to enter the monastery..." While she's aware of "evident, reasonable, and unavoidable" necessity, her words here in this chapter on enclosure come very close to those of Francis.

During the week people telephoned or came to the Stamford Monastery. The Sisters "hedged" themselves in by the use of a telephone-answering machine during prayer time and times of silence. And one Sister would be available to respond to those who came to the door, thus "hedging off" the others in their solitude.

8. THOSE BROTHERS WHO ARE THE MOTHERS SHOULD BE EAGER TO STAY FAR FROM EVERY PERSON; AND BECAUSE OF THE OBEDIENCE TO THEIR MINISTER THEY SHOULD PRO-

TECT THEIR SONS FROM EVERYONE, SO THAT NO ONE CAN TALK WITH THEM.

Here Francis is urging the "Mothers" to protect themselves as well as the sons who are in the stance of "Mary." For protection of the "Mothers" themselves, Clare writes:

The Sisters who serve outside the monastery should not delay long unless some evident necessity demands it. They should conduct themselves virtuously and speak little, so that those who see them may always be edified. And let them zealously avoid all meetings or dealings that could be called into question... They may not dare to repeat rumors of the world inside the monastery. And they are strictly bound not to repeat outside the monastery anything that was said or done within which could cause scandal. [Reg Cl IX 6-11]

Clare insures protection of the solitude of the Sisters — the Mary's — when she writes: "The Sisters are to keep silence... The Sisters may not speak at the parlor or at the grille without the permission of the Abbess or her Vicar." [Reg Cl V 1,5]

As I remember during my stay at Stamford, the abbess had to drive a Sister to an appointment. She let me know this as well as the time of her return for our planned celebration of Eucharist. There was need to go forth, but the return was precise, for I sensed the Sisters' desire to re-enter their rhythm of solitude. This or any appointment is insignificant to mention other than the fact that the appointments took them away from the rhythm of their solitude — and in the return I witnessed the desire to resume this rhythm, to return to the Lord, to their center. A woman also came for spiritual direction from one of the Sisters. This was announced to all to make us aware of someone entering, which awareness assured all of the preservation of the rhythm of solitude.

9. AND THE SONS SHOULD NOT TALK WITH ANY PERSON EXCEPT WITH THEIR MOTHERS AND WITH THE MINISTERS AND HIS CUSTODIAN WHEN IT PLEASES THEM TO VISIT WITH THE BLESSING OF THE LORD GOD.

Francis provided for ministers to be in touch with the friars who were in hermitage for long periods of time. Having no means of communication such to which we are accustomed, Francis allowed the ministers to come and speak with the brothers. Other than this exception, the "sons" were not speaking with others.

Clare says: "The Sisters may not speak... without permission of the Abbess or her Vicar... the Sisters should speak very rarely at the grille..." [Reg Cl V 5,9]

The Stamford Monastery, in comparison to some that I have seen, is small. Some people came to see the Sisters or pray in their chapel or on their grounds. People would approach to speak with them. Words were briefly exchanged. I observed one Sister on a bright, sunny day clearing leaves from a large flower bed. A man approached to speak. He pulled up a chair, sat and spoke. The Sister, listening and making occasional responses, continued her clearing. I smiled to myself as I observed this scene. However, even with this intrusion, she preserved her "Martha" rhythm by continuing to work as she listened and responded. When he left, her silence surrounded her once again.

10. THE SONS, HOWEVER, SHOULD SOMETIMES ASSUME THE ROLE OF THE MOTHERS, AS FROM TIME TO TIME IT MAY SEEM, GOOD TO THEM TO EXCHANGE (ROLES). THEY SHOULD STRIVE TO OBSERVE CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND CAREFULLY ALL THE THINGS MENTIONED ABOVE.

From 2 Cel 178 we know that the friars in Spain living in hermitage, exchanged roles. We read:

In this way each week those who lead the active life exchange with those who live the contemplative life and the quiet of those giving themselves to contemplation is changed for the business of work.

Clare sees the role of Abbess as that of "Mother." [Test Cl 19-20] And in chapter IV of her Rule, Clare provides for the election of abbess as well as her council, passing the role to other members of the community. [Reg Cl IV 17-18]

Today, in all monasteries, the exchange of abbesses and her council — the Marthas — takes place by election to terms of office. So these Sisters are able to exchange this work role for a contemplative role within the rhythm of community solitude once again. As Abbess and council, they worked to preserve this solitude. Now others are chosen to do the same, as they, once again, enter the embrace of communal solitude.

In the Stamford Monastery, the Sisters take every Friday as a quiet day, doing only necessary chores, and with one Sister completely free from all work. The Sisters exchange roles every Friday to partake of "contemplation" while the others attend to the "business of work."

CONCLUSION

In the early years, the Order was experienced more as a Franciscan movement. From the beginning, Francis spent time in caves, in solitude. Dacian Bluma, O.F.M., claims that Francis spent up to half of his con-

verted life in hermitages. Clare came on the scene in these early years. Solitude and contemplation were valued by both of them. And while Francis preserved his experience for us in his Rule for Hermitages, it seems that Clare picked up this same rhythm as she and her sisters lived as contemplatives in the solitude of San Damiano. And Sister Rosina Carosa, in the list of quotes from Clare's writings handed to me, picked up the same rhythm in the writings of Clare as we shared an experience of the Rule for Hermitages together. It was verified for me during my stay at the Stamford Monastery. It seems that in regard to contemplation and solitude in the early Franciscan movement, there is much harmony between Francis and Clare.

★ ★ ★

Clare's Conversion: A Counter-Cultural Choice

SR. ROBERTA A. McKELVIE, O.S.F.

When Chiara di Favarone left her parental home on Palm Sunday night/Monday, 1212 (Proc II:1),¹ her choice represented much more than a personal response to the conversion and influence of Francis Bernardone. Within the context of Franciscan sources, the conversion of Francis reaches its climactic moment with the young man's renunciation of his earthly father and his embrace by Guido, Bishop of Assisi. Because this was so radical it has become perhaps one of the greatest symbols of conversion in Christian hagiography. Certainly, it is more universally known than the conversion symbol of Clare's reception at the Portiuncola. However, properly understood, *in terms of social and historical realities for women, Chiara de Favarone made the more radical choice.*

To understand clearly the full impact of Clare's conversion, one must place her within the context of the social, political and religious milieu of the early thirteenth century. What were Clare's options? What were the secular attitudes toward women in general? Church attitudes? Toward chastity within marriage and outside of marriage? Toward not marrying?

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The interplay of all these elements is more complex than is readily apparent, and understanding each element would contribute to a greater appreciation of Clare of Assisi and her radical embrace of Gospel values.

The primary vocational "choice" for any thirteenth century woman was marriage. Formal education was more or less non-existent, although a daughter of nobility such as Clare probably received some instruction within the precincts of her home, from her father or a private clergyman.² What training women did receive included the "household arts" with the addition of carding, spinning and embroidery."³ (Clare's spinning is referred to several times in the Process of Canonization: I:1, II:2, VI:14, IX:9). An "upper-class woman had no function as a worker; she was expected to marry in her early teens."⁴ Once married, women from the nobility were expected to handle "routine tasks of supervision and administration"⁵ of the house (and/or lands whenever the husband was absent). In addition, "sewing, embroidery, visiting the sick, and relieving the distress of those stricken with poverty helped fill the hours..."⁶ of women like Ortolana, Clare's mother (see Proc I:4). Clare would have been trained to follow her mother's example; indeed, documents containing testimony describing Clare's life in her parents' home before her conversion support this image (Proc I:1, II:2, XII:1, XVI:5, XVIII:1-2, XIX:1-2).

Clare seems to have received, in light of source documents, the upbringing typical of her class and social position. A choice not to marry would carry major consequences. In the secular world, "the problem of the unmarried girl of the upper class was... difficult, for in feudal society there was no place for women who did not marry and marry young."⁷ For most of those who did marry, marriages were arranged by fathers, or in the absence of the father, other male relatives, and a variety of authors cite "forced marriages" and "the very real fears and dangers of childbirth"⁸ as two of the major components defining women's lives in the Middle Ages. Children were considered marriageable from the beginning of puberty. So Clare, still unmarried at eighteen, was well beyond the typical age for marriage.

However, this was part of her legal heritage: she had the right to refuse marriage. The procedure for arranging marriages included 1) the assignment of property, 2) betrothal, 3) and public consent of the couple and their families. The first two elements could occur while the couple to be married were still children, even as young as 6 or 7 years of age. If the betrothal took place at the age of 12 or 13, the girl could, by refusal, end the process by refusing consent at that point. Or, she could end the betrothal at any time up to and including at the marriage ceremony. The ritual of marriage itself took place openly at the entrance to the church and included a "symbolic transfer" of the endowment, proclamation of the families' consent, the vows of the couple, and then the entrance to

the church for Mass and the nuptial blessing.⁹ Clare apparently simply refused to even become betrothed.

As far as her other legal rights were concerned, she did possess, as did other women of noble background, the right to dispose of her own property. In France, and probably in Italy, "unmarried women sealed acts issued in their own names,"¹⁰ while married women "sealed a great variety of deeds conjointly with their husbands and not merely those involving disposition of their own rights or properties."¹¹

Although society at this time was in transition with the rise of the merchant class and the communes, early thirteenth century Assisi had only one other option for Clare, and it was not a secular one. Monastic, enclosed life, "religion" as it was called, held a high place of honor within the culture of the Church; it also stood in contradiction to the values of secular society. At least one writer believes that in the issue of following a religious vocation "contests between children and parents did not display an opposition so much between religion and irreligion as between two different cultural values, the individual's need for spiritual expression and the family's need to perpetuate itself."¹² This, too, is supported by the sources describing Clare's family; her mother's religious faith and pilgrimages were well noted (Proc I:4, III:28, VI:12; BC 8; LegCl 1-2) and the family could hardly be described as irreligious. Nevertheless, marriage of a daughter was at times a way of gaining or maintaining social position, wealth or power. And when Clare attempted to follow a particular way of "spiritual expression," conflict inevitably resulted. Daughters of nobility were expected to assume a particular place in society, not only as child-bearers, but also providing, as cited earlier, certain skills within their new family, once married, and affecting the family's social position at the same time:

Nor was the role of women gauged chiefly by their private, domestic qualities. It turned rather on the public honor — or dishonor — they conferred on the family... At no time was a family's honor more exposed than at a marriage. This was the moment when, through dowries given or received, the wealth and standing of a house might be known or estimated and community status measured.¹³

Emphasis on *horizontal lineage* (as in marrying a person and his/her family, and subsequent rights therein) meant that everyone shared in the benefits of land or wealth gained or lost by marriage or the end of marriage. (It was no wonder Clare's family wanted a say in how she disposed of her inheritance). In the Germanic tradition, for which there are records, the dowry a woman brought with her into the marriage had to be returned intact if her husband repudiated her.¹⁴ And there was the custom of the bridegift, i.e., real property given to the wife as part of the marriage

agreement, as well as the dowry, often property bestowed on the woman by her family as a marriage gift, to say nothing of the "morning gift," more property given to the bride after the consummation of the marriage. In Lombard law, the amount of property a woman could receive as morning gift was limited to one-quarter or less of the husband's patrimony.¹⁵ Although the husband had control over his wife's property, he could not sell the dowry, which in case of his death was meant to provide for her and any heirs.

A marriage, then, or a refusal of marriage, had significance for "protecting the family's wealth, promoting its interests, or maintaining its prestige."¹⁶ Again, the sources tell us that it was expected that Clare would marry (Proc VIII:8, XIX:2) and that her flight to the Portiuncola greatly disturbed the family. When a second daughter made the same choice, the social repercussions must have been immeasurable. Evaluating the import of Clare's conversion against the background of Assisi life, as well as the meaning of her rejection of family expectations, Rosalind B. Brooke and Christopher N. L. Brooke state that "... it is likely also that Clare's background added to the difficulties.... Evidently her family were both pious and conventional.... A reaction against such a home was less excusable in the public eye than Francis'...."¹⁷ Because Clare's household was remarkable for its seven knights, because both parents were nobles, not only was Clare to marry, we are told by Pietro de Damiano of Assisi, but she was to "marry magnificently, according to her nobility, to someone great and powerful" (Proc XIX:2). Given the respect apparently accorded the Favarone family in Assisi, Clare's choice not to accept a husband must have been very detrimental to family status. What was at stake was family honor, political and military strength, and monetary gain.

When her family came to San Paolo to rescue her, the "saving factor," if you will, was the tonsure/haircut given her by Francis and the Brothers. It was the universally recognizable sign and symbol of Clare's irrevocable decision to become a bride of Christ. And this leads to consideration of a question raised earlier: what were the attitudes prevalent pertaining to women and chastity?

An exaltation of espousal to Christ seems to have been a deliberate ecclesial response to what was both a secular and clerical problem: the fundamental medieval view that women were by nature "sexually charged and morally lax, ready agents for the devil's work."¹⁸ The qualities attributed to women consisted of *levitas*, *fragilitas*, *imbecillitas*, and *infirmitas*.¹⁹ Freely translated, that means women were judged inherently silly or light-headed, frail and easily broken, feeble of mind, and physically weak. For whatever reasons, as far as churchmen were concerned, "there was only one way in which women could transcend their unfortunate sexuality and free themselves from their corporeal shackles, and this was

.... by aligning herself with Francis and his brothers, what Clare did assumes monumental meaning.

through a life of sexless perfection."²⁰ Unmarried females were a scourge, and

However worthy the married state, they [women] were also assured, again and again, that it was much less honorable than virginity. Lifelong celibacy, then, came to be regarded among Christians as a higher and holier calling than marriage, and as an almost necessary prerequisite for any thoroughgoing attempt to enter the narrow way that led to perfection.²¹

So once Clare's hair had been cut and she had "entered" San Paolo, her family was caught between two harsh realities. There was the loss of enhanced social position that would have attended a good marriage, and there was enhanced honor given to those who chose "integritas,"... uncorrupted sexual and spiritual purity."²² It is both quite interesting and significant that 1) "family pressure to marry seems to have intensified in direct proportion to the wealth and power involved;"²³ 2) "for women saints but not for males, the official classification turned on asexual condition: women saints were recorded as either virgin or widow;"²⁴ 3) "for women virginity was everything — once having given up her maidenhood a woman was irrevocably excluded from the silent company of those who lived in Mary's image;"²⁵ and 4) in the hagiographic mold for women saints, "women are in the mold of Mary, virgin of spirit if not in body, longing for freedom from the importunities of the world.... The woman who internalized the ideal of Mary and sought to achieve it was virtually assured of failure, not only because the flesh was weak but because the world demanded marriage and motherhood."²⁶

So, in the context of medieval inconsistency about the role of women as temptress or agent of salvation, in the context of leaving behind status, power, prestige, and wealth, in the context of joining what was still, in many ways, a group of outcasts, by aligning herself with Francis and his brothers, what Clare did assumes monumental meaning. The consequences of her choice, as significant as they were at that time, are no less important to Franciscans or to the world today. □

Endnotes

¹Clare of Assisi *Early Documents*, ed. and trans. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.

Cap (New York: Paulist Press, 1988). All references for sources about Clare taken from this volume unless otherwise noted.

²Sara Lehrman, "The Education of Women in the Middle Ages," *The Roles and Images of Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance Vol. III*, Douglas Radcliffe Umstead (Pittsburgh: & Enterprises, 1975) 141.

³Lehrman, 139.

⁴Lehrman, 136.

⁵Harry Elmer Barnes, *A Survey of Western Civilization* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1949) 301.

⁶Barnes, 301.

⁷Eileen Power, "The Position of Women," *The Legacy of the Middle Ages*, eds. C. G. Cramp and E. F. Jacob (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969) 413.

⁸Jane Tibbets Schulenberg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse University Press, 1986) 41.

⁹"Family, Western European," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages Vol 4* (New York: Scribner's, 1984) 599-604, and "Bethrothal," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages, Vol 2* (New York: Scribner's, 1984) 207-208.

¹⁰Brigitte Bedos Rezak, "Women, Seals, and Power in Medieval France 1150 - 1350" in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds., *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 67.

¹¹Rezak, 67.

¹²Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society The Two Worlds of Western Christendom 1000 - 1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 75.

¹³Diane Owen Hughes, "Invisible Madonnas? The Italian Historiographical Tradition and the Women of Medieval Italy," *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (Phila.: UP Press, 1987), 34-35.

¹⁴Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe 500 - 1100" in Erler and Kowaleski, 87.

¹⁵McNamara and Wemple, 83-101.

¹⁶Arnaldo Fortini, *Francis of Assisi*, trans. Helen Moak (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 343-45.

¹⁷Rosalind B. Brooke and Christopher L. N. Brooke, "St. Clare," *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 284.

¹⁸Weinstein and Bell, 81.

¹⁹Hughes, 26.

²⁰Schulenberg, 31.

²¹Oakley, 192.

²²Schulenberg, 31.

²³Weinstein and Bell, 88.

²⁴Weinstein and Bell, 87.

²⁵Weinstein and Bell, 87.

²⁶Weinstein and Bell, 98.

Clare Reflected in her Writings

POLLY DURYEA

There are similarities in the writings of Clare and St. Francis, but differences also occur. She mirrors his radical form of poverty in all her works. She differs from his archaic, anthropological, theological style, i.e. the equalness of Trinity of three — he takes a more Eastern view of the Trinity (Meyendorff 154) as found in II Cor 13:14, which emphasizes the Holy Spirit; he is concerned with the fragility or corruption of man. Clare presents the unified Deistic view of the Trinity, as held in the Latin west (Meyendorff 157); hers is a modern, feminine sensibility, forceful but not without seduction, endurance, patience, combat, tenacity, yet never aggressive (*Écrits* 63-5).

But before examining Clare's separate writings, which rely heavily on the scriptures, one must consider the remarkable literacy of this woman. As Hamilton writes in *Religion in the Medieval West*, the medieval theology was formed by scholastic logic, and it had "its own highly technical vocabulary and was the most taxing and rigorous intellectual discipline then known" (111). Clare's Letters, more than the works of St. Francis, display this particular theological vocabulary combined with a formal intellectual discipline. One may imagine that Clare's wise mother saw to her schooling, but that does not account for the theological complexity exhibited in her Letters.

Unlike her twelfth-century contemporary, Hildegard of Bingen who was the abbess of Rupertsberg (d. 1179), Clare as abbess held neither land, nor schools (Hamilton 34-5). The tie between monasticism and nobility was a long one, going back to the fourth- or fifth-century (Lerclercq 79). Like Clare, Hildegard was an example of an aristocratic nun whose concept of nobility was found in the *Speculum Virginium* where the author

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distinguishes between "true" and "false" nobility: "*la prima é spirituale, la seconda é carnale e mondana;*" "the first is spiritual, the second is carnal and wordly (Leclercq 82).

Unlike Clare's Rule, with its unique "Privilege of Poverty," the contemporary (c. 1230) English *Ancrene Rule* for aristocratic anchoresses stressed only promises of obedience, chastity, and stability of abode.³ There is no mention of poverty, and extreme fasting was considered a matter of personal choice. Time consuming care of property or possessions little applied to the Franciscan Orders. Since the Poor Clares were, and continue to be, one of the most austere orders, one devoted entirely to prayer and labor, one may suspect that Clare used some of her time and literary talents in a broader context than now shows in her extant works. The unhappy paradox is that Clare probably wrote many such letters, but since she held general learning to be unimportant, they were probably lost or destroyed.

It is possible that she acquired some doctrine from sermons or catechismal manuals (Hamilton 109). It is also likely she was influenced in her affective piety by the Cistercian Visitor, Ambrose, who occupied that position for the Poor Clare Order around 1218 (*Francis* 224). Some sophisticated theology may have resulted from the influence of the great neighboring universities at Bologna and Padua, where members of many orders were in attendance and where Poor Clare abbeys were also located.

Clare's extant writings center on different interests and different audiences. They exhibit regal familiarity in her Pastoral letters to a Prague Princess (Blessed Agnes), a democratic but authoritative Rule for the Church Officials (*Écrits* 467), and a vernacular voice in her Testament for the Poor Clares. In tone, Clare's Letters seem to reflect an elegant French influence, the Rule speaks in the formal international language of the Church, Latin, and the Testament tells of personal experience. It seems possible that Clare could read the Italic dialect, and like St. Francis, knew some Norman French (Petroff 28). It is not entirely unreasonable that she was familiar with German considering Assisi's recent Teutonic rule under Frederick Barbarossa (de Robeck 24-6). In the thirteenth-century, Assisi was truly a lingual, cultural, and political cross-road of North, South, East, West.

Clare's lyrical images, as shown in the passage below, reflect the Scriptures and the Franciscan tradition in the three steps to contemplation. The steps are also marked by the affective devotion and image theology spawned by Saint Anselm of Bec and Canterbury, and by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. This tradition of piety appealed to the emotions rather than to the intellect (Gray 18).

Look upon Him Who became contemptible for you, and follow Him, making yourself contemptible in the world for him. Your Spouse, though more

beautiful than the children of men (Ps 44:3), became for your salvation, the lowest of men, despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout His whole body, and then died amid the sufferings of the Cross. O most noble Queen, gaze upon [him], consider [him], contemplate [him]), as you desire to imitate [Him].

Clare's Letters to Agnes are oratorical and poetical in style, as they reveal her personal spiritual experience.

The steps through prayer included gazing (*intuere*), considering (*considera*), and contemplating (*contemplare*) (Francis 197; *Écrit* 96-7, L2). Bynum, describes this kind of piety as "not primarily a stress on the sacrifice needed to bridge the enormous gap between us in our sin and God in his glory; it is rather an identification with the fact that Christ is what we are" (Jesus 130) — in other words, an image of Christ.

Clare was influenced by the Cistercian spirituals, especially by St. Bernard and his interpretation of *Song of Songs*. Here, marriage as a sacrament was emphasized as a spiritual metaphor in twelfth-century theology, but the trend was accompanied by both male resistance to and male support for an attempt to feminize the priesthood. Like Bernard, Clare adapted her "new song" (L4:3) to include marriage as a sacrament in a spiritual metaphor. This idea also found its source in the Scriptures: "For I have espoused you to husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (Cor 11:2). Like Hildegard of Bingen, Clare was not overly attracted to the image of the erotic bridegroom as were some literary women mystics; she saw woman's role as that of contemplative spouse (Bynum 112-3) and she mirrored that concept in her writing.

Ragusa and Green suggest in the introduction to *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, by Pseudo-Bonaventura, that later fourteenth-century Franciscan work exemplified this kind of affective piety and was one of the chief sources for later mystery plays, so popular in England. This medieval manuscript was actually addressed to a Poor Clare. It used sensual elements with emphasis on meditation and poverty and included use of the Bernardian nuptial theme (*Écrits* 35). His address was to an individual nun, but the document had, like Clare's Letters, the potential for a general audience of nuns. The Pseudo-Bonaventura's observations also defined and made use of the same characteristics and earlier imagery, such as sweetness, mirror, lamentations, vine, nativity and suffering,

found in Clare's Letters written to Blessed Agnes of Prague. In her four Letters between 1234 and 1253 to Blessed Agnes of Prague, Clare follows in the tradition of Cistercian pastoral letters. Blessed Agnes, her saintly namesake, rejected two royal offers in marriage, from Emperor Frederick II and from his son and heir. Agnes went on to found a Franciscan church, friary, and hospital. There, she entered the attached monastery and emulated Clare's life for fifty-four years (Francis 189).

Clare's Letters to Agnes are oratorical and poetical in style, as they reveal her personal spiritual experience. They also reveal a correct use of grammar and a rich vocabulary, employing and repeating words (unlike St. Francis) such as *speculum* [12], *conversio* [7], *vocatio* [6], *imitari* [5], *amator* [4], *amplexari* [4], *intueri* [4], *mirari* [4], *consensus* [3], and *contemplatio* [3] (*Écrits* 33).

In the First Letter (1234 - 38) Clare addresses Agnes in the polite or noble form of *Vos, Vester* (Francis 190). The following three Letters are more familiar, and more sensual, dealing with the look, touch, smell of the spiritual faculties and affections (*Écrits* 57, 64). At first glance, the Letters appear to be spontaneous, but they clearly are not. They are progressive tracts on the ladder to divine inhabitation: "*et fere digne meruistis soror, sponsa et mater altissimi Patris Filii et gloriosae Virginis nuncupari*" (*Écrits* 54, 88).

She opens three of the Letters with Anselmian humility, (cf. "Obviously, I am a *inutilis* person" Anselm in Petroff 25): "Clare, unworthy servant of Jesus Christ and *inutilis* handmaid" (Lk 17:10); "Clare, the unworthy and *inutilis* servant of the Poor Ladies"; "Clare, unworthy servant and *inutilis* handmaid."

Clare traditionally uses the notion of *O pia paupertas*, or God-centered poverty, reflecting that Christ the Lord came poor to us on earth, Francis 192; Cor 8; 9):

- O blessed poverty,
who bestows eternal riches on those who embraced her!
- O holy poverty,
to those who possess and desire you
God promises the kingdom of heaven
and offers, indeed, eternal glory and blessed life!
- O God-centered poverty,
whom the Lord Jesus Christ
Who ruled and now rules heaven and earth,
Who spoke and things were made,
condescended to embrace before all else!

She employs the Franciscan theme of exchange, or *commercium*, of world riches for the promises of new spiritual rewards for her virginity, casting aside such earthly riches as pearls, gems, a golden crown, fine

garments for similar rewards in heaven (*Francis* 192-3). At this point, one is reminded of the glories of Justinian and Theodora in their pearl-studded heavenly court pictured in the San Vitale mosaics at Ravenna. Clare writes:

What a great laudable exchange:
to leave the things of time for those of eternity
to choose the things of heaven for the goods of earth,
to receive the hundred-fold in place on one,
and to possess a blessed an eternal life.

The Second Letter (written sometime between 1234 - 1238) is one of instruction and encouragement. Clare compares Blessed Agnes to an imitator of God, and to the bride of Christ, whom she hopes to join in mystical radiance by exercising the three steps to contemplation already mentioned. Contemplation anticipates Clare's many [12] uses of the mirror metaphor, which is first expressed in the third Letter (c. 1238):

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory! (Heb 1; 3)
Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance! (Heb 1:3)
And transform your whole being into the image of the
Godhead Itself through contemplation! (2 Cor 3:18)
So that you too may feel what His friends feel
as they taste the hidden sweetness (Ps 30:20)
which God Himself has reserved from the beginning
for those who love Him.

The first few lines may express Passion theology of figura to fulfillment, using first Old Testament Verses figuratively to end in the fulfillment of a New Testament conclusion (Marrow, *passim*).

Clare's Fourth Letter (1253) brings to full contemplative blossom the metaphor of the mirror. Clare instructs Agnes, and implicitly her Poor Ladies as well, as a bride of Christ to study her face in the multiplicity of images in the convex mirror. There she will see reflected in herself the facets of poverty, humility, charity in the grace of God. This image-splicing recalls the Dominican Friar, Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274), as he reflects a few years later on the Augustine's concept of the mirror (462): it is to see many reflections of one divine truth; to "see now through a glass in a dark manner (1 Cor 13:14); to see the truth reflected in the minds of men as "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image" (2 Cor 3:18). In comparison Clare's own image is closer to the one from Wisdom 7:26: "for she is the brightness of eternal light: and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of his goodness." Two important Cistercian works of the twelfth-century were *Speculum caritatis* by Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-1167), and *Speculum*

fidei by William of Thierry, and later Bonaventure would use mirror image in *A Soul's Journey to God* (*Francis* 204).

Clare adopts the Cistercian devotion that addresses sentiment in the pathetic details from "de la crèche ou de la croix" (Aelred 25). She describes Christ's nativity, Christ's humiliations and sufferings, and his lamentations in what may be an example of emotional rhetoric as defined by Bestul as a summing up, an arousal to indignation, and an appeal to pity (Bestul 217):

Look at the parameters of this mirror, that is, the poverty of Him Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. O Marvelous humility, O astonishing poverty! Then, at the surface of the mirror, dwell on the holy humility, the blessed poverty, the untold labors and burdens which He endured for the redemption of all mankind. There, in the depths of this same mirror, contemplate the ineffable charity which led Him to suffer on the wood of the Cross and die thereon the most shameful kind of death. Therefore, that Mirror, suspended on the wood of the Cross, urged those who passed by to consider, saying: "All you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like My suffering! (Lam 1:12; *Francis* 204-5).

Clare climaxes this description of the mirror of contemplation in Bernardian language from *The Song of Songs*, and whatever conclusion one might derive from the conceptual intention of her words, the language and metaphor were neither unique nor unusual for the period. They were a means of expressing unity with God:

Contemplate further His ineffable delights, eternal riches
and honors, and sigh for them in the great desire and
love of your heart, may you cry out:

Draw after You!

We will run in the fragrance of Your perfumes,
O heavenly Spouse!

I will run and not tire,
until You bring me into the wine-cellar,
until Your left hand is under my head
and Your right hand will embrace me happily
[and] You will kiss me with the happiest kiss of your mouth.

(Cant 1:3; 2:4; 2:6; 1:1)

Rhetorical background for Clare's letters appears in the writing of Aelred of Rievaulx. In his pastoral letter, *La Vie De Recluse: La Prière Pastorale*, to his sister and her convent, he recalls Augustine's neo-platonic influence in seeing the unity of God, and he calls the crucifix "the mirror of the Christian" 15). Aelred divides meditation on the crucifix into three steps: the past (*memoria*), the present (*experientia*), and the future (*expectatio*) (12). *Bernard of Clairvaux, as well as other monks and Aelred's sister,*

made appeals for his writings (*Treatises* 42). His systematic method, more so than St. Bernard's more elegant method, was precise, rapid, and condensed (33). Just as Bynum notes that St. Bernard used "maternal imagery for male figures" (*Jesus* 115), Aelred, in *The Mirror of Charity*, to "go to Jesus by means of sincere prayer to draw... the milk of consolation from the breast of Him who is a mother to you" (68). It is interesting that in the pre-canonization process for Clare's sainthood, Thomas of Celano suppressed as too embarrassing Clare's "*visione de la mammella de santo Francesco*" only recently discovered by new readers. The vision ends with "*come quasi in uno specchio*" (Bartoli 451). Mirror is a word used often by Clare in her Letters.

In Aelred's exact terms the Cistercian added a new element in the allegorical method of contemplation in that by remembering Jesus, one may also see God (20). Aelred also demanded for his sister a rule of life, and aesthetic director, and an example for meditations (12). This last concept is paralleled in Clare's reminding Agnes, in her Second pastoral letter, that as she contemplates Christ she reflects God's image. For a nun as the bride in the spiritual marriage, contemplating the crucifix, as she is instructed to do by Clare, would constitute a spiritual exercise in how to become close to the Deity by way of the inner world of the intellect. Leclercq suggests that the inner world is neither in the intellect nor the body but is somewhere in between the sensation and the abstract conception (Aelred 25). In another Cistercian work, that of William of Thierry in his Letter to the Brothers of Mont-Dieu, "*La Lettre D'Or*," William adds a more carnal element to the union (412), so that the tradition of physically embracing Christ as spouse was an extraordinary but conventional one, both in text and in the consummation of married love.

It is noteworthy that by writing Pastoral Letters, Clare managed to sermonize about her principle of poverty and at the same time spread her ideologies without actually preaching. This was probably no accident on her part, since even the Cistercian Fathers used their impersonal writings to maintain their evangelical tradition (Aelred 36). Preaching, like evangelizing, was in her masculine domain, and Clare was always careful to work within the narrow church-established limitations provided for women spiritual writers. She never abandoned her persistence in protecting and providing for her method of piety, and as an abbess, she emulated the Cistercian Pastoral letters and thus helped to insure papal approval.

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Evangelization IV — Preaching

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

It is commonly accepted that the quality of preaching is one of the major challenges facing the church today. Dissatisfaction with preaching is often alleged as one of the main reasons why people become estranged from church. Scripture scholar J. Murphy O'Connor says:

Just as the Reformation 4 centuries ago, the progressive de-christianization of society today is attributed to a failure of preaching. The factor that more than any other made the Reformation possible was the theological confusion that marked the preaching and teaching of the Faith in the early 16th century. Today preaching is admittedly orthodox, but it is often vapid and lacking in vitality. It no longer seems to make converts or lead to sanctity those who already have the Faith. (Quoted by Walter Burghardt, S.J., in his *Preaching: The Art and the Craft*, p. 1).

Both the council (P. O. = *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 4) and Paul VI (E. N. = *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 42) recognized that preaching is a very difficult ministry. Paul VI lists some reasons for this: modern men and women are sated by talk, and easily tire of listening; the fatigue induced by so much empty talk; the claim of so many psychologists and sociologists that we have moved beyond the civilization of the word and have entered the civilization of the image. Nevertheless, the Pope's conclusion will surprise no one:

[these difficulties] must not diminish the permanent power of the word, or cause a loss of confidence in it. The word remains ever relevant, especially

This is the fourth in a series of articles on "The New Evangelization." The January, February and April issues of *The CORD* carried the previous three. Father Charles V. Finnegan, O.F.M., writes from the Franciscan Mission Service in Silver Spring, Maryland.

when it is the bearer of the power of God. (Cf 1 Cor 2:1-5). This is why St. Paul's axiom, 'Faith comes from what is heard,' also retains its relevance: it is the Word which is heard which leads to belief" (*ibid.*).

Repeatedly — some 480 times — the New Testament speaks of faith and its crucial importance. To cite only two well known texts: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6) and "my just one will live by faith" (*ibid.*, 10:38). But where does faith come from? Faith is always God's gift, but the New Testament does tell us once the precise means God uses to beget and nourish faith in our hearts: "Faith comes from hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Paul VI sees in preaching therefore, "the bearer of the power of God." Preaching is a saving event, a graced moment.

In a similar vein, Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, 20, writes:

The church is effectively and concretely at the service of the kingdom. This is seen especially in her preaching, which is a call to conversion. Preaching constitutes the church's first and fundamental way of serving the coming of the kingdom in individuals and in human society.

In a remarkable sentence that gives witness to the importance of preaching in the catholic tradition, Ives Congar, O.P., surely the greatest theological historian of our times, wrote:

I could quote a whole series of ancient texts, all saying more or less that if in one country Mass was celebrated for 30 years without preaching, and in another there was preaching for 30 years without mass, people would be more christian in the country where there was preaching." (See "The renewal of Preaching: Theory and Practice" [*Concilium* 33, 1968] p. 62.)

The second Vatican Council was at pains to point out that liturgy does not and cannot be expected to exhaust the church's activity. Liturgy is not even the first step in the church's ministry: "Before people come to liturgy they must be called to faith and conversion" (S. C. = *Sacrosanctum, Concilium*, 9). Before! Why? Because liturgy is a celebration of faith, and "faith comes from hearing the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). From ancient times the sacraments were called "sacraments of faith" precisely because "they not only presume faith, but also... nourish, strengthen and express it" (S. C. 59). Note: sacraments *presume* faith; they do not substitute for it. The council then drew the pastoral conclusion: "In non-christian territories or societies people are led by the proclamation of the gospel to faith and the saving sacraments. In the christian community itself especially for those who have little understanding or faith... the preaching of the word is required by the sacramental ministry itself since the sacraments are sacraments of faith (P. O. 4; see notes 1, 4, 5, 8, 9 of

chapter II for patristic texts on the priestly ministry of preaching, and note 66 for an inspiring text of Paul VI.) In other words, there is no sacramental ministry that does not include a preaching ministry.

Preaching: The Servant of God's Word and of God's People.

The preacher is the servant of God's word, and is sent to proclaim not his/her own wisdom but God's saving plan. The preacher is also the servant of God's people, and his service is to make God's plan "come alive" for them, inviting their personal and communal faith-full response.

As the council taught, Christ is present in his word (S. C. 7 and 33). This is a real presence. The Introduction to the Lectionary of the Mass (the excellent second edition, 1981) carries this one step further: "Christ himself is also always present and active in the preaching of his church" (24). In *Ad gentes divinitus* 9, the council had said something similar: "Through preaching... missionary activity makes Christ present." Christ's presence is always dynamic; He is present for a purpose: to give glory to His Father and to be a Savior to His people. So too His presence in the preaching of His church.

That Christ is present in the preaching of His church is taught from earliest times in the catholic tradition:

Didache 4:1: "My son, remember him night and day who spoke the word of God to you. Honor him as the Lord, for where the majesty of the Lord is told, there the Lord is." *Apostolic Constitutions* 7, 9: "indeed, where instruction about the Lord is imparted, there the Lord is." The *Letter to Barnabas* draws the conclusion: "Cherish as the apple of your eye anyone who speaks of the word of the Lord."

Preaching in Franciscan Sources

If Francis and his brothers were called to live as Jesus taught His disciples to live, then Francis and his brothers were also commanded to preach the gospel to all peoples. (See Mt 28:19 and Mk 16:15.) To neglect preaching the gospel would be to neglect one of the essential elements of living the gospel.

That was St. Francis' conviction from the beginning. Indeed, while his contemporary and friend, St. Dominic, founded an order of friars called "the Order of Preachers," Francis had obtained papal permission for his brothers to preach in 1209, some six years before St. Dominic obtained that permission for his Order.

In his writings, St. Francis consistently warns his followers that they are to give priority in their lives to "the spirit of holy prayer and devotion." However, the *Fiori dei tre Compagni* (47) tells us also of Francis' fear

that because of the fatigue induced by preaching he might give such a preference to prayer and solitude that he would neglect preaching, "the very work that Christ came to this world to do." God called Francis and his brothers precisely for this: "to go through the world preaching and praising God" (*ibid.* 105).

According to Francis, preachers are "the life of the body [of Christ], the devil's adversaries, and light of the world" (2 Cel 163). He wanted ministers of the word to be free to spend their time in sacred study and not be impeded by other obligations (*ibid.*). Theologians and preachers are to be honored because they provide that most valuable of all services: they "minister spirit and life to us" *Test* 13).

For an eloquent witness to the importance of preaching in the Franciscan tradition, see the sermon of St. James of the March in the Office of Readings on his feast day, 28 November. He quotes Augustine's powerful statement:

Tell me what you think is greater, the body of Christ or the word of God? If you wish to answer truly you must say that the word of God is not less than the body of Christ. He is no less guilty who hears the word of God carelessly than he who allows the body of Christ to fall to the ground through his own negligence."

The Example of St. Clare

On this point too, Clare's convictions were in perfect harmony with those of Francis. A certain Sister Agnes, daughter of the mayor of Assisi who was reconciled to Bishop Guido by St. Francis' intervention, entered the monastery of San Damiano as a very young girl while Clare was still alive. Agnes testified at Clare's canonization process (X, 8) that "the Lady Clare delighted in hearing the word of God." For that reason Clare was unhappy with a regulation in the rule of the friars forbidding them to enter the monasteries of nuns without papal permission. She was disappointed when Pope Gregory IX, in the Bull *Quo elongati* (28 September 1230) insisted on the strict observance of that prohibition for Clare loved to provide for herself and her Sisters "the nourishment of the word of God through dedicated preachers" (*Legend of St. Clare*, 37). She regretted that she and her sisters "would more rarely have the food of sacred teaching" (*ibid.*). Deprived of the services of the friars who ministered the word of God, Clare sent away the other friars who brought food to the sisters: "Let him take away all the brothers since he has taken away those who provide the food that is vital" (*ibid.*). On hearing this, Pope Gregory mitigated the troublesome prohibition. Franciscan tradition likes to consider Clare *la pianticella*, the "little plant" of St. Francis. Perhaps the title is appropriate, but Clare was surely a very sturdy "little plant!"

Early Franciscan sources deal also with the content, purpose and style of preaching.

The content of the Franciscan ministry of the word is:

*** "the reign of God and penance [conversion]" (1 Cel 22). The person of Christ and His teaching, as well as His holy mysteries, and the gift of the Spirit, are here of central importance. Given the importance of this theme in the Franciscan tradition, a later essay in this series will be devoted entirely to it.

Francis and all who would join his movement are to be "heralds of the Great King" (1 Cel 16) as they go through the world proclaiming the gift of the Risen Christ: PEACE! A future essay will also consider justice and peace — so urgently needed today, as recent events make clear again — as necessary elements in all Franciscan evangelization.

*** "vices and virtue, punishment and glory" (Reg B 9, 3 and *Anonymous of Perugia*, 8). The second pair follows from the first. These themes flow directly from the commission given to Francis and his first eleven followers by Pope Innocent III: "Go with God, brothers, and preach penance to all, as God shall deign to inspire you" (1 Cel 33). From that day on Francis traveled tirelessly through villages and cities "preaching with the greatest fervor" (2 Cel 17).

The purpose of Franciscan preaching is always "the usefulness and upbuilding [edification] of the people" (Reg B 9, 3). By the words of the Lord the brothers are to lead people "to the love of God in joy and gladness" (Adm 20, 2).

Preaching is a gift of the Spirit given "to build up" the community. In a similar vein, St. Paul reminded the Corinthians: "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... The prophet speaks to people for their upbuilding, their encouragement, their consolation" (1 Cor 12:7 and 14:3). Paul sees an important difference between the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues: "The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but he who prophesies builds up the church" (*ibid.* 14:4). Preaching is like prophecy: its purpose is to build up the church.

Seeing the church as a building needing to be "built up" is a frequent insight of the New Testament, especially in the Pauline corpus:

We (ministers) are God's co-workers, while you are his cultivation, his building (1 Cor 3,9).

You form a building which rises on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is fitted together and takes shape as a holy temple in the Lord; in him you are being built into this temple, to become a dwelling place for

God in the spirit (Eph 2:20-22). Be rooted in him and built up in him, growing ever stronger in faith, as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude (Col 2:7).

You too are living stones, built as an edifice of the Spirit, into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:5).

For St. Francis, the preaching ministry has two noble objectives: promoting the glory of God and building up the body of Christ, the church.

Francis warns his followers therefore, in chapter XVII ("preachers") of Reg NB, "not to take pride in themselves or be puffed up interiorly about their good works." They "must beware of all pride and vainglory" and keep themselves "from the wisdom of this world and the prudence of the flesh. For the spirit of the flesh desires and is most eager to have words, but does little to carry them out." On the contrary, "let us refer all good to the most high and supreme Lord God, and acknowledge that every good is his, and thank Him for everything, He from Whom all good things come."

There is also a Franciscan "style" of preaching. it should be

*** brief, "because the Lord spoke briefly while on earth" (Reg B 9, 3). Another reason why St. Francis proposes brevity in speech might be the importance he attaches to *living* the gospel. If one's whole life is proclaiming the gospel, there is no end for an abundance of words.

*** with words "well-chosen and chaste." Words are well-chosen when they transmit God's saving message faithfully, and in such a way that the message can be grasped by the listeners. Does this not imply the importance of careful preparation?

The preacher's words are "chaste" when they are like "Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste" (C Sun 7). Chaste words are transparent, as is pure water. Water is pure as it comes from the hands of God; it becomes impure when befouled by extraneous elements. A preacher's words are chaste when, without any admixture of error or elements foreign to the gospel, they expound truthfully the saving message of Jesus. According to psalm 12:7, God's word is chaste ("eloquia Domini eloquia casta"), because God's word is sincere and truthful, "refined seven times like silver, freed from dross." In this God's word is contrasted with those human words that are deceitful: "Everyone speaks falsehood to his neighbor; with smooth lips they speak, and double heart" (*ibid.* 3).

The preachers' words will be "well-chosen and chaste" when they proclaim clearly, sincerely and truthfully God's loving message, calling preachers and listeners to continual conversion to gospel values, in such a way that people will truly be "built up as an edifice of the spirit" (1 Pet 2:5).

What Now?

When she had come into the room
All eyes were turning his way,
So Francis at first was not aware

How much the place had changed,
How there was a hush at the center
Of the talk, a quietness creeping in.

And then he lifted his head. There
She was. So small, so slight; tender,
Instant. The fair, flowing hair and

Those dark, enquiring, questioning
Eyes, that seemed to ask "What now?" and,
At the same time, have the answer too.

He felt no urge to lower his gaze nor
Power to break the silence that had
Come. What peace (thought he) the

Peace of home., The house settling for
The night. Lights being quenched,
Clouds crossing the moon. Here-and-there

The gentle cooing of doves. Perfect
Contentment, perfect joy, pure
Treasure. Francis' mind was miles away.

But her soft "yes" brought him back,
Here to where their eyes were meeting.
A stillness at the heart of things.

A ray of light that came through all
The dark, to tell him: Clare, Clare had
Entered his domain, never to depart.

Iain Duggan

SEPTEMBER, 1991

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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WITH FRANCISCANS AT THE UN**

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMIn: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum Commernium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

GUEST EDITORIAL

Franciscans and The United Nations

MARGARET PIRKL, O.S.F.

Why should Franciscans collaborate with the UN? Francis of Assisi was associated with the United Nations long before his followers applied for NGO (non-governmental organization) status. Interestingly, his relevance to the goals and work of this large international organization is recognized by almost everyone because Francis is widely accepted as one of the few universal persons given to humankind through the course of history. Further, his sincere desire to reconcile speaks to one of the UN Charter's chief priorities, peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Francis integrated within himself a personal love-mysticism and a cosmic mysticism in a way that sets him apart in Western Christianity.¹ Far from living aloof or detached from other creatures or assuming a level above theirs, in order to attain to union with God, Francis recognized, accepted, and celebrated his openness with them. He lived what he was: a part of the cosmos, a part of the entire earth-community. At the same time he was permeated with the mystery of God. In this holistic, integrated spirituality, Francis transcends all sects and attracts and speaks to persons of all religions, all cultures, all races. Clearly, naming him patron of the United Nations is entirely *apropos*.

Francis' cosmic spirituality holds a deep call for citizens of planet earth and urges us to inclusiveness. This inclusiveness heals the division and the exclusion coming from dualism and its consequences. Whether we consider dualism in philosophic thought or its implications in territoriality or in patriarchalism and dominance of creatures, we become aware of a great need. That need is for inclusive love, for mutuality, for reconciliation, for unity, not only among persons but between humankind and nature: Francis has shown the way; we are given countless instances by his bio-

graphers. He realized in full what is implicit in every feeling of sympathy or compassion; he lives as one with each and all. his rejoicing of another became his rejoicing, the pain of another his pain, whether the other was person or animal, plant, fire, or water.

Hence, for all who stand at the threshold of a new millennium, beholding a world of pain, Francis is an authentic exemplar and guide. We who profess to be followers of Francis are called as never before to help usher in an age informed by the values he lived: respect for human dignity, peace through reconciliation, simple life style, and oneness with the earth and all its creatures. These values mesh in a significant and prophetic way with those often delineated as the values of the United Nations: social justice, shared decision-making, peace, economic equity, and ecological balance.

The commonality of the values of Francis and of the United Nations becomes evident in how they are lived. Reverencing every person is basic to social justice as well as to shared decision-making. Conscious and explicit commitment to peace by engaging in reconciliation is a key to world peace. A lifestyle motivated by simplicity, using only what is necessary, could be the critical factor in attaining economic equity. And a life of union with the earth and its creatures is naturally concerned for ecological balance. Only development motivated by commitment to these values, development that is spiritual and world-wide, will ensure a sustainable world order.

NGO status at the UN provides an avenue for promoting a sustainable world. We Franciscans now enjoy this status with the UN Department of Public Information, and we are moving toward application for consultative status with ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council. The latter status would allow us not only to participate by working with UN committees and offices but also to make written and oral interventions before ECOSOC in the areas of our expertise and commitment. Over the world we will be able to support the work of the UN by drawing attention to issues, disseminating information, and suggesting programs. Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary-General, has said of NGOs: "They constitute an essential extension of the capacity of the United Nations to reach its global constituency."² In 1992, we are invited to support the work of the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Looking ahead, Kevin Smith, Executive Director of the Franciscans at the UN Project, indicates that, along with the UN, Franciscans will focus on Human Rights in 1993 and on Families in 1994.

That we Franciscans are called to work for the happiness of the entire world is hardly debatable. In this decade leading to the 21st century we must, if we are to be vital, establish our spirituality, our lives, in the context of global community. It seems clear that the potential for good

in connecting Franciscans with the UN is almost beyond imagination. The earth and its people desperately need all we can do to alleviate their distress, and we need them to teach us about priorities, about what is truly important. In our giving to the UN and our receiving from the UN, we will have deeper insight into who we are, who God is, and what our relationship is with the entire global family. We will be inviting to life, as Francis did, "the young and the old, the healthy and the sick, all the small and the great, all peoples, races, tribes, and tongues, all nations and all peoples everywhere on earth who are and who will be...." (Reg NB 23, 7).³

Endnotes

¹Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (London: Routledge & Degan Paul, Ltd., 1954) 70.

²Quoted in *Newsletter of Franciscans: A Non-Governmental Organization at the United Nations* (Winter 1990): 2.

³*Francis and Clare: Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM, Cap., and Ignatius Brady, OFM (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982) 132.



Special art work for this issue is by Clairvaux McFarland, OSF

A Focus on Poverty: Women, Children and the UN

RACHEL WEST, O.S.F.

Media attention in the wake of the Persian Gulf War has focused on the plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees (Iraqi nationals, Kurds, and Shi'ites as well as Palestinians and Kuwaitis) who are suffering unimaginable impoverishment as a result of political decisions over which they had no control. Photographs from the area indicate that the bulk of these refugees are women and children.

In the meantime, the no less appalling tragedy of African famine — drought and war-related — has had to take second place in news coverage. Nevertheless, it is a recognized, if not well-publicized fact that some 16-20 million people in the region of Africa known as "the Horn" are currently at risk of starvation. Again, film footage from areas hardest hit demonstrates that those most affected are women and children.

In 1990 the World Bank reported that 1.1 *billion* people, living in those countries of the world designated as "developing", have an annual *per capita* income of \$370 or less and are hence classified as "extremely poor." Within this classification, chronic malnutrition and high infant and child mortality rates are the norm. Women make up some 70 per cent of these poor of the developing world. Those who are at greatest risk as a result of their poverty are the children, especially "little ones" under the age of five.¹

For Franciscans — indeed, for all persons who claim to follow the Gospel — concern for the human beings who comprise these statistics is not an option but a condition of maintaining their identity. But for many

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persons, including Franciscans, regardless of how grounded they are in the "option for the poor," the task of standing with these weakest and most defenseless members of humanity in their struggle to overcome the evil of poverty (defined not only as economic want, but as "powerlessness" to alter oppressive or debilitating circumstances) has become increasingly difficult, if not overwhelming.

In recent years, both religious and secular Franciscans, women and men, have organized "justice and peace" or "global concerns" committees to coordinate efforts to "do something" about issues of poverty and injustice, both at a local and global level. Chapters have drafted statements declaring commitments to global concerns, and religious congregations have diverted resources to projects for the poor, both here and abroad. The movement away from corporate ownership of institutions such as schools and hospitals has come to mean that more and more Franciscans are currently engaged in direct ministry for and with the poor. For Franciscan women especially, but also for some Franciscan men, this movement has frequently included a special commitment to women's issues and to concern for their children, e.g., homeless women and children, or those suffering from AIDS.

It is possible that at this particular time, several years after making such commitments and in the wake of "Reaganism" followed by a demoralizing war, Franciscan groups may be seeking still more "focused" ways of demonstrating their ongoing concern for the world's poor. At this juncture, Franciscan NGO status may provide invaluable assistance in attuning or refocusing those efforts.

If "solidarity with the poor" means anything, it indicates a commitment to be with and for the "truly poor" of this world. The two major groups among the global poor and powerless are women and children. These are the "truly poor" with whom all Christians, not just Franciscans, should be in solidarity. At the same time, the United Nations and its related agencies stand as the most knowledgeable and best equipped to delineate the major issues of the possibilities of combating it. While some may criticize — with justification — the efforts of the United Nations in maintaining peace, especially their involvement in the Persian Gulf War, there is generally great respect, if not always agreement concerning specific strategies, for UN efforts to meet the ever growing need of poor women and children.

The UN commitment to the world's needy flows from its third major purpose as set forth in Article 1 of the UN Charter:

3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.²

Other major documents of the UN have voiced concern for and commitment to those who do not have adequate access to necessities of life. (Perhaps because of the extreme difficulty of defining the term, the word "poverty" appears nowhere within major documents of the United Nations). Notable among these are the Declaration on Human Rights, agreed to in 1948, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1966 and accorded international treaty status a decade later. According to Article 25 of the Declaration:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (sic) and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.³

The major facilitator of attempts to achieve these aims and protect these rights is the Economic and Social Council, which coordinates the efforts of fifteen specialized agencies, including the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Together with the General Assembly, it also works with several UN-related autonomous agencies, notably the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). ALL of these groups have at one time or another dealt with women's and children's issues, and most continue to do so. (Overlapping and duplication of efforts in particular issue areas are among the UN's major problem areas).

THE UN AND THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

The principal intergovernmental organization dealing with problems of women is the UN Commission on the Status of Women, founded in 1946. UNESCO, FAO, ILO, and WHO all report to the Commission, which currently has 45 members (thirteen African, eleven Asian, four East European, nine Latin American and Caribbean, and eight from Western Europe and other states). The Commission itself reports to the Economic and Social Council.⁴

The Commission on the Status of Women has been one of the most active of the intergovernmental organizations affiliated with the United Nations, specially since 1972, when the General Assembly proclaimed 1975 the International Women's Year. Its 1975 World Conference in Mexico City led the General Assembly to declare the following ten years the UN Decade for Women, which concluded with the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The two major groups among the global poor and powerless are women and children. These are the "truly poor" with whom all Christians, not just Franciscans, should be "in solidarity."

This conference adopted *The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, a set of objectives for the last years of the twentieth century. The "Strategies" are monitored closely by the Commission on Women. Some notion of the scope of their aims in the area of bettering the condition of women everywhere is indicated by the following listing of the Strategies' "Areas of Special Concern":

- A. Women in areas affected by drought.
- B. Urban poor women, whose numbers "could nearly double by the year 2000."
- C. Elderly women.
- D. Young women.
- E. Abused women. A special branch of the UN Human Rights Commission has studied and made recommendations regarding this issue, which is acknowledged as a problem of global dimensions and a contributor to women's relative poverty.
- F. Destitute women. "Destitution" is defined as "an extreme form of poverty." In this area, reference is made to the related problem of homelessness, highlighted by the 1987 UN-established International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.
- G. Women victims of trafficking and involuntary prostitution.
- H. Women deprived of their traditional means of livelihood. Many of the women spoken of in this category have been driven from the land by "desertification."
- I. Women who are the sole supporters of their families.
- J. Women with physical and mental disabilities.
- K. Women in detention.
- L. Refugee women.⁵

A major focus of the Commission's work is education concerning the increasing "feminization of poverty." As mentioned above, women now constitute 70 per cent of the world's poor, and that percentage is increasing. According to the 1989 UN World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, the principal reason for the increasing impoverishment of women is "uneven economic development", particularly in the developing

nations, many of which are faced with lower prices received for their commodities, coupled with crushing collective debt. The Survey notes that the depressed economic conditions in the world (in any country) affect women disproportionately — girl children are frequently withdrawn from school, women leave homes to work, women eat less and suffer the consequences of malnutrition and illness.⁶

In the developing world, an increasing number of women are in the work force, but such women and dependent children all too frequently "become in a cycle of crushing poverty." Even in the industrialized world, among U.S. women, the poverty rate has increased to 13.1 per cent from 11.4 per cent a decade ago. In the much poorer country of Brazil, where the debt crisis has caused severe economic hardship, women are described as "poor, powerless, and hungry."⁷

A focus of the Commission's efforts since its founding has been the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender, a major factor in the impoverishment of women worldwide. To this end, the Commission drafted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December, 1979. Since 1981 the Convention has had the status of an international treaty, and by most recent count, some 100 nations of the world have bound themselves by its provisions.

At this date, the United States is a signer of the Convention but has not agreed to be bound by it as a treaty. President Jimmy Carter submitted it to the Senate in 1980, but that body has so far taken no action concerning it. While the current administration has no declared position regarding the Convention, the document contains provisions mandating passage of "maternity-leave" legislation (allowing working women paid or unpaid leave with guarantee of job retention upon birth of a child) which the administration opposes.⁸

An initial and ongoing emphasis of the Commission's activities and a major item within the Convention is the elimination of discrimination between women and men in employment and pay scales. Equality between women and men in the work place has been recognized as a "human right" from the time United Nations first used that term, and Article 7 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights stated the right as follows: "Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work."⁹

Accompanying the struggle for equality in the work place have been efforts to recognize the value of "women's work", which is consistently devalued or undervalued throughout the world. For women in developing countries, such work includes not only the care of children and the mainte-

nance of the home, but a major portion of the agricultural labor. Particularly in Africa, but also in many other areas of the developing world, women are literally "the breadwinners." According to the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies:

Women constitute 35 per cent of the world's labor force, and this figure is likely to increase steadily to the year 2000.... Women's employment is likely to be concentrated in areas requiring lower skills and lower wages and minimum job security.... Women have sole responsibility for the economic support of a large number of the world's children, approximately one third and higher in some countries, and the numbers seem to be rising.¹⁰

The UN and the Impoverishment of Children

The principal UN agency dealing with children's issues is the United Nations Children's Fund, created by the General Assembly in 1946 to deal with emergency relief for children displaced and victimized by war. Its acronym, UNICEF, retains the "E" for "Emergency", which was originally within the title. Since 1950, when the war emergency was said to be at an end, UNICEF has devoted its efforts to improving the lot of the world's children, particularly those victimized by disease, chronic poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and lack of educational opportunities. UNICEF's methods from the beginning have concentrated on highly effective strategies demanding relatively little expenditure of money and have relied on NGOs for disseminating information and for actual implementation of programs. For example, in the area of disease control, UNICEF has come to be associated with low cost immunization programs which, with the cooperation of NGOs have virtually eliminated numerous diseases as a cause of child mortality.¹¹

In September, 1990, UNICEF sponsored the first World Summit for Children, bringing together representatives of 159 nations, including 71 heads of state to, in their words, "undertake a joint commitment and to make an urgent universal appeal — to give every child a better future."¹² The Summit met during the same month that the UN Convention on the Rights the Child, approved unanimously by the General Assembly only nine months before, received the required number of member-nation ratifications to be accorded the status of an international treaty. (While the U.S. is a signatory to the Convention, President George Bush has never sent it to the Senate for ratification. Reportedly, the President opposes it because it would bar the death penalty for people under eighteen — "children", by the Convention's definition — and because it does not define the fetus as a person. In regard to this last point, it may be of some interest that the Holy See has agreed to the Convention.)¹³

In addition to agreeing to the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, world leaders attending the summit adopted a Plan of Action committing themselves and their nations to 22 "targets" relating to ending child mortality and child malnutrition by the year 2000. The annual report of UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 1991*, contains the full text of the Summit's Declaration and Plan of Action, together with descriptions of how the 22 objectives (which UNICEF condenses into seven goals) can be achieved.

Among the "facts" highlighted in the UNICEF report are the following:

- Forty thousand child deaths occur each day as a result of "ordinary" malnutrition and disease. The majority of these deaths occur in homes where food is available but where knowledge of children's food needs is inadequate or disease and poverty combine to create debilitating apathy.
- 150 million more children live in ill health and stunted physical and mental development because of malnutrition and disease.
- 100 million 6 to 11-year-olds, for various reasons, are not in school.
- 900 million adults, two-thirds of them women, cannot read and write.
- One young woman dies each minute as the result of pregnancy or childbirth.
- More than 100 million children live "in especially difficult circumstances...."

At present 80 million children are exploited in the work place and 30 million are left to fend for themselves on city streets." In addition there are the millions of children who are victimized by war.¹⁴

Even before the Summit, UNICEF's report, *The State of the World's Children, 1989*, furnished an astute analysis of the causes of the increasing plight of children (and women) in the developing world. The report demonstrated that despite major progress made by the international health community in the areas of immunization and the elimination of deaths from diarrheal disease, pregnancy, and childbirth, deaths from poverty-related causes — particularly malnutrition — were on the rise in most of the developing world. As with the impoverishment of women in the developing world, the underlying cause as of 1989 was the world debt crisis. According to UNICEF:

Throughout most of Africa and much of Latin America, average incomes have fallen by 10% to 25% in the 1980s. The average weight-for-age of young children, a vital indicator of normal growth, is falling in many of the countries for which figures are available. In the 37 poorest nations, spending per head on health has been reduced by 50% and on education by 25%, over the last few years. And in almost half of the 103 developing countries from which recent information is available, the proportion of 6 to 11-year-olds enrolled in primary school is now falling.¹⁵

The principal cause for declines in health and education spending on

the part of developing nations is their need to use larger portions of their total domestic national income to make interest payments on debts. On average, such repayments amount to almost 25% of the developing nation's export revenues. At the same time, the prices these nations receive for their exports have fallen by about 30%. So-called "adjustment policies" imposed on debtor nations to stave off default crises, while necessary, nearly always call for deep cuts in government domestic spending. Not only do the poor suffer disproportionately in such a situation, but more people fall into poverty conditions, most of them women and children.¹⁶

Despite this dire picture, UNICEF and the World Summit leaders maintain that the following goals for child survival can be attained by the year 2000:

- reduction of infant and under-5 child mortality rate by one-third or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births respectively, whichever is less;
- reduction of maternal mortality rate by half;
- reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half;
- universal access to safe drinking water and to basic sanitation;
- universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children;
- reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level with emphasis on female literacy;
- improved protection of children in especially difficult circumstances.¹⁷

These are ambitious goals, but UNICEF appears confident that, with concerted effort on the part of national governments, NGOs, families, business, social, cultural, and religious organizations, they can be accomplished. On the basis of UNICEF's established record in supporting effective immunization and "ORT" (oral rehydration therapy designed to reduce deaths from diarrhea among children) programs, their self-confidence seems justifiable.

In order to achieve the Summit's objectives, as well as similar goals outlined in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, two conditions appear essential. The first is the reordering of priorities on the part of nations of the so-called "developed" world — that is, the "rich nations", most of them in the Northern hemisphere. If the debt crisis is to be resolved on a permanent basis, more resources must be allocated to real human needs — the needs of women and children — and less to maintaining "dominance", however that term is currently defined — the most common appearing to be "military superiority." In fact, not much "reordering" may be necessary. According to UNICEF, the amount needed to carry out its program during the '90s is close to \$20 billion a year for the decade. \$20 billion is "half as much as Germany will find for the process of national reunification in 1991. It is as much as the world spends on the military every 10 days."¹⁸

The second, no less essential factor is the sustained action of individuals and organizations, especially NGOs, in maintaining — through educational efforts, letter-writing campaigns, direct or indirect participation in the programs designed to meet the year 2000 goals, and countless other creative ways — the “political will” necessary to eliminate the worst results of poverty throughout the world. The reason for this is obvious. The poor, almost by definition, are politically “powerless.” In few areas, either in the industrialized “democracies” or in the developing world, do they directly participate in governmental decisions which affect their lives. Concerted action on their behalf is necessary to keep their needs (and government leaders’ promises) constantly before decision makers’ eyes.

NGO status, therefore, presents a unique opportunity for Franciscans to “stand with the poor” as advocates and publicists for the rights guaranteed, not only by UN documents and pronouncements, but by Christian belief in the inherent dignity of every human being and a truly Franciscan commitment to the “least” of the human family.

Endnotes

¹World Bank, *World Development Report 1990: Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 1-6. The address for the World Bank is 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433. These and other statistics on poverty with a focus on the problem of malnutrition are also found in the Bread for the World annual *Report on the State of World Hunger, 1990*, available from Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development, 802 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20018.

²The principal UN documents can be found in most public or academic libraries. To obtain copies of any document or resource, contact United Nations, Department of Public Information, New York, NY 10017. Also useful for up-to-date information on current UN documents, organizations, and issues is Arthur S. Banks, ed., *Political Handbook of the World: 1990* (Binghamton, NY: CSA Publications, 1990).

³For a collection of the major human rights documents, see *Human Rights: The International Bill of Human Rights* (UN Publication, DPI/925-49945, 1988).

⁴Commission on the Status of Women (UN Publication, DPI/1009-40998, 1989).

⁵*The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (UN Publication DPI/926-09859, 1989), pp. 66-75.

⁶*International Economic Cooperation: The Feminization of Poverty* (UN Publication DPI/1051G-40287, 1990).

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸“Justice for Women and Families,” *INTERFAITH IMPACT Magazine* (Washington, DC: INTERFAITH ACTION for Justice and Peace, 1990), p. 10.

⁹See *Human Rights: The International Bill of Human Rights*.

¹⁰*Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies*, p. 12. See also, *Women and Literacy* (UN Publication, DPI/1075, 1990).

¹¹For a description of UNICEF’s anticipated eradication of polio by the year 2000, principally through educational and fundraising efforts of Rotary International, see the UNICEF report, *The State of the World’s Children 1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 56.

¹²NGO Committee on UNICEF, *Action for Children*, Vol. 5: Number 2, 1990. The entire issue of this tabloid newspaper is devoted to the World Summit for Children. The publication is available from Action for Children, C/O UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (212) 326-7303.

¹³“Justice for Women and Families,” p. 10. See also Action for Children.

¹⁴UNICEF, *The State of the World’s Children, 1991* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 3-6. In addition both the UNICEF reports and *Action for Children* give special attention to the numbers of children with AIDS and to the 10 million children who will be orphaned in the 1990s by AIDS.

¹⁵*The State of the World’s Children, 1989*, p. 1.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 15-28.

¹⁷*The State of the World’s Children, 1991*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 15. The World Bank’s 1990 Report also argues convincingly that the costs of substantially reducing global poverty are relatively low for industrialized countries.



Care of Creation: Working with the United Nations

MARGARET PIRKL, O.S.F.

That Franciscans should work in collaboration with the United Nations to care for creation is right and fitting. Francis of Assisi and his way cross not only religious, ethnic, cultural, political, and philosophical boundaries, but historical periods as well. To translate his attitude toward nature, toward the earth, for a world headed into the 21st century is one of the challenges we Franciscans face today. Many through the years have pointed to Francis as a cosmic person who lived out of a belief in the unity of all that is and all who are, who considered himself to be simply part of creation, brother to all creatures, no more, no less. His attitude toward nature was original: sensitive, affectionate, compassionate, fraternal, courteous, particular, and filled with wonder.

One might argue that the large-scale approach of the United Nations would be foreign to Francis. Obviously, though, Francis was large-minded and large-hearted and inclusive (*omnia* or "all" appears often in his writings).¹ In the Rule of 1221, he invited to faith and penance "all peoples, races, tribes, and tongues, all nations and all peoples everywhere on earth who are and who will be...." (Reg NB 27, 7).² In the "Canticle of Creatures" he celebrated everything and everybody: "Praised be You, my Lord, with *all* creatures...." (CantSol 3) With today's almost instantaneous planetary communication, information about human pain and ecological devastation from anywhere on the globe is inescapable. It is difficult to imagine that, in the face of this knowledge, Francis would not seek every way possible to alleviate suffering, to reconcile, to heal the earth family everywhere. This is why I believe Franciscan's participation as an NGO (non-governmental organization) in the work of the United Nations has our founder's blessing.

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Francis probably would have difficulty separating the three aims of this effort, concern for the poor, peacemaking, and care of the earth, for he might see them as three facets of the goodness to which God calls us. They might be for him implicit aspects of love for brother and sister whose needs one moves immediately to fulfill. In this discussion of care for creation, we shall see natural interconnections with peacemaking and concern for the poor. We shall find the three, in fact, integral to each other here as they were in Francis' heart.

The Franciscan familial model of the earth's functioning has much to offer our ecological age. Challenging a domineering attitude with respectful mutuality, replacing alienation with loving acceptance, eliminating dualism by work toward wholeness, excluding none, including all, reverencing each particular being — these are gifts from our heritage we can offer humbly in today's efforts to save the planet, gifts given by God to Francis for whom all creation, not only humankind, was family. One behaves sensitively toward ground water that is sister and animal that is brother, toward tree that is sister and air that is brother, toward earth that is sister-mother and political oppressor or victim who is brother or sister.

With and through the United Nations, Franciscans have tremendous increased potential for sharing, networking, and reaching out to meet urgent needs in their efforts to heal earth and to help earth heal herself. Even though UN values and Franciscan values seemingly have different sources, they are not only compatible but supportive of each other. For example, the "World Charter for Nature," promulgated in 1982 by the UN General Assembly and hailed as one of the most significant documents of our time, seems very close to Franciscan teaching. To demonstrate several aspects of such relatedness, we will consider here a small part of the Charter, namely the preliminary philosophy and rationale that give rise to the document's principles. Though all seven sections are interconnected, the first four will be treated individually and the last three as a group.³

1. [Humankind] is a part of nature, and life depends on the uninterrupted functioning of natural systems which ensure the supply of energy nutrients....

We have already indicated that for Francis all of creation, including humans, was family and that its functioning was guided by mutuality. Members of this family were to meet each other as creatures belonging to the same Creator, not holding dominance over one another and over natural process but, like a sort of cosmic democracy, supporting the delicate balance that sustains all on earth. This attitude of Francis flowed from an insight Celano describes:

[Francis] called all creatures brother [and sister], and in a most extraordinary manner, a manner never experienced by others, he discerned the hidden things of nature with his sensitive heart, as one who had already escaped into the freedom of the glory of the [children] of God. (1 Cel 81)⁴

If our planet and its inhabitants are to survive in a healthy state, the most basic "hidden thing of nature" grasped by Francis, after the revelation of God in all creatures, must also be recognized by us, that is, the call to live and think and love as members of the earth-family whose natural systems and processes support life itself. This truth permeates the teaching of Thomas Berry, which I believe is prophetic for our day. Better than any contemporary thinker, Berry has articulated the oneness of creation with life's dependence on healthy ecosystems. He once said in conversation, "Nothing can be itself without everything else," and, another time, "Humans are a dimension of the earth; these two are totally implicated each in the other." When the United Nations states in a rationale that "[Humankind] is a part of nature," it is naming this implication as fundamental to further thinking about and living on our planet.

From our heritage, we Franciscans can bring to the UN a familial dimension, a loving, emotional dimension, to humankind's relationship with earth. This way of thinking and being could be propagated throughout the world both by realizing in our own lives that we are but part of the earth-family and by networking with other groups who wish to bring humankind to the same awareness. It seems clear that a strong effective link with the UN is a highly desirable opportunity for us to strengthen in ourselves a sense of cosmic familiarity and to share it with others over the entire planet.

2. Civilization is rooted in nature, which has shaped human culture and influenced all artistic and scientific achievement, and living in harmony with nature gives [human beings] the best opportunities for the development of [their] creativity, and for rest and recreation....

As a process rooted profoundly in earth, our human development arises out of our experience of all we encounter during our lives. Thomas Berry says it beautifully:

If we have a wonderful sense of the divine, it is because we live amid such awesome magnificence. If we have refinement of emotion and sensitivity, it is because of the delicacy, the fragrance, and the indescribable beauty of the delicacy, the fragrance, and the indescribable beauty of song and music and rhythmic movement in the world around us.... If we have powers of imagination, these are activated by the magic display of color and sound, of form and movement, such as we observe in the clouds of the sky, the

trees and bushes and flowers, the waters and the wind.... if we have words with which to speak and think and commune, words for the inner experience of the divine, words for the intimacies of life, if we have words for telling stories to our children, words with which we can sing, it is again because of the impressions we have received from the variety of beings about us.⁵

Francis knew this well. He sang, "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth who sustains and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs." (CantSol 9) The verse clearly reflects its author's experience of earth's influence in his life. In celebrating other creatures, Francis used adjectives like "precious", "beautiful," "cloudy and serene," "humble," and "playful" (CantSol), words that point to the saint's personal involvement with nature and evidence the union of his inner and outer worlds.⁶

In the phenomenal order, earth with its creatures, including humans, is primary in the various aspects of human development. The richer this development in individuals, the healthier is the society formed by the individuals. On a large scale, nature determines to a great extent the livelihood and culture of a people. For example, the desert gives rise to a nomadic way of life, the mountains to an independent one; cultures in the plains are individualized by their soil and water supply as well as their locations in northern or southern areas.

The UN's assertion that "civilization is rooted in nature" and that "nature sustains our creativity and rest and recreation" implies society's dependence on its member's experience of nature. The statement also acknowledges implicitly that a society's health is contingent on the health of its environment. In the "World Charter for Nature," the UN seeks to foster consciousness of this truth. Our Franciscan tradition supports living in harmony with all creatures because Francis knew it was a way to God and fullness of life. As an NGO moving along UN channels in decision-making and education, we Franciscans, true to our charism, will become more aware of how nature forms us and find opportunities to share that awareness with others. The more heightened our awareness, the greater will be our sense of urgency in work toward the planet's healing.

3. Every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its worth to [human beings] and, to accord other organisms such recognition, [humans] must be guided by a moral code of action....

This statement by the UN is remarkable from a Franciscan vantage point for (1) it makes humans' behavior toward earth a matter of morality and (2) it could be pointing to the respect we owe each particular being ("every form of life"). According to the early sources, Francis believed that all creatures have rights and deserve our respect (even Brother Fire

who was consuming his clothing! (LP 49)). The narrator of the "Legend of Perugia" states:

.... we who lived with [Francis] were witnesses of his affection and respect for [creatures] and of the pleasure they gave him. He had so much love and sympathy for them that he was disturbed when they were treated without respect. (LP 49)

In the stories coming down to us, we note another point. Francis was dealing with and fascinated by *particular* creatures: it was a particular rabbit he consoled and comforted and protected (1C 60); it was a particular cricket he urged to sing (LP 84); it was a particular nightingale he joined in antiphonal praise.⁷ Francis' courteous attitude toward each one marked his life.

Franciscan theology, after John Duns Scotus, teaches that not only each species but each particular creature takes its design, its pattern, from the Incarnate Word and therefore radiates the light and beauty of Christ in a unique way, never to be repeated — every leaf, every blade of grass, every flower, every snowflake, every cloud, every newborn. This gives serious reason for respect.

I doubt that the ecological situation today will get better until humans begin to reverence every particular being and recognize its right, as a precious creature of God, to exist in sustainable balance with the rest of nature. If we lived consciously, in communion with God's beautiful earth and its members, I believe we would automatically honor every creature, regardless of its usefulness to us. Such respect is a hallmark of the Franciscan charism and a religious responsibility that might be shared with many through the UN. In turn, as we Franciscans network with other groups, we will learn a great deal about unique life systems over the entire earth and humans' interaction with them. Such knowledge will be both motivation and support for the conversion of our own attitude toward creatures other than ourselves.

4. [Human beings] can alter nature and exhaust natural resources by [their] action or its consequences and, therefore, must fully recognize the urgency of maintaining the stability and quality of nature and of conserving natural resources....

Never before has the planet experienced the effects of human activity to the extent we see today. Until relatively recently, human power over nature was limited; over the last 300 years that power has drastically increased. As Thomas Berry states:

The power of our technologies is now such.... that nature cannot prevent us from doing whatever we decide in diminishing the splendor and vigor and variety of life upon the earth.⁸

Soil, air, and water are poisoned so that they can no longer support life; species of plants and animals, tens and hundreds of millions of years old, many of which we do not know yet, are rapidly being extinguished; the planet is warming, very probably as the result of extra greenhouse gases emitted in fossil-fuel burning; the delicate balance of entire ecosystems and of the globe itself is being disrupted. Although earth damage in the 13th century was not nearly as extensive as it is now, it affected Francis' sympathetic heart. In the story describing the origins of the "Canticle of Creatures," Francis speaks these words:

.... I want to compose a new "Praise of the Lord in His creatures" for we daily make use of them, and cannot live without them, and through them the human race greatly offends their Creator. (SP 100)

We may conclude that our founder not only paid attention to humans' effect on nature but that he was concerned about it. Eric Doyle argues:

Even so long ago the ecological problem, manifestly in a milder form than we have it now, had its part in the composition of "The Canticle." This, therefore, is not only a beautiful piece of literature, it is also a protest against the misuse of creatures.⁹

If Francis in his day tried to address human activity harmful to nature, can we do less in our day when the magnitude of earth's wounds overwhelms us? Working with the United Nations will provide many channels for carrying out this mission.

5. Lasting benefits from nature depend upon the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems, and upon the diversity of life forms, which are jeopardized through excessive exploitation and habitat destruction by [human beings]....

6. The degradation of natural systems owing to excessive consumption and misuse of natural resources, as well as the failure to establish an appropriate economic order among peoples and among States, leads to the breakdown of the economic, social and political framework of civilization....

7. Competition for scarce resources creates conflicts, whereas the conservation of nature and natural resources contributes to justice and the maintenance of peace and cannot be achieved until [human-kind] learns to live in peace and to forsake war and armaments....

Underlying these three statements from the "World Charter for Nature" is the truth that justice, peace, and earth wholeness are integral to each other and cannot be separated; they are three aspects of goodness, as we said earlier. Injustice, violence, and ecological damage also come together, never singly, as three manifestations of evil. Oppression and injustice

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lead to war; military spending takes funds from the poor; poverty causes damage to nature; the poor suffer disproportionately from environmental decline; tensions from environmental problems lead to violence and war; and warming causes damage to the earth.

Probably the unfairness in which we individuals of this country are most implicated is our wasteful lifestyle, our overconsumption, and our participation in a throwaway society. Our clothes, our diets, our homes, our recreation, our transportation — practically all aspects of our lives — are energy-intensive, require fossil-fuel burning, and contribute ultimately to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Our excessive per capita consumption cheats the world's poor of food, clothing, shelter, medicine. Our demand for "things," including certain foods, supports exploitation of poor workers and ecosystems abroad and encourages unfair land ownership practices and economic policies; these, in turn, cause intranational and international tensions. In a word, affluence in the United States is devastating in its effects on people and nature over the entire globe.

I believe that we Franciscans, working with the United Nations, can help to address this dreadful state of affairs (1) by renewing the gift of simplicity in ourselves and (2) by convincing others that eating lower on the food chain and having fewer things leads to both healthier and happier lives, to say nothing of helping the poor, abating violence and caring for the earth!

Selfish behavior of individuals harms others the world over, but larger systems also bear responsibility for the immense pain in people and nature everywhere. For example, UNICEF has blamed the death of half a million children per year on the debt burden of the eighties¹⁰; this tragedy may be intensified during the nineties. In most poor countries land ownership is unjustly concentrated in the hands of a few. Lakes and forests of some areas are dying because of acid rain resulting from coal-burning in adjacent regions. Global military spending over four days, about \$8 billion, would pay for five years of effort to save the world's rain forests; two days of this spending would cover the cost of a proposed UN program to halt desertification over twenty years.¹¹ In one year, the world's military spending

comes to about \$200 for each person on the planet, but governments cannot find the \$5 per child needed to eradicate the simple diseases that killed 14 million children in 1988 alone.¹²

Since its establishment in 1946, the UN has sought to promote justice, peace and the care of nature at the international level. The basic premises undergirding its founding Charter are (1) that human beings have dignity and are to be treated justly and (2) that conflicts can be resolved peacefully. The "Convention on the Law of the Sea," the Decade of Women, the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," the "Convention on Climate Change," and international meetings and negotiations on global warming and on depletion of the ozone layer are but a few efforts of the UN. The 1990 "Convention on the Rights of a Child" names a life-sustaining environment among the rights of today's and tomorrow's children. The annual Environmental Sabbath celebration originated with and is supported by the UN Environmental Program. By these endeavors and many others the United Nations seeks to make the world a better place.

Many within the Franciscan family by their work and preaching are already addressing abuses of people and nature by large systems. The effectiveness and scope of these healing efforts can only be increased by collaboration with the United Nations. Further, more Franciscans will be alerted to and convinced of the urgent need to work for systemic change as well as personal conversion for the sake of the entire earth-community. In the process, Franciscan hearts and minds will be encouraged to grow large enough to hold the planet, the cosmos even.

Practical Participation

In the story of Noah and the flood, God puts a rainbow in the sky as a sign of covenant not only between God and humankind but between God and the earth! (Gn 9:17) I believe we human beings are beginning to understand that we must be part of the gift of that covenant. Might the rainbow with all its colors be an image of Franciscans coming together to collaborate with each other and with the United Nations in efforts toward a whole earth? What could the rainbow look like when translated into concrete works that care for the earth?

Last year, each Franciscan community was urged to plant trees in order partly to offset global deforestation activity. Franciscans in 33 countries responded by planting 20,844 trees. The invitation was renewed last January. Might the response result in hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of new trees?

Franciscans everywhere celebrated the UN Environmental Sabbath in June this year and joined concern for nature with concern for children. Many planted trees during the Sabbath weekend, dedicated the planting

to children, and involved children in the event. In preparation for the Sabbath, a communication from the UN Environmental Program Office stated:

Children — our most precious natural resource — will be the theme of this Environmental Sabbath.... The state of our children and the state of our environment say more than anything else about the state of our civilization and the prospects of our future as a species.¹³

June 1992 will see in Brazil a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Among the objectives are

- the production of an earth Charter that will embody basic principles which must govern the economic and environmental behavior of peoples and nations to ensure 'our common future';
- the production of Agenda 21, a blueprint for action in all major areas affecting the relationship between the environment and the economy — focusing on the period up to the year 2000 and extending into the 21st century.¹⁴

The Conference, intended for heads of state or governments, will be the largest Earth Summit ever held. Some consider that it will be one of the most significant conferences in history, for it will involve the most far-reaching global negotiations since the founding of the UN. It will bridge earth care and concern for the poor, and it will also embrace peacemaking; for, if we do justice to people and to the environment, we will reduce causes of violence, increase security, and therefore further peace. All Franciscans can stay in touch with the Conference, let themselves be "stretched" by it, and seek to act locally — and globally — in support of its work.

A year of education on the environment from June 1991 to June 1992 is a special project for Franciscans connected with the UN. Brother Kevin Smith, Executive Director of the Franciscans at the UN Project, expresses the hope that each local community will prepare a program for education. Working together, we are capable of accomplishing miracles! Schools and parishes are fertile ground for sowing education about earth's beauties and mysteries and gifts, her present travail and woundedness, and ways toward her healing. Environment can be incorporated not only into science classes but classes in religion, social science, mathematics, art, history, geography, language arts and literature, and adult education. In parishes, religious education programs, Confirmation classes, reflection days, and retreats provide avenues for teaching about earth. Liturgical celebrations, homilies, in particular, may educate even though that is not their primary purpose. Health care institutions can relate earth to human health and educate employees and patients by ensuring that their use of materials is friendly to the environment. Informal education can accompany every

ministry, and each individual Franciscan can educate others by "living lightly" on the planet.

The movement has only begun; much work remains to be done. The challenge is great because the scope of caring for the earth is vast and the planet's systems, some large, some small, are complex and interconnected. The opportunity to work with the United Nations in order to effect changes in humanity's interaction with nature at both individual and systemic levels, as well as the conversion of our own attitudes toward the earth and the widening of our vision, is an opportunity I believe we are called to embrace, even though at times the goal of planetary well-being seems impossible.

We will find that pivotal in our collaborative effort with the UN to care for creation is the gift of simplicity, allowed to influence us and others through us. The gift challenged Francis, it challenges us; it promises healing and asks for total commitment, as the poet's lines declare:

Quick now, here, now always —
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well....¹⁵

ENDNOTES

¹See Patricia A. Keefe, OSF, "Sisters and Brothers Throughout the World: Franciscan Response to Global Human Rights Issues," *Franciscan Global Perspectives* (Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation, 1986) Vol.1, No.1, 15-17.

²All references to the writings of Francis are from *Francis and Clare: Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap, and Ignatius Brady, OFM (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982).

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⁵Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988) 11.

⁶Eloi Leclerc's discussion of this is fascinating. See Eloi Leclerc, OFM, *Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977).

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¹⁰Alan B. Durning, "Poverty and the Environment: Reversing the Downward Spiral," *Worldwatch Paper* 92 (Washington, D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1989) 6.

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Weeds

We poison, pull, spray, smother.
Nature seems to back off.
Weeds entwine with wheat,
Fill abandoned space.

Industrial varieties sprout in unwanted plants,
grow in capitalism's cracks,
thrive where love fails.

We sow tame wildflowers along highways
and blow leaves off footpaths in the park.

Wild seed blown by wind,
scattered by birds,
Fed by famine.
Nature's reclamation,
Flowered, sweet, perch for birds.
Gambler, entrepreneur.
Weeds refuse to fail.
We merely scold.

Michael Barrett, O.F.M.

Franciscan Peacemaking and the United Nations

PETER A. LYONS, T.O.R.

January 13, is a peaceful Sunday morning in Nova Olinda do Norte. Deep in the rain forest of Amazonas, along the Madeira River, TOR missionaries from the United States have served this area for the past 29 years. I am visiting our mission stations in Amazonas prior to attending a meeting of Latin American TOR formation directors in Sao Paulo.

The world stands at the brink of war this weekend. And even though deprived of our usual propaganda sources, I am kept aware of the world situation by the concern of people here. For even in this place, so far removed from the site of the conflict and the centers of power, people are deeply disturbed by the threat of war. Yesterday in the even more remote Indian village of Koata, the members of the Munduruku tribe whose lifestyle has changed little in the past century, were aware of the threat of war and were scanning the sky with worried looks, searching for dark clouds and dangerous fallout.

Today in Nova Olinda a young man carrying a duffel bag through the town square is taunted by his neighbors: "Are you running away from the war?", they ask with nervous laughter.

The turnout for Mass has been unusually high at each place we've gone, even on weekdays. People are praying with deep feeling as the January 15 deadline for a negotiated settlement approaches.

The setting provides a helpful backdrop for reflecting on the priorities of our Franciscan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the United Nations. The issues of peacemaking, concern for the poor and care of the earth are all reflected here in Amazon. It is in many ways the best of times and the worst of times here. It is a place of stunning beauty and awesome mystery — yet the river is used for raw sewage and garbage and the rain forest is being burned to create pasture land. There is a simplicity and joy of life among the people, yet there is very great poverty and suffering caused by hunger and inadequate medical care.

But it is mostly about peacemaking and peace keeping that this article

Peter Lyons is a member of and the vicar provincial for the Sacred Heart Province of the Third Order Regular Franciscans. He carries responsibility for personnel and ongoing formation.

is concerned. The contract between the peaceful and peace loving natives of Amazonas and the threat of terrible destruction looming over their heads is the starting point for these reflections.

The charter of the United Nations states as the first purpose of the UN: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind."¹ There follows the fairly elaborate organization of the UN, including the General Assembly, Security Council and International Court of Justice. In spite of the good intentions of the framers, these organs have often been used as instruments of national self-interest rather than of global concern. Nations lobby to persuade or intimidate other nations to form effective voting blocks which often fail to address the genuine issue of the common good.

What has emerged, however, as a strong agency of peacemaking is the office of the Secretary General. Javier Perez de Cuellar put the matter this way in his 1989 Nobel lecture:

In the political and military conditions of the post-war world, forceful international action has not proved to be a practical proposition. Sanctions and embargoes have rarely been agreed on, and military enforcement action never, apart from the exceptional case of Korea. Instead the Security Council and the Secretary General have pioneered a different route — the route of consensus, conciliation, good offices, diplomatic pressure and non-forceful, cooperative peace-keeping.²

The past year has been a critical one for the UN, particularly in light of its endorsement of "forceful international action" in the Persian Gulf. Prior to this, the strength of the UN rested in competent and persistent mediation. The signing of the Geneva Accords in 1988 settling the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the United States and the Soviet Union as co-guarantors, was the result of eight years of intensive and complex negotiations by the Secretary General. Other international conflicts in which the Secretariat has been actively involved include Cambodia, Central America, Cyprus, South Africa and the Middle East.

While nationalism and self interest continually insert themselves into the UN through its member states, the Secretary General has been able to achieve diplomatic credibility through the twin pillars of impartiality and permanence. Perez de Cuellar has stated:

The Secretary General and his representatives may not be more talented than national diplomats, but they have the advantage that they are independent of States. They are, consequently, more able to win the confidence of parties to a conflict in the exercise of good offices. Their permanence, however, is a distinct advantage in the case of protracted negotiations. Indeed, one reason we were able to seize as rapidly as we did the opportunities for peace offered us by the changing international climate was

because we had, for years, been maintaining close contact with the parties involved and working tirelessly to bring their views closer together.³

These qualities of impartiality and permanence form a link between the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and those of the world-wide Franciscan Order. This is not to make excessive claims for the Franciscans. We have often enough practiced our own versions of nationalism: rivalry and competition across jurisdictional lines, national and gender differences. We have, however, come together to the extent of affirming our common heritage, recognizing the overriding threats to our planet and committing ourselves as an NGO to the goals of the United Nations, particularly those of peacemaking, concern for the poor and care of the earth.

Our Franciscan commitment to peacemaking is rooted in the life of Saint Francis and of the early penitents who followed his inspiration. Francis' vision of peace derived from his relationship with Jesus Christ and his desire to follow a gospel way of life. He was not a social critic or an anti-establishment rebel. He was a just man who lived faithfully his responsibility in all the relationships of his life. By his deeds more than by his words he had a profound impact on society.

When it came to the issue of peace, Francis was a man who had become reconciled with himself. A sinner who had come to make peace with his own shadow self, his self acceptance was central to his public posture. He declares that his conversion was concretized in the embrace of a leper who had been previously loathsome to him. (Test 1-3)⁴ The divisions he had projected onto his world had begun as divisions within himself. By facing and overcoming those divisions he was able to make peace with all peoples. He renounced ownership so as not to have to be concerned with defending property. He renounced power so as not to be tempted to seek self advancement. And thus he came to achieve credibility with everyone because he was a threat to no one. (Reg NB 7, 1-2; 8, 3) Even on his death bed Francis was able to serve as a mediator between the mayor and the bishop of Assisi because of his impartiality and complete transparency. (SP 101)⁵

As the Franciscan movement grew, however, independence from the dominant institutions of society came to be viewed more as a threat than a benefit. Both church and state grew uncomfortable with the simple but powerful witness of these early friars whom Thomas of Celano calls "followers of justice." (1 Cel 35)

When the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 called for renewal of the sacramental life of the church and the preaching of the gospel, Francis was enthusiastic in his support for the program of the Council. But when the Council decreed a fifth crusade for the liberation of the Holy Land, Francis quietly demurred. Instead he went on pilgrimage to the Saracens'

sultan in Syria and spoke warmly with him in the hope of effecting conversion and reconciliation. While well received by the sultan, Francis' mission was not successful, due quite likely to the fact that "great and severe battles were raging daily between the Christians and the pagans." (1 Cel 58) In his Earlier Rule Francis provided for those who would go among the Saracens and other nonbelievers either to live peacefully in their midst or to proclaim to them the Word of God. (Reg NB 14,3-7) This pioneering missionary stance was quite different from the prevailing mentality of his day. And, alas, it was not to endure long beyond the lifetime of Francis.

Likewise Francis was able to distance himself and his movement from the conventional civil wisdom. The Rule for the Third Order Penitents specifically proscribed the bearing of arms: "they are not to take up lethal weapons or bear them about, against anybody."⁶ This rule for lay tertiaries was quite revolutionary and constituted the Franciscan penitential movement as a peace movement, in opposition to the militaristic bent of the times. Indeed it became increasingly difficult for the lords and mayors of the city states to mount an army since so many of their subjects had joined the Franciscan penitential movement.

David Flood argues that chapter 17 of the Earlier Rule is not simply a pious exhortation to the friars to be humble. It is a warning against the danger of being co-opted by the world and domesticated as safe and innocuous representatives of good Christian living:

Above all we have to avoid being taken in by people who call us good Christians. If we slip into that role as our admirers invite us to, then we set out to give example deemed good by others. We soon depend on their good opinion. We cease to challenge them to live differently, in true peace. And we entangle ourselves in the world we left behind.⁷

In terms of this article, Francis was warning his followers against the loss of that impartiality which is essential to doing peace. History convicts us with the loss of that impartiality. As Franciscans became court chaplains and agents of colonizing powers as well as caretakers of major church institutions, that impartiality was compromised.

In the case of the secular Franciscans, the prohibition against bearing arms had disappeared from the rule by the time it was revised by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289. Men of the fraternity could now bear arms in defense of the Roman Church, of the faith, and of their country, or with permission of the minister.⁸ In 1912 Pope Pius X addressed a letter, *Tertium Franciscanum*, to the Third Order in which he maintained that this was a true religious order, whose members were called to a life of sanctification through religious and charitable activities, but that fraternities were prohibited from pursuing political and economic ends. The emphasis was on

personal conversion and sanctification. To become involved in Catholic Action, tertiaries joined other groups specifically organized for that purpose.⁹ The present rule, issued by Pope Paul VI in 1978 specifically calls the order to corporate action on behalf of justice: "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith."¹⁰

The renewal of the Third Order is but one piece in a greater awakening in the Franciscan world. The Franciscan family crosses many divisional lines: we are international, from rich countries and poor, male and female, lay and clerical, Protestant and Catholic. The Second Vatican Council challenged us to re-discover our charism and apply it to our present world reality. The process of developing a new rule around core Franciscan values was enriching not only to the Secular Franciscan Order, but the same process has revitalized the many congregations of the Third Order Regular as well. The experience of Franciscans in poorer countries of the southern hemisphere has brought them closer to the reality of the poor and enabled them to formulate new theological insights about God's plan for the liberation of all people.

There is a paradox afoot in the public posture of the Catholic Church today. It is at once less politicized and more socially involved than at any time in modern history. The Second Vatican Council charted this direction. It acknowledged the church's mistakes in seeking temporal power in the past.¹¹ It acknowledged the legitimate autonomy of civil structures.¹² It expressed a desire to re-enter the public arena, not as an imperialistic power or a dogmatic force but as a concerned participant in the world's welfare and as one with an unique heritage of wisdom and compassion to bring to the world scene.¹³ The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World withdrew any claim on the part of the church for preferential treatment by political authorities. The church should be free to exercise its mission in civil society and in turn will not attempt to enforce its denominational views (as opposed to its humanistic concerns) on the state.¹⁴

Brian Hehir, writing in a recent issue of *Church* stated: "This explicit shift in Catholicism's public posture — from a claim to favoritism to a claim for freedom — serves to guarantee the transcendence of the church in the face of any and all political regimes. It depoliticizes the church's social role because it withdraws the church from dependence upon or alliance with any specific civil power."¹⁵

But at the same time the church distances itself from political regimes it commits itself to a concern for the human dimension of politics, economics and international relations. Brian Hehir interprets the ministry

of Pope John Paul II in light of this two-fold movement: away from "political activity" by institutional representatives of the church and yet deeply committed to preaching and teaching an expansive concept of human rights and passionate appeals for justice on a global scale.

These qualities of impartiality and permanence form a link between the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and those of the world-wide Franciscan Order.

The Franciscan family has been animated by this two-fold ecclesial movement, finding in it a reassuring sign of its own authentic origins. The present project, Franciscans at the United Nations, both expresses and advances the process of renewal within the Order. The Second Vatican Council expressed a desire that Catholic international bodies would assist the community of nations on the way to peace and brotherhood.¹⁶ The considerable ingenuity that has been required on the part of the NGO organizers to communicate within the Order in its many jurisdictions and locales has been a healthy exercise in promoting unity, as have been the several efforts to form federations and to promote regionalization within the Order. The Franciscan family has come to a new realization of its need for internal unity, partially as a result of this United Nations project.

Moreover, the prospects for disseminating UN information and peacemaking initiatives are greatly expanded by reason of the presence and action of Franciscans in a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional occupations: from sacramental reconciliation to family therapy, community development, conflict resolution, health care, education, spiritual renewal, communications, foreign missions, ecumenical dialogue and institutional advancement, to mention but a few of the diverse ministries in which the brothers and sisters are engaged.

While the issue of impartiality remains pivotal in any peacekeeping ministry, the other pillar described by Perez de Cuellar, permanence, seems even more critical today. In an age of incredible upheaval in the world and in the church, the steadiness and faithfulness of peacemakers seems to be at the heart of the matter. Our history reveals high ideals in our founding period and a quickness to compromise in ensuing ages. The dominant culture and its leadership affect us deeply and wear down the cutting edge of our radical gospel convictions. In past ages individual

commitment to the institute was strong, even when the corporate vision of the institute was shaped by conventional wisdom and values. Today the common vision has been renewed and broadened as a result of the initiatives of the Second Vatican Council, the recovery of our charism and the awareness that doing justice is a constitutive part of living the gospel. But our personal commitments tend to waver in this age of individualism. We tend to test many things and to cling to few. The challenge of permanence in pursuit of peace is the challenge to be faithful to what the Lord has begun to accomplish in us. Franciscans at the United Nations cannot expect instant success from its collaborative relationship with the international community. But it is reasonable to hope that the beneficial results to both groups will continue to accrue, if we remain united to the Lord, to one another, and to the twin principles of impartiality and permanence in the cause of peacemaking.

Endnotes

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³*Notes* 3.

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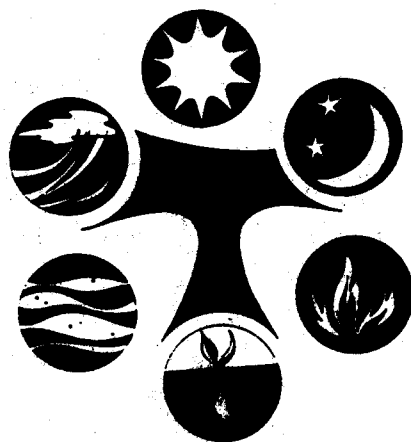
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Membership Drive Begins. . .

Membership in Franciscans, a non-governmental organization at the United Nations, is not automatic — **to belong you must join**. For a number of reasons, membership is on an individual basis and not by Order, Province, Congregation or Fraternity. These groups are being asked to be sponsors rather than members.

Ideally, participation will be in local inter-Franciscan groups. This will not be realistic for many, so there will be different ways to participate as a member.

Initial membership will be for a two year period. To become a member complete the application below. Feel free to duplicate copies of this application. We need your prayers, ideas and contributions. We need each other if we are to make a difference!

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I support the purposes of the Franciscans and wish to become a member for 1991 - 1992. As a pledge of my commitment to assist the Franciscans, I promise my support by:

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 - ☐ concern for the poor
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OCTOBER, 1991

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum Commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Reflections over a Cappucino

WILLIAM DE BIASE, O.F.M.

This past summer I had the joy of making the Franciscan Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. One of the more delightful parts of the experience was to be able to enjoy delicious Italian cappuccino. Since I am an early riser, the morning was very special. It was a time of reflection, of entering into myself before the business of the day began. The following is not a reflection that I had on one particular morning but rather a composite of many mornings.

The town of Assisi says so much about the Franciscan vocation. It is not only in the holy places, San Damiano, the Portiuncula, or the tomb of Francis that the voice of Francis is heard. That voice is experienced amidst the humdrum of ordinary life — in the shops, the crowded streets, the bars...paradoxical, perhaps.

It is true that the moments spent in the holy places were and continue to be precious time. They will be those very important memories in my life..... these seconds, minutes and even hours were the moments of contact with Francis. He came alive. I touched the stones of San Damiano, I heard the birds of Assisi, I saw the Portiuncula....time and space indeed became relative to the ability of one to forget about them and to travel 800 years back.

A sense of silence surrounded these places. A silence that was an invitation to remember.. to remember who one is, where one came from and where one is going. The silence is not external.. there are tours and guides giving their talks... trying to explain that which really can not be explained... it reaches into that part of one's being where only he or she exists with God... Sitting in the lower church, or at the Portiuncula,

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enclosed in this wall of silence, does not cut one off from the real world but gives a glimpse of the ultimate reality. The dream comes alive. Walking through the fields of RivoTorto, the bridge of time no longer exist; space does not encapture as you kneel before the body of Clare.... 800 years disappear at the sight of the Baptismal font of St. Rufino's....

This Assisi without time and space exists within another Assisi... the Assisi of the shops, motorcycles, restaurants and bars. As the Assisi of the "holy places" had no time or space.. this other Assisi is bounded by time and space... the Assisi of the speaking stones, of the dreams of long age stands side by side with the Assisi that hears the voices of young people from all over the world singing in the village square, with merchants selling their goods, with people sitting at the bars drinking their cappucinos and dolce... Which is the real Assisi?

The easiest answer would be to say that the Assisi of the "dream" is the real Assisi. All these other things are merely intrusions into the holiness: they are aberrations the motorcycles, the shops, the "commercialization" of the pilgrims. There is almost a cry within, the spirit that they be done away with... the shops, all these signs of the 20th century.... that the pristine setting of the "dream" be once again found... A nostalgia breaks into the heart. This nostalgia, no matter how holy, builds within one a dichotomy between the dream and the world in which this dream must live. The world of the shops, the tourist trade, are all there because of the dream... in a sense without Francis this other world would not exist. Assisi would just be another of the thousands of little towns perched on a thousand mountain sides throughout Italy.

The dream changed things. Perhaps it is being used in a way that would surprise Francis; perhaps in many ways the dream itself has been forgotten, or clouded over... perhaps people come to Assisi not really knowing the "why" but only that many years ago someone saw things a little differently than other people.

All of these come into living the vocation of a Franciscan. The dream can be forgotten, the dream can be covered over by years of "habit" perhaps the "why" can not be answered as quickly as it used to, perhaps there is a nostalgia and because of this the dream is looked upon as unlivable...

The two Assisis, however, give me a different message. They say that the dream must live in the world of the now, that the timelessness of the "holy places" is there so that they can live in time.

As I sat over that cup of cappucino in the quiet of the early morning, when the streets were still empty, before the din of the motorcycles shattered the silence, before the shops which sell the reminders of the dream opened, in that time and space the voice came: the dream is still alive. □

Repair My House

JAN VAN DE PAVERT, O.F.M.

The Franciscan family is thoroughly familiar with the words Saint Francis of Assisi understood from the lips of the cross at San Damiano, in the first stages of his conversion: "Francis, go and repair my house, which as you see, is falling completely into ruin." The story is first mentioned in the Legend of the Three Companions.¹ Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of Saint Francis of Assisi, copied this text literally into his Second Life² and again in his Treatise of the Miracles,³ and Bonaventure did likewise in the Legenda Maior.⁴ In the languages in which I can read and understand this text (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Indonesian and Dutch) I find consistently the same reproduction of the words⁵ which Francis perceived from the lips of the cross. But, surprisingly, it is not the proper translation of the words which the Three Companions wrote. To examine the words of the Three Companions we want to know what they really wrote and therefore, we have to refer to the text-critical edition by Fr. Théophile Desbonnets, O.F.M.:⁶ "Francisce nonne vides quod domus mea destruitur? Vade igitur et rapara illam mihi." Which mean in English: "Francis, don't you see that my house is being destroyed? Go then and repair it for me." My house "is being destroyed" is not the same as "is falling into ruin."⁷ "Falling into ruin", could be because of neglect; however, "is being destroyed" indicates that someone or something is actually working on the destruction. The Latin verb "destruere" means: to break down, to destroy, to annihilate; it is the autonym of

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"construere" to build, in the same way as destruction is the antonym of construction. "My house is being destroyed" and Francis is charged to repair it. The biographer states that Francis did not immediately understand the true meaning of these words and therefore he started to work on the material repair of three little churches. But later on he understood the spiritual meaning of the charge. Thomas of Celano states: "For, though the divine command concerned itself with the church that Christ had purchased with his own blood, Francis, who was to pass gradually from mundane to spiritual, was not inclined to suddenly consider himself as being called to a task at the highest level."⁸ Bonaventura in the *Legenda Maior* says the same in these words "...although the message really referred to the Church which Christ 'won for himself at the price of his own blood', as the Holy Spirit afterwards made him realize and he himself explained to the friars."⁹

The Setting

In order to appreciate the experience of Francis with the speaking cross in San Damiano, we have to realize what happened in his life before the experience. He joined the rebellious citizens of Assisi in a local war against the neighbouring city of Perugia and he was captured. For one year he remained in prison. When he was freed he aspired to become a great lord, a military nobleman, a knight. And Francis had a dream of a palace full of arms and shields, marked with a cross,¹⁰ which fitted perfectly with his great desire to be knighted.¹¹ His chance came when fighters were recruited for a military expedition into Apulia, in the south of Italy. Francis signed up for it.

The question why Francis wanted to go to Apulia can be answered only by stating that he wanted to become a knight, but not to indicate for whom he was going to fight. The articles written to explain why Francis wanted to go to Apulia¹² do not give us a definite answer; they only numerate some possibilities, within the context of the complicated political situation where Pope and Emperor tried to claim their rights. However, on August 16, 1205, pope Innocent III wrote a letter¹³ to all Christians of the world to support the Latins in Constantinople, because he thought that it was a way to enter into Asia and eventually liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims. The plan of the pope was: All go to Apulia, to the harbour of Brindisi, where they depart by ship for Constantinople and from there proceed to Jerusalem. So, without calling for a new crusade, the letter of the pope pointed in the crusade direction. At the same time the pope could use the expedition for his own interests, since he was trying to reclaim all territories that rightly belonged to the Church. Emperor Henry VI was married to Constance, daughter of Tancredi, appointed by the pope

as fief over Sicily. After Tancredi's death, his wife Sybilla was manipulated by Henry VI to resign her rights over Sicily in favor of Henry VI, and he promised that she should receive the county of Lecce in Apulia to compensate for the resignation. But Henry did not keep his promise. Sybilla then went to France with her family, where her oldest daughter Alberia married Count Gautier (= Walter) de Brienne. The pope, as grand feudal Lord, was interested in the area of Apulia (Taranto and Lecce) and the Kingdom of Sicily also because he was tutor and guardian of Frederick Roger, the future Frederick II, whom his mother Constance on her death-bed had placed under the tutelage of the pope. Frederick should inherit the kingdom of Sicily. The mercenary count, Walter of Brienne, fought already for the pope in the south of Italy and was very successful. His fame spread all over Italy. But also this count had his own interests. His wife Alberia, oldest daughter of the King of the Normans, Tancredi, had rights in Taranto and Lecce in Apulia. The expedition of Walter intended to restore order in Puglia, fief of the pope and to regain all of Puglia, not only for the pope but also for himself.

How did it Happen?

A nobleman of Assisi wanted to go to Apulia to fight. Francis joined him under command of Count Gentile della Pagliara of the Knights of Manoppello. In this situation Francis saw his great chance to become knighted. He set out on the long trip from Assisi to Apulia (some five hundred kilometers). But he came only as far as Spoleto (about 50 kilometers from Assisi) and fell sick. There he had a vision.¹⁴ "Who could do better for you, the servant or the Lord? Why then are you seeking the servant instead of the Lord?" "Lord what do you want me to do?" "Go back home to the place where you were born, because your vision will be fulfilled by me in a spiritual way." So Francis returned to Assisi with a broken dream of greatness and knightly honor. Probably he was ashamed and disillusioned. In any case, he was at a total loss concerning his immediate future, which brought him into a profound crisis. The description of his struggle to know his destiny and find direction in his life is moving. And in this state of mind he prayed in the little church of San Damiano before the crucified Lord: "Most high glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, and give me the proper faith, the firm hope and the perfect love, the consciousness and the knowledge, Lord, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command". It was then that the lips of the crucified started to move and Francis heard the words: "Francis, don't you see that my house is being destroyed? Go and repair it for me." These words of the crucified Lord directed the rest of Francis' life. How this command of the Lord truly could be fulfilled he learned later when he went to

consult the Gospel book in the church of San Nicola. The discernment for which he struggled in the cave, for which he prayed before the crucifix of San Damiano, which he found spelled out in the Gospel book, resulted in evangelical life. And this became in fact, the constructive "repair my house" in the spiritual sense. But if evangelical life repairs the house of God, what then destroys it? Francis was going to fight, join the war in Apulia to become a knight, a man of war, a man of arms, a man of power, a man of violence. God calls him back and says "Don't you see that my house is being destroyed? The house of God is the place where God lives, where the Suffering Servant on the cross becomes visible. A Church which only can think of war, violence and power, destroys itself. Then the Church is no longer the house of God. Francis repair my house that is being destroyed by following the Suffering Servant Jesus Christ.

A Church which only can think of war, violence and power, destroys itself.

The Crumbling Church

The powerful pope Innocent III had a dream when Francis came to him to ask the approval of his rule of life. He had seen in his sleep the Lateran basilica about to fall to ruin, when a certain religious, small and despised, propped it up by putting his own back under it lest it fall. "Surely", he said, "this is that man who, by his works and by the teaching of Christ, will give support to the Church." We know this story about the pope and Saint Francis from 2 Celano.¹⁵ But it is significant that the Dominicans have the same story about Saint Dominic.¹⁶ Both saints are the protagonists of evangelical life,¹⁷ by which the destruction of the Church is counteracted. The Church is being destroyed by power, the house of God is repaired by being subservient to all and to everything.

The End of Power and Might

With the pontificate of pope Innocent III the papacy came to its highest summit ever of wordly power and might. The Innocent III, of origin son of Count Trasimondo di Segni, belonged to the old nobility. He studied Church law in Paris and Bologna and was an expert in Roman Law. At the age of 37 he was elected pope (January 8, 1198) and one month later he was ordained a priest and bishop. A man with exceptional gifts of mind, he tried to keep reform movements within the Church. Regarding Francis

and his followers he saw it as his task to let them work in the Church and for the Church, in order to prevent that they should slide into heresy and thus become a threatening danger to the church. His wide vision opened the road for Saint Dominic and Saint Francis to become an avant-garde with papal approval in the service of Church with the religious movement of the thirteenth Century and thus deprive the heresy of its power.¹⁸ Innocent III died in 1218 in Perugia, when he was preparing for a new crusade. His body lay in state in the cathedral in the full glory of his papal attire. Jacques de Vitry, who came to Italy to be ordained bishop of St. Jean d'Acre, arrived in Perugia and wrote a letter,¹⁹ dated October 1216. "*Then, I arrived in a city, named Perugia, where recently Pope Innocent had died, but was not yet buried. During the night thieves had stolen his precious clothes in which he should be buried and had left his body almost naked in the church, in a terrible stench. I went there and I have seen with my own eyes how short, how vain and how delusive is the glory of the world.*"

Conclusion

Usually the Franciscan Family has applied the command "to repair my house" to all good works; it was a lid that fitted all pots. But, the understanding of the true translation of the words of the cross of San Damiano is not at all generic. On the contrary, the words have a very specific meaning and clearly point to the life style of the Friars Minor: evangelical servitude, following the example of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.

Father Mario von Galli, S.J., writes in his book *Gelebte Zukunft: Franz von Assisi*²⁰ that every saint has something which transcends his own time. But it cannot be said of every saint that this time transcendence is timely especially for our time; however, for Francis, in my opinion, this seems to be the case. This makes him a guide towards the future. From the time of John XXIII, Pope and Council provoke us to understand the signs of the time. For me it was unexpected and surprising that the more I was occupied with Francis, the better I was helped to understand the signs of the time.

In this time of ecumenism, dialogue, option for the poor and solidarity, the command to Francis: repair my house by way of evangelical servitude, is more than ever a command to the followers of Francis.

Endnotes

¹Soc., 13.

²2 Cel., C. VI, n. 10, line 9, p. 137, *Analecta Franciscana X*, Quaracchi, 1926 - 1941.

³3 Cel., II, 2, line 12-13, p. 272, AF XC.

⁴*Leg. Mai. II, line 190, p. 563, AF X.*

⁵*English:* Francis go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling completely into ruin. *French:* François, lui disait-il, va et répare ma maison, qui tu le vois, tombe en ruines. *German:* Franziskus, geh hin und stell mein Haus wieder her, das wie du siehst, ganz verfallen ist. *Italian:* Francesco — gli dice chiamandole per nome — vè, ripara la mia casa che, come vedi, è tutta in rovina. *Spanish:* Francisco, i no ves que mi casa se derrumba? Anda, pues, y repara. *Indonesian:* Fransiskus, pergilah, perbaikilah, rumahku sebagaimana kamu lihat yang seluruhnya sudah nyaris bobrok iyu. *Dutch:* Franciscus, ga en herstel mijn huis, dat, zoals je ziet, in puin valt.

⁶*Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 67 (1974), Collegio San Bonaventura: 3 Soc. V, 13, lines 16 - 18, pp. 99 - 100.

⁷Fr. André Jansen, OFM, made this observation in this article "Het gebed voor de gekruisigde" in *Franciscaans Leven*, 74 (1991), p. 24.

⁸2 Cel., VI, 11, lines 14, 15, 16 in AF X, p. 137.

⁹LM. II, 1, lines 14, 15, 16 in AF X, p. 563.

¹⁰*Anonymous Perusinus* (L'Anonyme de Péruse, éditions franciscaines, Paris, 1979, Traduit per Pierre-B. Béguin, 5a, b, c, d, pp. 31 - 32).

¹¹LM. II, 3: "sperans... decus adipisci militiae" and 3 Soc., II, 6: "ut ... miles fiat."

¹²"Perchè S. Francesco voleva andare nelle Puglie" in: *Miscellanea Francescana*, 27 (1927) pp. 33 - 36, D. M. Faloci Pulignani; and in: *L'Italia Francescana*, 2 (1927) pp. 321 - 334, P. Ottavio da Alatri, D. M. Faloci Pulignani, Pietro Giannone.

¹³"Universis Christi fidelibus ad succursum Terrae sanctae volentibus Constantinopolim proficisci mandat, ut reddant pontificem de ipsorum proposito certiore, ut viam eis securam faciat per Apuliam preparari, eantque nuntii Brundisium ad navigium conducendum." Cf. Augustus Potthast: *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, Vol. I, Berolini, 1874, p. 220, N. 2570.

¹⁴2 Cel., II, 6.

¹⁵2 Cel., 17.

¹⁶*Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*, Cronica Ordinis ab anno MCCIII usque ad MCCLIV, Lovanii, 1896, p. 323, Cronica prior, ad annum 1215: *Dominum vero Innocencium papam predictum dominus hac visione ad petitionem beati Dominici inclinavit: Videbatur enim sibi, quod Lateranensis ecclesia minaretur ruina; sed frater Dominicus accedens suppositis humeris totam illam casuram fabricam erigens sustentabat.*

¹⁷In the Mass on the feast of Saint Francis the third strophe of the sequence reads: Novus ordo, nova vita/ mundo surgit inaudita./ Restauravit lex sancita/ statum evangelicum.

¹⁸Cfr. Grundmann: *Eresie e nuovi ordini religiosi nel secolo XII*, in: Relazioni del X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche, Vol. III, Firenze, 1955, pp. 368 - 369.

¹⁹R. B. C. Huygens, "Lettres de Jacques de Vitry," édition critique, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1960, pp. 73 - 74, lines 61 - 67.

²⁰Mario von Galli, *Gelebte Zukunft: Franz von Assisi*, Verlag C. J. Bucher, Luzern und Frankfurt/M., 1970, pp. 17 - 18.

St. Francis, the Leper

"Once we understand the natural history of leprosy, it becomes clear that a diagnosis of tuberculoid leprosy best accounts for Francis' illnesses. His stigmata can be understood as the wounds of a man who became a leper precisely because of his love for the Crucified Leper."

SCHATZLEIN & SULMASY

The leper that I've shunned
Is the Christ I'm asked to face
On this journey I've begun.

The stench had left me stunned,
His countenance I debased,
This leper that I've shunned.

My world has come undone
By the miracle of His grace
On this journey I've begun.

For the riches that are won
Are gathered in embrace
From the leper that I've shunned.

Enflamed with wounds that weigh a ton
Brother Ass is laid to waste
On the journey I've begun.

So I no longer run
Or live my life in haste
Fearing the leper I once shunned.

Though I burn with brother Sun
It's His Passion that I trace
In the hug, that kiss, His face:

See the leper I've become
As I live a life displaced
On this journey to the Son.

Didacus R. Wilson, T.O.R.

"Proclaim Peace To All" (1 Cel 29)

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

Francis of Assisi was a violent young man. As a youth, his great ambition was to be a warrior, a knight. War did not come to Francis; he went looking for war. Historians tell us that the battle of Collestrada in which Francis took part in November of 1202 was an exceptionally bloody battle. Francis may well have killed men or seriously wounded them before he himself was taken prisoner. Released from prison because of an illness, Francis returns to battle again after his recovery, this time under the leadership of the famous warrior, Gauthier of Brienne. It has been observed that all this seems to indicate that the young Francis was a competent and enthusiastic swordsman.

Romain Mailloux, OFM, writes:

Francis had the temperament of a "fighter". When he discovers peace, it will never be an escape for him. Francis will not become a man of peace because he is afraid to fight or because he lacks courage. Gospel peace will not be for him the reaction of a fear-filled life, looking to protect himself from worldly problems. He will move beyond war, not stop short of it. Peace will have a militant and constructive dimension: that of gospel mission. (Translated from *Selecciones de Franciscanismo*, 57 (1990), p. 429.

Francis uses a monastic expression ("leaving the world") to speak of his conversion. While he attaches a meaning to this expression that is very different from the monastic understanding, Francis does indeed leave the world of Assisi that had been so dear to him; the world of his self-centered existence, in which he eagerly sought knighthood, looking to build up a kingdom for himself.

Embracing the leper, Francis is changed at the core of his being. He redefines what is bitter and what is sweet. No longer interested in building

This is the fifth article in a series on the New Evangelization. Fr. Charles writes from the Franciscan Mission Service in Silver Spring, Maryland.

up a kingdom for himself, Francis is free to be "the herald of the great King" (1 Cel 16; LM II, S and XII, 2; LMin I, VIII). Since the Kingdom of the great King is a "kingdom of peace" (Preface of Christ the King), "the Lord revealed to [Francis] the greeting: 'The Lord give you peace'" (Cf. Test 23) The "world" that Francis left so definitively "when the Lord gave [him] the grace to begin to do penance" (Test 1), was the world in which being aggressive played such an important role in Francis' plans for his future. Leaving that world in which violence was so acceptable and even honored, Francis would become an ardent lover and promoter of peace such as our church and world would seldom see. It is well known that St. Francis did not write the "Peace Prayer of St. Francis" ("Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...") but as an Italian would say, even though he did not write it, the claim that he did is "ben trovato."

It was, moreover, not only the "world" of Francis' day that was violent; the institutional church also had recourse to violence. The crusades were not an example of the "peaceful resolution of conflict." Consider the words of Bernard of Clairvaux to the crusaders in his *De laude novae militiae ad milites templi*:

Dying for Christ and killing for Christ are not sins, but deserve glory. The soldier of Christ kills with a clear conscience, and dies with even more peace. When he dies, he gains; when he kills Christ gains... In the death of a pagan, Christ is given glory.

Both Popes Clement III and Celestine III appealed to the Christian people "to purify the land of our savior from the filth of the Saracen people." The Portuguese Benedictine Cardinal Pelagio Galvan was sent as Papal legate to Damietta in Egypt in 1218, the year before St. Francis arrived there. The Legate was giving voice to a common conviction in Christendom when he would say: "Islam was born by the sword, was spread by the sword, and now must be crushed by the sword."

St. Francis' approach to the world of Islam is the exact opposite. As always, Francis draws all his inspiration from the gospel. His opening words in chapter 16 of the Reg NB recall Jesus' instructions to His disciples when He sent them out on mission: "I am sending you as lambs in the midst of wolves." Francis directs the friars to avoid even disputes with the Saracens; the brothers are, on the contrary, "to serve every human being for God's sake, and confess that they are Christians." Similarly, in his testament, Francis writes: "We were submissive to everyone." See also RB III, 11. We need to read these statements in their historical context to appreciate how truly revolutionary they were.

So convinced is Francis that violence is evil, that he attributes it to a diabolical presence. It is demons who rejoice at the sight of violence and destruction (Cf 2 Cel 108.) Francis orders Sylvester to pronounce an

exorcism over the strife-torn city of Arezzo, commanding the demons "in the name of God Almighty to leave the city immediately" (ibid.). To rejoice in violence and destruction is to rejoice at what gladdens the hearts of demons! Perhaps Francis was thinking of the curse of Psalm 68:31 in which the psalmist pleads with God to "scatter the people who take delight in war." On the contrary, a blessing is reserved for the meek: they "shall possess the land, they shall delight in abounding peace" (Psalm 37:11).

The Cost of Peace

Living at a very turbulent time, Francis is very aware that living in peace will be costly and counter-cultural. Since peace is such a supreme value, it is better to suffer for peace than to triumph through violence. Thus, in *Admonition XIV*, commenting on the beatitude "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God" (Mt 5:9), Francis writes: "The true peacemakers are those who preserve peace of mind and body for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite what they suffer in this world."

In a similar vein, when Francis learns of the "savage hatred" that had developed between the bishop of Assisi and the mayor, Francis was "pained to see that no one, religious or lay, intervened to establish peace and concord between them." Indeed, he considered it a "great shame for us, the servants of God, that at a time when the mayor and the bishop so hate each other no one can be found to establish peace and concord between them" (LP 44). Francis then added a special strophe to his *Cantic of Brother Sun*:

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are they who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.

In Francis' view, true peacemakers are those who are willing "to suffer for peace" and "to endure in peace." Just as a Christian may be called on to suffer for the faith, so may one be called on to suffer for other gospel values, and among these peace holds a prominent place.

Poverty and Peace

Francis' refusal to hold property is due in part to his commitment to being a man of peace. Francis and his pioneer brothers "were persecuted by their friends and relatives and by the citizens generally, both rich and poor, of all ranks, who derided them as madmen and fools, because at that time no one spontaneously gave up his own goods" (LP 35). Only the bishop of Assisi received them kindly, but even he counselled Francis

against such austere poverty. Francis would not be moved to change his proposal and tells the kindly bishop:

My lord, if we had possessions we would also need arms to defend ourselves. Riches cause quarrels and disputes, and thus in many ways impede both the love of God and the love of neighbor. For that very reason we do not want to possess any material good on earth" (L3S 35; see also *Anon of Perugia* 17).

In the "Fragments" of a rule composed by Francis sometime before 1223, he writes:

Wherever they may be, in hermitages or in other places, let the brothers be on guard not to claim any place or anything whatever as their own, nor to protect them against anyone (*nec alicui defendant*)

Similarly, in Reg NB (7, 14), the brothers are not to prevent anyone from coming to the places where they are staying, but on the contrary, are "to receive kindly all who come to them, whether they be friend or foe, thief or robber." That is revolutionary advice in any age!

Francis renounces material things because he sees they could threaten a life of peace in love. Having nothing to lose, Francis and his brothers had nothing to defend. Material poverty is not an end in itself; it is at the service of the gospel values of love and peace. To enter Francis' family therefore, was to enter "a delegation of peace" (1 Cel 24).

Francis understands peace not just as the absence of conflict, or "the tranquility of order" but the peace the gospel speaks of: peace at the core and center of one's being, peace of heart. Living that peace and spreading it to others is essential for Franciscan evangelization:

He also said to the brothers: "Since you speak of peace, all the more must you have peace in your hearts. Let no one be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but may they be drawn to peace and good will, to kindness and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to bring together what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way. Many who may seem to us to be children of the devil will still become Christ's disciples" (L3S 58).

Francis Announces Peace

As soon as Francis begins his preaching ministry, he emphasizes the importance of peace. Celano informs us that Francis delivered his first sermon at the church of St. George where he had studied as a boy and where he would be first buried, and then describes Francis' preaching ministry:

In all his preaching, before he proposed the word of God to those gathered

about, he first prayed for peace, for them, saying: "The Lord give you peace." He always devoutly announced peace with the greatest devotion to both men and women, to all those whom he approached and to all who approached him. Many who hated both peace and salvation embraced peace with all their heart, with the Lord's help, and became children of peace (1 Cel 23)

When Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples out on mission to proclaim the good news of God's reign, He instructed him: "Whatever house you enter, let your first words be: 'Peace to this house' (Lk 10:5; see also Mt 10:12). The blessing of peace prepared people's hearts to receive the central gospel message: God's loving reign.

When Francis sent his followers out on their preaching journeys, they too were to preach peace. (See 1 Cel 29) "May the Lord give you peace" was to be their greeting to all whom they met. The *Legend of Perugia* (67) informs us that this unusual greeting caused some difficulties:

In the early days of the Order, when blessed Francis was travelling in the company of one of his first twelve followers, that brother greeted men and women on the roads and in the fields by saying to them: "May the Lord give you peace!" The people were completely astonished, for they had never heard other religious use that greeting. A few men asked in an offensive tone of voice: "What is the meaning of that greeting?" The brother was ashamed and said to blessed Francis: "Brother, let me use a different greeting." Blessed Francis answered: "Let them talk; they do not have a sense of the things of God. Do not be ashamed. Nobles and princes of the world will come to respect you and the other brothers because of this greeting." And he added: "Is it not wonderful that the Lord has wanted a humble people different from those who have preceded them, people who are content to possess him alone, the Most High and glorious Lord, as their riches.

In the thought of St. Francis, people of peace are a humble people, those who are content to possess the Most High alone as their entire wealth. This goes to the heart of St. Francis' understanding of poverty also. Overflowing with praise for the grace of the stigmata, Francis prays: "You [Lord], are all our riches. You are enough for us." (*Parchment Given to Br. Leo*). Those who, like Francis, really believe that "God is enough" are truly poor and come to experience the peace Jesus speaks of: "'Peace' is my farewell gift to you; my own peace I give you; I do not give it to you as the world gives peace" (Jn 14:27). The world can never give peace of heart. And again: "I tell you all this so that in me you may find peace" (Jn 16:33). Similarly: "Your hearts will rejoice with a joy no one can take from you" (Jn 16:22). Those who are filled with this peace and joy in the depths of their being will necessarily be, like Francis, apostles of peace.

Vices That Destroy Peace

In his writings, the vices that Francis most warns against are precisely those that disrupt peace both in oneself and in others. Pride, arrogance, greed, haughtiness, vanity, jealousy, detraction, an unforgiving spirit — these are direct attacks on gospel peace, as they are incompatible with Franciscan *minoritas*.

In St. Francis' day, as in our own, the vices of arrogance and greed were the cause of grave injustices that Francis felt compelled to denounce. Injustice is always a grave threat to peace. As Pope Paul VI said: "If you want peace, work for justice." Francis did not shy away from threatening unjust men with the punishment of God. One day while Francis was preaching to the people in the public square of Perugia, a gang of knights

"began to gallop there in full armor, for the sport of it, so much so that they interfered with the sermon. The men and women who were listening attentively to the sermon protested, but to no avail; the knights continued. [Francis addressed the knights:] Your heart is puffed up with arrogance, haughtiness and pride. You pillage your neighbors and kill many of them. If you do not mend your ways soon and make reparation for the harm you have done I tell you that the Lord, Who does not allow any injustice to go unpunished, is preparing a terrible punishment and humiliation for you" (LP 35; see also 2 Cel 37.)

Senseless brutality and horrific injustice continue to plague the world of our time, threatening peace. To announce the Reign of God is to denounce what is anti-Reign of God as Francis did in his day.

Christian pacifism then does not mean "peace at any price." Pacifism is not passivism. Remaining passive and indifferent in the presence of evil is not a gospel value. As the OFM general constitutions state:

The brothers should live in this world as builders of justice and heralds and craftsmen of peace, overcoming evil by doing good (Art. 68, 1).

In protecting the rights of oppressed peoples, the brothers should reject violence and have recourse instead to means that are available to more powerless people.

The brothers should be aware of the horrendous dangers that threaten the human race. They should speak out courageously against the arms race and every kind of warlike activity as a most serious curse on the world and the gravest injury to the poor. The brothers should spare themselves neither toil nor hardship in building up the reign of the God of peace (Art. 69, 1 and 2).

The directive that the friars overcome evil by doing good is taken from Romans 12:21, and the recommendation to use means that people without power employ in resisting evil is based on Vatican II's teaching in *Gaudium et Spes* 78.

If, on entering the Franciscan family we enter a "delegation of peace" (1 Cel 24), we also live in a culture where violence is not only tolerated but at times is acclaimed as "the only thing that works" in remedying injustice. That was the argument used to justify the recent Persian Gulf war.

Although Pope John Paul II clearly condemned the invasion of Kuwait as "a brutal violation of international law and of the moral law", he also warned that war was not an appropriate response to that injustice; on the contrary, "the suffering and destruction of war would only give rise to further injustices". On Jan. 12, before the air war started, the Pope said: "The demands of humanity today ask us to move resolutely towards the absolute banning of war, and to cultivate peace as the supreme good, to which all policies and strategies must be subordinated." When war broke out, the Pope asked those responsible to "immediately abandon this war that is unworthy of humanity." On more than 50 occasions the Pope expressed his firm opposition to the war. All to no avail. Months after the war was declared "over", the Pope's judgment is that it was "tragic". He writes in *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991):

I myself, on the occasion of the recent tragic war in the Persian Gulf, repeated the cry: "Never again war!" No, never again war, which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution to the very problems which provoked the war (n. 52).

Meanwhile, the vast majority of north-americans, and no doubt many Catholics (and Franciscans?) among them, are being swept up in a wave of euphoria at "our massive victory". When the President's spokesman was asked about the human suffering caused by the war, he replied that the American people would not go on a guilt trip because of it. Perhaps not, but that only raises other questions, such as the one posed by Robert F. Drinan S.J. in NCR (= National Catholic Reporter) April 12, 1991: "Has America lost its moral compass?" Civil religion is a monstrous idol that can blind us to gospel values.

Yet the war and its aftermath were indeed a terrible tragedy for many. The U.S. armed forces and their allies killed some 150,000 Iraqi soldiers, most of them conscripts and many of them barely more than children. Some 88,500 tons (sic) of bombs were dropped on Iraq, causing what a U.N. report called "near apocalyptic" destruction. Some 70% of those bombs hit other than their intended targets, and it seems that well over 12,000 civilians — women, children, the sick and elderly among them, were killed. The U.N. estimates that 9,000 homes were destroyed and

... we also live in a culture where violence is not only tolerated but at times is acclaimed as "the only thing that works" in remedying injustice

72,000 people left homeless. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lived in sheer terror as their country was blasted back into the pre-industrial age. One is reminded of the forceful declaration of Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* (80):

Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and the human race. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.

And what is to be said of the long-term moral effects of the war on north-americans? Ignoring the tragic dimensions of the war conveys the message, especially harmful to our youth: violence works! Can we be surprised by the finding of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee that in 1990 "the United States led the world in the rates of its murders, rapes and robberies?" The U.S. is the "most violent and self-destructive nation on earth." The murder rate in the U.S. is four times that of Italy, nine times that of England, and eleven times that of Japan. While the U.S. population has grown 41% since 1960, violent crimes have increased by 516%. In 1990, more than 1.8 million Americans were murdered, raped or robbed. (Reported by Robert F. Drinan S.J. in NCR, 12 April 1991).

To denounce war in the present climate is to invite ridicule and contempt for one's supposed "lack of patriotism." Nevertheless, our task is to proclaim the gospel in utter fidelity to its message, even when that message is unpopular. If we fail to relate the gospel to the concrete challenges of our own times we fail to proclaim the gospel as relevant today. And, as scripture scholar John McKenzie notes:

No reader of the New Testament, simple or sophisticated, can retain any doubt of Jesus' position toward violence directed to persons, individual or collective, organized or free enterprise: He rejected it totally. (Quoted by Emmanuel Charles McCarthy in *America*, May 18, 1991.)

If the Franciscan family is to be again a "delegation of peace" we need the inner strength to risk unpopularity and to "swim against the current". Swimming against the current is difficult. It is consoling to know that only live fish can do it.

Conclusion

In an address delivered on March 13 of this year at Pacific Lutheran University, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen said:

In the afterglow of [the Persian Gulf] war in which many would say the military proved its worth, I am plagued by doubts. I'll cite a few statistics:

Some economists have figured that every billion dollars spent on arms means a loss of more than 2,000 civilian jobs. By that calculation, this year's \$300 billion military budget means sacrificing 600,000 jobs.

Military spending has made our country the world's biggest debtor nation. Since I spoke here ten years ago, our budget deficit and trade imbalance increased \$1 trillion. As a result we now spend more of our tax dollars paying the interest on our debt than we pay for all the housing, education, social welfare, food, employment, transportation, energy and environmental programs combined.

While the military budget increased 50% over the past decade, federal programs directed toward reducing poverty were cut 54%. As a result, one in four children lives in poverty, and our infant mortality rate is higher than in that of any other industrialized country.

The struggle for the soul of the United States, our soul as a nation, will occur in the coming struggle over how our government will spend our money. The church must join in this struggle.

Reflection Questions:

1. The beatitudes have been called Jesus' self-portrait. In our evangelizing ministry, do we attach enough importance to them and to the sermon on the mount? Do we Franciscans strive to make the beatitudes our own self-portrait?

2. One recent encouraging development in educational circles is the offering of courses on the peaceful resolution of conflict. Some 220 U.S. colleges and universities have peace-education programs, including 40 Catholic schools. What do you know about "peaceful resolution of conflict?" (The U.S. Bishops' pastoral "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," p. 69 ff, offers encouragement and interesting information on this topic. See also the *National Catholic Reporter*, April 12, 1991, for a report.)

3. In his 1982 visit to Great Britain, Pope John Paul II said: Today, the scale and the horror of modern warfare — whether nuclear or not — makes it totally unacceptable as a means of settling differences between nations. War should belong to the tragic past, to history; it should find no place on humanity's agenda for the future. (Homily at Babington Airport, Coventry)

How can Franciscans, members of a "delegation of peace" (1 Cel 24) make that message better known?

The Martyrdom of Daniel and His Companions: An Account of Early Franciscan Spirituality

ROBERT CARDEN, O.F.M.

The account of the Martyrdom of Daniel and his Companions from a contemporary *Passio* (The Second Reading from the Franciscan Office of Readings for Daniel, Priest and Companions, Martyrs, October 10) is an abbreviated version of the Martyrdom of Daniel and his Companions attributed to a thirteenth century account printed in *Analecta Franciscana* (Volume 3 [1892] 613-616).

This liturgical account of the martyrdom of Daniel and his Companions which occurred in Ceuta/Septa, a Moslem city, on October 19, 1227, a year after the death of St. Francis has been abbreviated and also purged of language (Satellites vero diaboli) that might be termed offensive in a post-Vatican II era of ecumenism and openness to the non-Christian.

Structure

The reading falls into three distinct parts. The first and third segments are narrative, the second segment is the account of the Martyrs' letters from prison. An anonymous contemporary presents the Martyrs' praises of God and of His activity within a narrative which first reflects on the attitudes of the Martyrs and then, after the Martyrs' praises, returns to the narrative of their martyrdom.

Summary

Daniel and his companions filled with a desire to convert the Saracens, prepare themselves sacramentally (Confession and Eucharist) for the task.

Fr. Robert Carden is a member of the Province of the Holy Spirit in Australia. His main ministry has been in the area of catechetics on the diocesan level. He recently completed studies at the Franciscan Institute.

In a spirit of penance (having sprinkled their heads with ashes) and strengthened by, and on fire with, the Holy Spirit, they approach the Saracens. They are derided as mad and placed in chains.

From their prison the Martyrs write of their praise and trust in God. This same God Who had called Abraham had, through Christ, given them the task of proclaiming the Gospel. With their feet, directed by Christ, they had performed their task faithfully, preaching the name of Christ and giving witness that salvation was only through him. Finally our narrator once more takes up the story of the martyrdom. Questioned about their attitude to the law and Mohammed the Martyrs give witness to the role of "our Lord Jesus Christ and the need for conversion." Finally we read of their joyful attitude as they faced beheading.

Letter Within a Narrative

The narrative has two levels: the contemporary letter from prison which would have been written some short time prior to the martyrdom and the narration of the total event in which is included their letter [In this two-level narrative event, there is a distinct difference between the spirituality that is evidenced at each level.]

The Spirituality of the Letter

The letter of the Martyrs is almost a concatenation of either Scriptural quotations or Scriptural allusions. Although being neither an overt statement about Franciscan spirituality in general, nor a claim to be an express statement of the spirituality of the Martyrs, these fairly terse Scriptural citations or allusions, present aspects of the Martyrs spirituality in the face of the expectation of death. It was a spirituality of praise of the Father, of openness to the saving activity of Jesus and to his guidance and direction. It was a spirituality that recognized the initiative of God as he asked a sacrifice of Abraham and he himself provided the victim; of a Christ who suffered for us and asked that we follow in his way for "his glory and the salvation of believers." Because they are "the aroma of Christ" they became instruments of Christ's reaching out to others for salvation or judgement, either to life or death, as they "offered living proof of Christ's concern for salvation."

The Franciscan Martyrs themselves express a spirituality redolent of Francis: praise of the Father, the initiative of God, provident care (Abraham), awareness of Jesus Christ who suffered for us, divine guidance ("He directed our paths"), a strong Christ-centered mission, ("an aroma of Christ", "the name of Christ was preached"), walking in faith the path

In this two-level narrative event, there is a distinct difference between the spirituality that is evidenced at each level.

directed by God, death, leading to honor or condemnation. However, from this particular letter it would be easy to overlook the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Martyrs. The presence of the Holy Spirit inherent in all these activities is, at the best, implicit.

The Spirituality of the Narrative

The contemporary narrative, in which this letter is presented, offered an important additional dimension of spirituality. The narrative particularly stressed the actual activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Martyrs. The Martyrs were "fervent in spirit". The task of proclaiming the name of the Lord and his salvation was the fruit of their being "strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit". God's word burnt "like a fire" in their hearts and they themselves were like men "intoxicated by the Holy Spirit". The activity of the Holy Spirit seemed "Pentecostal" ("These men are not drunk. Acts 2.15), Pauline ("For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God". Rom 8.14) and reflecting the admonition of Christ ("For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" Luke 12.12).

Without trying to explain the activity of the Holy Spirit and his relationship with the Martyrs in a systematic manner, the author of the contemporary *Passio* expressed a great awareness of the activity of the Holy Spirit. Their proclamation of the name of the Lord was linked to their strengthening by the Holy Spirit and their very intoxication by that same Spirit. Whether the author presumed areas of spirituality embraced in the letter section is not known but what is obvious is that he stressed the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Martyrs' lives, something that the Martyrs themselves did not do in their letter.

Narrator's Insight

The author of the contemporary *Passio* was possibly a Franciscan (two friars, one a Minor and the other a Preacher, were among the Christians in Ceuta/Septa to whom the letter from the friars was addressed) and we

can recognize quite distinct acknowledgement of the manner in which God works among men, urging men to proclaim the Gospel.

To the spirituality of the Martyrs' letter that overtly acknowledged both Jesus and God (Father), the narrator added details that are reflected practices dear to St. Francis, their sacramental preparation, of Confession (Reg NB XX) and Eucharist (Adm I.11, Test 10), conversion of life (Reg NB XVII. 14) but especially, he firmly placed the mission and martyrdom within a Trinitarian context through his explicit references to the strength, the power, the intoxication of the Holy Spirit.

The actual date and authorship of the *Passio* is unknown and it is attributed to a contemporary source. Whatever its actual date of composition, through the medium of the narrator, if not through the words of the Martyrs themselves, it placed special emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in certain critical apostolic activities of the Martyrs.

Conclusion

The *Passio* was written as a record of the Martyrs' death not as a statement of spirituality. However, in a non-systematic manner, the author of the *Passio* presented dimensions of a spirituality that showed a zeal inflamed by the Holy Spirit, bearing fruit in a life of praise of the Father through an intimate relationship with the Son by a life of ultimate witness through martyrdom. There is a real sense that the journey both of mission and martyrdom is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The author of the account, whether he was a Friar Minor or another, extolled the activity of the Holy Spirit leading "intoxicated" men to the imitation of Christ and to give glory to God through the forfeiting of their lives. He was certainly in sympathy with Francis who asked to be "inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit" and to be "able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son (EpOrd 51).

It could be said that the narrator has failed to touch upon the activity of the Holy Spirit in areas of the Martyrs' lives other than their desire to go to the Saracens, their preaching and martyrdom and that, in so doing presented a distorted view of the activity of the Holy Spirit and their relationship with him.

We do not know to what extent the narrator would have recognized the activity of the Holy Spirit in every detail of the lives of these faithful witnesses because he was writing solely of their martyrdom. However, the fact that Daniel, a "wise and prudent religious and his six companions were devoted to God and "fervent in spirit" would lead one to believe that the narrator recognized a pervading influence of God in the lives of the Martyrs and that it could have been said of them that they had "the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working" (RegB X.8). However,

whether the narrator would have attributed this to the activity of the Holy Spirit we cannot say, from the account in the *Passio*. Nevertheless, while in this *Passio* we have the grounds for the development of a spirituality in which the activity of the Holy Spirit was truly pervasive, the narrator did not state that this was so. He did not link the activity of the Holy Spirit with the total life of the Martyrs as they followed the footprints of Christ, perhaps in their Baptism, their life before coming to the friars, their call etc. The potential for this total relationship with the Holy Spirit is there but it was not explicated.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that the narrator did not have an awareness of the Holy Spirit's all-pervading presence in the lives of these faithful witnesses. He may have considered that the Holy Spirit was especially present only in the faithful soul, the dedicated soul, the soul whom the Spirit of Lord was espousing to Christ in a very special manner. He may have failed to recognize that the Spirit of the Lord was constantly espoused to every faithful soul, calling and leading that soul and forming Christ within. What we are certain of is that in the *Passio* he did at least proclaim the activity of the Spirit in their mission and death.

Even if we cannot generalize to the whole of the life of the Martyrs, the *Passio* presents a brief, non-systematic picture of the activity of that Spirit. If it is truly contemporary (about 1227) and by a Franciscan friar, it shows how very early in the life of the Order, one friar was in tune with Francis' awareness of the action of the Holy Spirit in Francis' own life and how that same Spirit could and should be active in the lives of his brothers. Certainly he recognized this presence in crucial moments and probably, since the Martyrs were "fervent in spirit", he may have recognized this presence generally in their lives. □

* * *

Oh, how happy and blessed are these
men and women when they do these things
and persevere in doing them, since the
Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them
and He will make His home and dwelling
among them. They are children of the
heavenly Father whose works they do,
and they are spouses, brothers, and
mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Francis' FIRST VERSION OF THE
LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL 5:7.

An Open Letter to the Winged Creatures of the World

Today's Franciscan preaching to the birds

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

Preliminary observation:

Legend says that Francis of Assisi preached to the birds. The following paraphrase adopts the form of an open letter. The author is fully aware of the liberties he is taking with the original and the danger incurred in so desiring to interpret this famous text.

Anyhow, this letter is addressed not so much to the birds as to the people who wish to be committed to the future of our Churches.

On this day, October 4 of
the year of the Lord 1990,
the feast of Saint Francis

To my beautiful feathered brothers and sisters.

In the year 1979, the Lord Pope John Paul II declared our little Brother of Assisi patron of ecology, because he discerned in every creature an image of God and was the first who desired to preach not only to men and women but also to the birds and the fishes. On the occasion of the

Fr. Hermann Schalück was elected Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor at its General Chapter in San Diego in June of this year. The CORD is privileged to publish his Fioretti-like stories that are profoundly insightful.

XXIII Day of Prayer for World Peace (1990), our Holy Father has again called Francis by this title.

I now desire to send you an open letter, so as not to lose contact with you. And first, I beseech all the diligent carrier pigeons among you, who experience an increase in their work, though not in their wages, to please hold me excused.

Here, then, are some reflections and questions which you may study, during your meetings and upcoming synods.

Bird's Eye View

You have not failed to observe that in spite of the evolution of humanity towards a "global village", the horizons of our brothers and sisters within our Churches have, on not a few occasions, become restricted. The human species and its material needs occupy the stage especially in our ancient Europe, which desires to change its plumage. Many are they who think only of themselves, forgetting the wider perspectives of solidarity. If we do not succeed in seeing beyond our noses or further than the rim of our nest, Europe will very likely be transformed into a fortress rather than into a house of many rooms. It will be the poor here and elsewhere who will suffer, as well as our living space. Many brothers and sisters engaged in politics and commerce and also some brothers and sisters in our Christian Churches have thus far exploited and exhausted our Mother Earth and its vital living space. They seem to forget that in God's plans the flowers and herbs, the air and water, fish and birds and the ozone layer are our brothers and sisters. We should therefore treat all creation with attention and respect, love and compassion.

In our Church many from among us have had very positive experiences in contact with other cultures and other theologies, but they have sometimes been branded "exotic birds" or "rare species". They could, however, have so much to contribute to the thought and faith of Europe. I am convinced that there will be more and more people who will understand the need for thinking globally so that they may take action locally. You are an inspiration for them.

For all those who stop off in Rome while on a new journey to Africa and to the Middle East I hope their stay will be a happy one, full of enriching experiences, and that they have a safe journey home.

Never cease to learn

Dear brothers and sisters, feathered friends of the world, what most of all attracts my attention is your capacity to grasp the "new thinking". It is now several years since some migratory birds have observed signs

of this new thinking among politicians close to Moscow. (It is sad to think that the news bulletins being broadcast from the antennae of the Vatican gardens should still be contradictory). I am pleasantly surprised to see that you form one family in which the humble sparrows and the simple swallows, the larks and the humming birds, the owls and the kakapos all enjoy, for the sake of the common good, the same dignity as the peacocks, the robins and the cardinal birds with their fire-red plumage.

Unfortunately, humans continue to insult one another with names such as "fat bird", "old magpie", "hare brain", "goose" and other such nicknames. It pains me when your names are discredited in this manner and I wish to ask your pardon for this attitude of my fellows, as well as for that "right of first picking" which they have so egoistically invented, thus projecting their thirst for power and their hatred upon you.

It would be so beneficial to learn from you. On our way towards the third millenium we are in dire need of becoming conscious of the dignity of all people and religious, of the need for sharing what is the patrimony of all, of the need for fraternal solidarity among all of God's preferential option for the wounded birds of all times and of all places of the necessity to build a just and peaceful world for all.

It is high time that we give you thanks for your good example, also for the way in which you deal with your refuse — so ecological, intelligent and non-toxic — and ensure its recycling. Was not our Lord Jesus the first to speak clearly in praise of your creativity, of your happy gift of combining very creatively short term improvisation with long range visioning and planning? In short did he not speak in praise of your excellent sense of priorities (Mt 6, 25)?

A New Solidarity — Even Among Humans?

Faced with the problems which more and more trouble humanity and also our Church, we ought to open our eyes more widely, broaden our horizons and listen to each other. To adopt the policy of the ostrich: stick one's head in the sand so as not to see the problems — is that another projection by my fellow-men on you? — does not solve anything. Some years ago our brothers, the German bishops, in a letter dealing with the ecological crisis, raised the alarm:

"The human race is filling its vital space and that of many generations to come with the refuse it produces and consumes. It is causing the destruction of elements on which our life and growth depend." They went on to affirm that humans can only protect themselves from the destiny they themselves are preparing by recovering their solidarity with all creation. Otherwise they will become slaves of a creation which they so proudly aspired to subject to their own will. What beautiful words for

the evangelization of our modern world and of our hearts! But, who is going to pay them attention if not you, our dear winged creatures? Thank you for your inspiring example.

Another specific element on which the life of our world depends is likewise in danger: the capacity to listen to the melody of others, the capacity to dialogue, the faith not in one's own power but also in the things God wants to tell us through other people and religious. He gives us so many signs of the liberating power of his Gospel, and he invites us all to live it in ever new ways.

You birds of the sky, fly peaceably on the breath of Brother Wind. You remind us of the Spirit which blows where He wills and which can renew us and carry us afar. Our Lord Pope Paul VI, in his letter "Evangelii Nuntiandi", has called to mind that whoever announces the Gospel must first of all be evangelized and inwardly converted himself. And his successor, Pope John Paul II, has highlighted that need during his numerous journeys on the wings of Brother Wind, on devout pilgrimage to so many cultures, religions and especially to the poor.

A Final Greeting

In conclusion, my dear brothers and sisters, the birds, I should like to invite you to renew your confidence in humanity, and to avail yourselves of the possibilities offered by so many churches and other ecclesiastical buildings so as to build your nests and face the winter. Numerous facades, restored at great cost, are now ready to offer you a "dwelling at low rent", not to mention the many empty rooms available in some of our institutions which could give you lodging. We have so much need of your intuitions in our institutions! Let us console ourselves mutually and meditate together upon a saying of Rabindranath Tagore:

"God becomes tired of mighty kingdoms,
but never of a little bird."

Your lesser Brother,

Hermann Schalück, O.F.M.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Spark in the Soul: Four Mystics on Justice. By Terry Testard. New York: Paulist Press, 1987. 124 pages. N.P.

Reviewed by Paul Lachance, O.F.M. St. Francis Retreat House, Oak Brook, IL.

One of the current trends of contemporary spirituality is to establish a rapport between mysticism and the struggle for justice. The intuition is there, its articulation still at a fledgling stage. Put simply, how do the callings of the search for God in solitude and silence and that of trying to find him in service and people mutually inform one another. Terry Testard's *Spark of the Soul* looks at the question from the point of view of how the mystical tradition can nourish the spirituality of those involved in prophetic social concern. To develop his theme he selects the lives and works of four mystics: Francis of Assisi, Master Eckhart, Evelyn Underhill and Thomas Merton.

From Francis of Assisi we can discover the vulnerable God, how signs of his self-emptying love in Christ are especially present among the powerless and the poor. From the Poverello, we can also learn how to grow in compassion and to live a spirituality of non-violence. Eckhart teaches us how to make way for God's birth in the soul by detaching ourselves from the compulsive grip of consumerism and the exploitation of the environment. From apprenticeship with Underhill we can learn how through a complete prayer—adora-

tion, communion and co-operation—we can come to the awareness that God's presence permeates the world. The light and power that is derived therefrom challenges and enables us to become change agents in society. Finally, Thomas Merton draws attention to the importance of solitude and silence for the discovery of our true identity of God. From the contemplative consciousness of who we really are in God's loving gaze we can, in turn, see through and contest the illusions of the times: individualism, utilitarianism, militarism, and unbridled technological growth. The common thread that runs through the insights that are derived from all four mystics is the courage with which they departed from conventional wisdom and challenged social assumptions—a witness which arose from their deep God-centeredness and radical openness to the world.

Testard's book dispenses some good advice. It can serve to initiate those involved in the struggle for peace and justice in the ways in which they can draw from and be "sparked" by the riches of the mystical tradition. If, however the link is to be forged between the power of the inner quest for loving union with God, one "without a why," and the outer struggle for full justice and peace in the world, further study is necessary in the processes in which this can take place and above all, the living witness of those who try to combine both dimensions. No less is needed if the planet is to be saved from extinction. □

In Jesus We Trust. By George A Maloney, S. J. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana copyright 1990. 149 pages. Paperback. \$5.95.

Reviewed by Sr. Frances Ann Thom, OSF, M.A. (Franciscan Institute), Pastoral Minister of St. Mary's Parish in Baldwinsville, NY.

In this world of such great anxiety, restlessness and temporal concern, George Maloney attempts to show the world and its inhabitants a better way to live each day. Writing in his usual personal and reflective style, the author focuses on the virtue of trust as the only means whereby persons can grasp the fullness of what life is all about. He does not rely upon his own insights as he explores the depths to which trust can preserve humankind from destruction but calls upon church teachings, revelation and the writings of many scholarly Christian contemplatives to enlighten and support him in his discovery.

The author believes that while all persons suffer from fears, sins, heartbreak, anxiety and loss, all of those sufferings can be dealt with on the higher level of trust—a trust that is a complete surrender. This surrender must be equivalent to the surrender Jesus himself undertook as he lived a human life in this world to show us the way to the Father. It is only in and through Jesus that each one can transform personal sufferings into trust.

Anyone who reads this book, will find in it inspiration and encouragement as each chapter unfolds the struggles of other human being and of Jesus, himself, to become totally surrendered in a union of wills. As George Maloney states, "To the degree that we Christians surrender ourselves freely to the leadership of Jesus Christ through the

mystical oneness we enjoy with him and in him, to that degree we can say we are Christians, living members of his body." (pp. 148-9) □

A Religious History of America, by Edwin Scott Gaustad. New Revised Edition. NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990. xvi + 391 pp.

Reviewed by James S. Dalton. Ph.D. (University of Chicago), Professor of Religious Studies, Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

Edwin Scott Gaustad, an eminent historian of Christianity in the United States, now offers us a revised edition of his standard work first published in 1966. As one might expect it is a clearly written and relatively up to date history intended as a textbook for introductory courses in the religious history of the United States. Its foci are denominations, regions and issues that have dominated American religious history for the last thirty years or so. Measured by traditional standards it is as fine a piece of work as one might expect of a scholar of the first rank. But for 1990 it falls far short of what needs to be done in re-shaping what has come to be a contested and changing field.

Although Native Americans receive a fuller treatment here than in most standard histories, there is little attention paid to the reality of their cultural contact with Europeans or, put in another way, their influencing of as well as their being influenced by the newcomers to their lands. Their cultural variety in the American landscape is ignored except for some attention to the East Coast. Their continuing role in the building up of American culture receives scant attention. The problem

here is not that they are not noticed, it is that they are not taken seriously as cultural contributors to an emerging world militarily and economically dominated by Europeans. During most of the story of the United States they are absent from the scene.

African-Americans are also given a competent standard treatment at a time when this very standard is open to question and debate. Little attention is paid to their African and African-Caribbean cultural roots and the role these roots played in shaping both themselves and the Europeans with whom they came into contact. There seems to be no "Africa" in these African-Americans. In Gaustad's story they play a reactive role. They are the objects and not the subjects of the ongoing story. Their story is that told by Europeans and this story, as increasing scholarship is showing, fails to recognize their important and dynamic contributions.

Hispanic peoples suffer a fate similar to Native Americans and African Americans. No time is spent on their roots in Islamic as well as Christian Spain. Gaustad seems unaware of their cultural

fusions with Native American and African American cultures and religions. Further, he does not discuss their continuing and important shapings of Northern Europeans especially in the American West and Southwest.

The major problem that I find with this approach to religious history in the United States is that it is both European and Eastern American centered. American culture is not merely the extension of European culture in a new and passive land. Religious and cultural patterns have always been the result of a dynamic integration of cultural strands; the Northern and Southern European, the Native American, the African and, more recently, the Asian. Europeans were influenced by and influenced other cultures, traditions and religions. It is time that a religious histories of the United States recognized these foundational realities. Charles Long, an Historian of Religions, calls America an "Aboriginal-Euro-African" country. What this means is the task of future writers of the religious story of the United States. Gaustad's effort, as well documented and learned as it is, falls regrettably short of this goal. □



Scene of the ANNUNCIATION, Portiuncula Chapel, Assisi

The Stigmata of St. Francis

I struggled to find
That one word
Which made the blind
See, the lame walk,
The dumb talk.

In the darkness
Of that terrible
moment my call
Went unheard,
That fall seemed forever:
I called and called
Ever clearer, ever louder

And in the silent
Being alone
I was a little man bent
And weary to the bone

Who realized the wounds
on the feet, hands and side
Were the silent sounds
That had already died.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

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FRANCISCAN GATHERING XII

February 2 - 7, 1992

A celebration of the Franciscan tradition and future by sisters and brothers, religious and secular, who share a common history and common dream. The focus is Minoritas, which leads one toward greater oneness with God and all creation through Servanthood and Contemplation.

Theme:

Minoritas: Toward Oneness Through Servanthood and Contemplation

Speakers:

Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap.
Joanne Schatzlein, OSF


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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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The CORD

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
CL: Legend of Saint Clare
CP: Process of Saint Clare
Flor: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
LP: Legend of Perugia
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
SC: Sacrum commercium
SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

REFLECTION:

For Everything There Is A Season

SALLY SUMMA

Trees surround the chapel. Their thin, flexible trunks gently sway with the exuberance of youth, free in the blowing breath of God on the mountain. The maples praise their creator with uplifted limbs against an often ominous sky. They appear feeble against the harsh words of nature and yet even these young arbors have a deep rooting and the closeness of similar hardwoods to protect them.

A long, devastating ice storm left its mark on several counties in Western New York State on March 3, 1991. Walking the trails of Mt. Irenaeus, a Franciscan retreat, near West Clarksville in Allegany County, New York, days later, the loss was evident and disheartening. Monstrous trees uprooted and pulled down by the weight of the ice upon their limbs now littered the grounds. Others around them still stood mourning the loss but sharing similar damage. Dead limbs severed from the whole lay suspended and caught among their brothers. A few tips of branches became dangling twigs unable to sustain the impact of the water when the branches had frozen.

Old and young, strong and weak, made no difference in the random selection of nature's wrath. The rain streamed evenly and the temperatures fell the same degrees across the region. Why then did some fall and the neighbors live on? Why were others left to suffer with their bark torn back, their wood exposed and beads of sap bleeding along their grains?

Sally Summa is a Mass Communications Major in her third year at St. Bonaventure University. She is a Music Minister for Mt. Irenaeus, is involved in Students for the Mountain on the Bonaventure campus and is a novice in the Secular Franciscan program at St. Bonaventure.

Around the quiet wooden chapel, the young maples sway unscathed by the destruction around them, new buds now forming on their uplifted limbs. Life goes on and peace returns to the mountain despite our questions.

I returned to Mt. Irenaeus with four of my friends a few weeks later. The weather had become warmer, but a cool breeze forced a few of us to put on our gloves. We all agreed on one thing, however:

"We have to go for a walk to where those trees have fallen." "We have to go play on the trees."

Standing over the uprooted pile of pines we did not weep at their sorry fate but instead stood in awe at the richness of the light brown soil the roots had unearthed and we marveled at the process of rejuvenation already begun. Limbs lining the ground had started to decompose and, covered with moss, were soft to the touch and were already becoming one with the needles and the thawing earth.

The giant fallen pines themselves proposed the greatest excitement. The trees lay a foot or more off their ground and the trunks of each were easily in leaping distance for an agile, courageous youth. Since the five of us considered ourselves neither agile nor courageous, nature had build out of its destruction, a superb playground of swings and branch handles to aid us across the natural bridges. We accepted the challenge. Though only a foot off the ground, we had to know our limitations, overcome our fears, and maintain our balance.

Several times we fell — only to realize we were back on firm ground only a step below. On the trunks not high off the ground, however, having been braced by another neighboring pine on its descent downward at the time of the fall, reason for caution increased.

Halfway up the huge limb, surefooted and confident, I suddenly felt myself begin to lose my balance. Grabbing hold of one flexible branch, I quickly realized that my fall was inevitable. Butt-first into the tangles of pine branches I would go. I closed my eyes...

Seconds later, opening my eyes, I felt the comforting support of many hands around me, cradling me inches above the ground. I had been caught by the intertwined branches and now sat nestling in their protection. They waited to give me further support when I would rise again.

At that instance, I laughed to myself at the fears I had had a moment ago. Safe and protected by nature's loving limbs, I contemplated the warmth and safety of God's arms that have seen me falling from much higher branches but are always there to catch me and hold me as long as I need to be held before I ascend again.

How sad that I had to get up at all. I felt so at home and comfortable in the tangled pines. I've wanted to stay in God's arms as well many times but always chose to leave. More challenges, sadness and suffering may

have been in my future but the reminder that the safety net would always be there reassured my decision to move on. Why did I go? Why haven't I returned now?

We all can learn a lesson from the nature God has created. All the trees on the mountain, like Christians, stand vulnerable to the slightest breeze or the strongest storm. We must emulate them and become strongly rooted in our faith with arms forever raised in praise of God. They change with the seasons and bear hardship as best they can. If, by some blow of nature, they are broken, this change too has its purpose. Each tree becomes part of a new cycle of rejuvenation in which their decay becomes the fertile soil of new forests of the future.

Pain and suffering are a part of everyone's life. We must accept our suffering as change with a purpose instead of assigning blame or feeling sorry for ourselves. Suffering can be used as a vehicle to become closer to God. He places fallen trees on our journey to challenge us to overcome our fears and learn about ourselves. Every change we allow Him to make in us is a step in His perfecting of us and our eyes and hearts become more open to the ways and graces of God.

We should also not forget the numerous neighboring trees God has placed in our lives willing to support us if we fall. We don't have to wait until we are falling or failing to get help from those or from God. They all wait for us to turn and reach to them and answer "Yes, you may help me." And even if you don't remain in God's comforting arms for very long, they are still there — always open.

Explanatory note:

Mt. Irenaeus is a Franciscan mountain retreat near West Clarksville, NY, in Allegany County, about 35 minutes from St. Bonaventure University. The mountain-top farm is comprised of more than 228 acres including more than three miles of trails, woods and clearings.

Atop the "enchanted" Allegany Mountains, Mt. Irenaeus provides a family place for common prayer and family meals. It is "where you can forget everyday concerns and be yourself with people who do the same," says Dan Hurley, OFM, one of four Franciscan friars who reside on the Mountain.

A one story main house serves as a gathering place and offers all the basic comforts. It overlooks a small pond.

Three "hermitage" cabins are set aside for solitude and allow for additional overnight accommodations.

On the hill, an all-wooden chapel with large clear windows opens to the world around it.

Anyone who is looking for a place to slow down and get started again is welcome at Mt. Irenaeus. For more information contact Fr. Daniel Riley, OFM at (716) 973-2470.

A Reclaimed Heritage: Franciscanism in the Anglican Communion

GORDON J. DE LA VARS

One of the most encouraging results of the nineteenth-century Catholic revival in the Church of England, also known as the Oxford Movement, was the reappearance in Anglicanism of religious communities of professed men and women. This was a quite natural outgrowth of the Oxford Movement, concerned as it was with Anglican identity and how this related to "the apostolic character of the Church and its ministry, and in particular with the succession of the historic episcopate" (Rowel 158). The desire to rediscover and reclaim an ancient Catholicity led ultimately to the appreciation of the benefits of monasticism and to the belief that a spiritual model involving lifetime vows and adherence to a rule of conduct (disciplines that had all but disappeared in the reformed churches after the sixteenth century) was not only a necessary link with the early Church but potentially a source of enrichment and renewal in a highly commercialized and increasingly secularized society (Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition* 193-95).

Although meeting at first with popular resistance stemming from centuries of anti-Romanist prejudice, societies and congregations of both men and women patterned on the monastic-Benedictine model began to appear in the 1860's—a model, incidentally, with deep roots in the English church since its founding in the seventh century by Augustine of Canterbury, himself a monk, sent by the Benedictine pope, Gregory the Great (Hale 82-84). Given this new interest in community religious life, it is not surprising that the Franciscan model of spirituality and the Franciscan way of life also began to gain adherents. After all, it was remembered, Franciscans could likewise claim a distinguished English heritage, with

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the first friars arriving in England during Francis' lifetime, disembarking at Dover Harbor in September, 1224. These were as John Moorman affectionately describes them, "a little group of nine men, all scantily clad in old, patched garments and with nothing on their feet," all of them "members of the religious order which had emerged in Italy some fifteen years ago as the result of the genius, inspiration and courage of a man known as Francis of Assisi" (*The Franciscans in England* 1).

First settling in Canterbury, these Franciscans—called "Greyfriars" because of the color of habit they subsequently adopted—quickly established communities throughout the kingdom, so that by 1255 there were over twelve hundred friars in England, divided among forty-nine religious houses. In time communities of the Second and Third Orders, of Poor Clares and professed laypeople, were added to this number, introducing "a new and influential element into the religious life of the country" (Moorman, *Franciscans* 26). This presence lasted up to the dissolution of the religious houses by Henry VIII in the 1530s.

Memory of this heritage, coupled with the growing attraction of Catholic spirituality, increased the appeal of St. Francis, and by 1900 a deluge of books, about the saint (especially the English translation of Sabatier's *Vie de Saint Francois*) had already drawn many Anglicans to follow the example and rule of the "little poor man." Perhaps no other person of the time did more to articulate this appeal of Franciscanism, and to promote the active, professed Anglican Franciscan movement, than James Granville Adderly, who, as vicar of Plaistow in East London, had worked in one of the nation's poorest urban districts. Desiring to live a life of austerity and poverty while providing spiritual and material help to his neighbors, Fr. Adderly, together with two friends (a priest and a layman), established in 1894 a brotherhood they called "The Society of the Divine Compassion." Their description of themselves and their goals has about it an unmistakable Franciscan ring: they were

a community of priests, deacons and communicant laymen, banded together in a common life of poverty, chastity and obedience for the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and for the benefit of His Holy Catholic Church: to worship Him and to work for Him in all mankind, especially the poor and suffering, in imitation of the Divine Master, seeking the help of one another in thus obeying Him. (Moorman, *Franciscans* 113)

In fact, the Society hoped to reestablish in the Church of England something similar to the Order of Friar Minor, and as though to underscore outwardly this intention, its members wore the Franciscan habit and knotted cord.

The brotherhood that James Adderly began inspired other Anglicans to band together in communities that sought to adapt the Franciscan way

of life to parochial ministry to the poor, the homeless, the oppressed. A number of these Anglican Franciscan communities exist to the present day (the most prominent being the Society of St. Francis, established in 1921) maintaining similar goals and comprising celibate men and women as well as lay married persons, in all representing "a flourishing Franciscan movement in the Church of England and the Anglican Communion throughout the world" (Moorman, *Franciscans* 120). Each of these congregations and societies follows a distinctly Franciscan rule and thus seeks to imitate its patron saint as he sought to imitate Christ, especially the call to serve the needs of his "little ones." So in his many sermons and lectures on Francis, Fr. Adderly addresses the related theme of service to the poor and transformation of society, the liberating message of Francis through whom the Church may be renewed and the world restored. Quoting a fellow "convert" to Franciscanism, he asserts "no revolution, no war, no declaration of rights advance the cause of human freedom so much as did the life and example of Francis of Assisi" (Adderly and Marson 48).

Yet these English admirers of St. Francis did not view him merely as an enlightened social reformer, but rather as one in whom a personal transformation of a profound spiritual character had taken place, and it is on this radical turning of the mind and heart and will to God that Fr. Adderly focused his attention most frequently and eloquently. Above all, he writes, Francis was

a child of grace. It is the Christ in him that he discovers and allows to live. He lets Christ live in him, and abandoning himself unreservedly to the Spirit, just acts, and talks and sings, and loves, and weeps. Thus it is that the Sacred Humanity seems to live again in him and the Sacred Heart to beat. (52)

It was only as the result of this emptying love, and as a consequence of this indwelling, Fr. Adderly suggests, that Francis was able to reach out to suffering humanity. "To [Francis] Christ meant love, and love meant selfgiving, to have attained to Christ meant to have found out that, life to be true life, consists in love of others" (55-56). And so it was through Francis, and through those who followed his way of life, that humanity realized its full worth and found lasting hope. "Love was still an active force that could heal, and tend, and succour." Francis "aimed at creating in others a sense of their own dignity as children of God, and their own potentiality as members of the Body of Christ" (56).

The embracing spirit that such remarks reflected at the turn of the century has since contributed to the cause of ecumenical outreach and understanding between the Anglican and Roman Communions, advancing the possibility of full unity between these "sister churches" (Hale 4). A

great celebration at Canterbury in 1924 marked the 700 anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscans in England. Services were held in Anglican Canterbury Cathedral, followed by a grand procession through the city's streets to the ancient Roman Catholic friary, which had been recently restored to its original condition. Speakers at the Cathedral included Paul Sabatier, the writer who had first impressed on James Adderly the significance of Francis of Assisi. Fifty years later, in 1974, in the wake of Vatican II and the commencement of the ongoing Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, an even grander celebration took place in Canterbury, including special prayers of thanksgiving for the return of the Order of Friars Minor to "the city of their first foundation" (Doyle 75). It is now common throughout the world to see Anglican and Roman Catholic Franciscan communities working closely together with friaries of both churches often serving as centers of ecumenical activity, of shared ministry, research and worship. (Hale 158).

As John Moorman notes, the history of Franciscanism in England has been one marked both by progress and stagnation, by renewal and repression; yet throughout the centuries "St. Francis has touched the hearts and minds of men and women and urged them to make great sacrifices in order to obey the divine purpose interpreted by St. Francis himself". (*Franciscans* 120). So with this knowledge, and reminded of this heritage, Fr. James Adderly, at the end of one of his sermons, recites a prayer whose hopeful call echoes a transforming moment in history even as it addresses the circumstances of our own time:

Speak to us, Lord, speak to us as Thou didst to Thy servant on the Umbrian hills; send us another message; breathe into us again his spirit, which is the Spirit of the Lord Himself. Raise us from the sloth of sin unto the life of righteousness. Make us poor in spirit, that we may be partakers of Thy heavenly treasure. (Adderly and Marson 62)

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The Form of St. Francis' Prayer: Models for Creative Diversity Today

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND, O.F.M.

It is perhaps an overstatement to say that as with all great holy men and women Francis was a person of deep prayer and prayerfulness. However, it does not mean that Francis was 'skilled' in the art of prayer immediately after his conversion experience. Instead, he had to be instructed in prayer: he had to learn the language of prayer; learn the skills of prayer; learn varying forms of prayer; and above all learn the hurt, the pain, the suffering and the love that prayer could also bring.

The encouraging aspect of Francis' prayer for me is that there is nothing in it which can be particularized so that one can point to that and say: "THIS is the way St. Francis prayed so let's all do it this way." But while this may be the case, the journey of Francis' prayer can be charted with some confidence, and not just the journey, but the forms of prayer he used can be identified and used to encourage us today.

Francis' life of prayer was intense and invigorating; prayer challenged the way he saw himself, the world in which he lived and the God to whom he prayed. It is not that God used Francis' prayer as intensive therapy so that Francis could see the reality of himself; no, it was rather that he showed Francis in prayer where he was coming from, where he was at, and to where he would be taken.

There is a sense in which, therefore, it is right and fitting that there is no specific mode, method or form to Francis' prayer — because

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it remains vibrant, free, spontaneous, and universalized. This takes nothing away from the many pains he suffered as he sought through prayer to understand and answer what he perceived and discerned to be God's will for him. It merely sets it within the context of his unusual life.

This reflection on Francis' prayer forms is not therefore intended to offer any interpretational look at Francis' prayer life. It is rather to highlight some of the many ways in which Francis prayed and what these prayer forms may be saying to us today as we try to follow God in the way of the Little Poor Man.

Francis prayed throughout his life — from the first beginnings of his conversion (1 Cel 17, L3S 3, LM 1,1) to the height of La Verna and at the very point of his death. Yet his prayer was not confined to praise of God and thanksgiving for everything God had done for and through him. He prayed during times of struggle and crisis (1 Cel 6, L3S 12). He prayed in times of solitude (2 Cel 9, LM 2, 5) and in fear (1 Cel 10, L3S 16, LM 2, 2). He also prayed when he was hurt, sad and angry.

His life of prayer was never static but always searching and trying to probe out the depths of what God's will for him was. God promised that he would answer Francis in prayer (1 Cel 7; L3S 13) and so Francis heard the voice at San Damiano (2 Cel 10-11; LM 2,1; L3S 13-14) and it is from this prayer experience that Francis begins his first tentative steps towards fulfilling what the Lord has in mind for him. He renounces his worldly good and claims God as his Father (L3S 20; 1 Cel 14-15; 2 Cel VII 12) and goes rebuilding churches (1 Cel 18; L3S 21) and finally becomes Herald of the Great King (1 Cel 23; L3S 26).

The initial stages of his conversion are opportunities for the Lord to teach and instruct Francis in the way he is to live and the work he is to do. So Francis' prayer never stands still; it grows and develops and matures. It moves from the prayer of inquiry: "Lord, what do you want me to do?"; to the prayer of loving union: "Welcome Sister Death". It is because of the very vibrancy of this prayer that one can begin to understand why no one particular form of mode of prayer would have been appropriate in Francis' life. Rather there was newness and freshness; there was daring and unusualness; there was creativity, challenge; anger and frustration. The forms of Francis' prayer show that he never allowed himself to become staid or stagnant in his approach to God but rather grew and matured into a rich inventive, intimate and dynamic relationship with God.

Song and Drama

Singing was always a part of Francis' life and it became a favorite form of prayer for him. As a youth he loved to sing (1 Cel 2). and even as a dying man he never lost it. Celano tells us that when he wished to pray

he sang in French as if French was the secret language of love he had for God (2 Cel. XC, 127). He wrote the Canticle as a prayer-song having composed a melody for it (LP 43) and used the singing as a prayer of reconciliation between the bishop and the mayor of Assisi. The Lady Poverty is serenaded with prayer-songs ((1 Cel. 3, 7; 2 Cel. XXV, 55) and Celano has a beautiful description of Francis pretending to play a medieval rebec (2 Cel. XC, 127: this is translated as a viol in the *Omnibus* but the viol was not invented then; the rebec is the forerunner to the viol and all instruments associated with it). And the *Speculum Perfectionis* (121-123) gives us the description of his death and the prayer-songs which went on at that moment. Augustine's dictum: "He who sings prays twice" is most true in Francis' case. Song as form of prayer is central and important to his life and the singing of hymns, composing of religious songs is important for us too.

This creativity of Francis in prayer, this daring and different perspective in his approach to prayer also shows itself in his use of drama and the dramatic. I have written elsewhere about Francis as a dramatist¹ but here it is the context of his prayer I wish to write and reflect upon now. The most obvious instance of his use of drama as a form of prayer is of course Greccio. But it is not simply that Francis gave us the first crib which is now such an important feature of Christmas celebrations — but rather the response that Francis makes to what is in essence a prompting of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure writes:

"...three years before he died Francis decided to celebrate the moment of the birth of the child Jesus at Greccio, with the greatest possible solemnity..."
LM. X,7

So it is a desire within Francis prompted by the Holy Spirit which brings about the response in the Greccio event. Bonaventure's description of the event is beautiful and too long to quote here, but there is one sentence which shows how intimately united with God Francis was on that night:

"...the saint stood before the Crib and his heart overflowed with tender compassion..."

Too often we stay with what is safe, with what is laid down in the rubrics. Yet this action of Francis was innovative and in many respects daring. One need not introduce here the Medieval Mystery plays since they are not pertinent, but they do serve to show that the dramatizing of biblical events was not the sole inspiration of Francis. However, what is new is the exactness of the Greccio event. It brings alive what was often mere words heard but not listened to. The images that come to mind as we read the Scriptures can be given a profound expression through daring, creative drama.

The sending of the friars to sing the Canticle to the warring factions of Assisi and the peace that ensued is another example of the drama-prayer. La Verna is drama-prayer; the preaching to the birds is drama-prayer; going to the Sultan's camp is drama-prayer. All the creative arts, as I have suggested about song, can be used to enrich, deepen, strengthen, and express our call to intimate union with God in and through prayer. Poetry, music, art, sculpture, dance, drama, mime and movement are all in themselves forms of prayer, which, given the spontaneous creativity of Francis, we could utilize more.

The Office and Repetition

Many of us will have engaged at some stage in repetitive prayer, quite apart from the Liturgy of the Hours. Whether it be the Rosary, the "Jesus" prayer, or my own prayer "Jesus, remember me when You come into your kingdom", the repetition serves as a mantra-like focus for the reality we are praying about or to. It allows us to concentrate on the reality rather than the actual form being used. Francis used repetitive prayer frequently, as Celano tells us:

"...he wished that the course of his own life and those of his brethren be shown to him by the Lord; he sought out a place of prayer as he had done often, and he persevered there with fear and trembling standing before the Lord of the whole earth and he thought of the years he had spent wretchedly, frequently repeating this word: Lord, be merciful to me a sinner..." 1 Cel 26)

In this context prayer becomes familiarity breeding intimacy and acceptance, confidence and hopefulness because, Celano goes on to write:

"little by little a certain unspeakable joy began to enter his innermost heart...there was poured into him a certainty that all his sins had been forgiven and a confidence of his restoration granted to him..."(ibid)

Repetitive prayer helps us 'tune' into the presence of God in our prayer so that the words themselves become a focus for the mystery we are contemplating yet move beyond themselves so that, as for Francis, focus becomes more important than content.

The same can be said in many respects for the Divine Office. Francis had a tremendous devotion to the Office and although as a cleric bound to say it daily, there is nothing empty about this particular form of repetitive prayer in his life — something can unconsciously creep into our saying of the Office. So much so did Francis venerate the Office that he chose this as a special (though not particular) form of prayer and developed his own paraliturgical office: the Passion, Advent psalms, Litany of Praise,

Blessed Virgin. Francis' commitment and devotion to the Office is well attested to by Celano:

"When he went through the world on foot, he always stopped to say his office." 2 Cel 96.

And in the Rule of 1221, 3, Francis commanded the friars:

"...and so all friars, both clerics and lay brothers must say the Divine Office with praise and prayers as they are obliged to."

And in the rule of 1223 Francis reiterates this only in much stronger terms (cf. RB 3), and in his *Letter to a General Chapter* in 1224 he asked that the Rule be observed exactly in relation to the Office, and in the *Testament* he branded as "...not Catholics..." those who wanted to bring changes to the Office.

But it was not legalism which prompted this in Francis, rather it was the spirit of prayer and devotion which he also asked the friars never to extinguish. The Office was central to Francis' prayer life though not the only form he used. For us today the Office is central since it is the prayer of the Church. Yet, uniformity does not mean everyone doing the same thing at the same time. The Introductions of the Office permit beautiful ways of praying the Liturgy of the Hours and we can remain faithful to Francis' exhortation while at the same time adapting the way we pray the Office to our needs and the needs of the Church and world.

Sharing prayer

Francis often prayed with the Brethren in a quite spontaneous way sharing their prayer and his with them. *The Little Flowers* 14 relates that

"...our holy father Francis plunged all his thoughts in the Blessed Christ and directed all his efforts and desire and way of praying and speaking and conversing toward His pleasure, both for himself and his other companions."

This introduces a very moving text in the Fioretti and it gives us both an indication of Francis' attentiveness in prayer and how he saw the importance of prayer not just for individuals but also for groups, communities. The text goes on to say:

"...The devout father was sitting with his very blessed sons and in a fervour of the Spirit he commanded one of them in the name of the Lord to open his mouth and say about God whatever the Holy Spirit suggested to him."

Francis continued to command each of them to pray in this way. This form of prayer is popular today in prayer groups, Charismatic renewal and in a sense the intercessory prayer during mass. But there is room for

a regular meeting of friars, outside the mass and Office to share prayers with and for each other. Shared prayer allows us to experience another person's relationship with God and opens further avenues to intimate union with each other in the presence of the Lord so that praying together becomes a source of great joy, comfort and support to each of the fraternity.

Written prayer

The writing of prayers was important for Francis and this was above and beyond what he read. There is something profound about writing prayers, especially writing one's own prayers; and anything inspired by the Spirit can be written down and shared with the brethren. The written prayers of Francis are as follows:

PRAISE OF THE LORD

PRAISES OF GOD

CHAPTER 23 RULE 1221

LETTER TO A GENERAL CHAPTER

CANTICLE

PASSION OFFICE

BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER

LETTERS TO THE FAITHFUL

SALUTATION TO THE VIRTUES

SALUTATION TO MARY

PARAPHRASE OF THE OUR FATHER

PSALM 141

OPENING PRAYERS OF RULES

In writing these prayers, Francis has bequeathed them to us that we too might pray the prayers he prayed, as well as those prayers which the Holy Spirit inspires within our hearts as we come before the Lord in community, in solitude or in silence. In writing our own prayers, we can share these promptings of the Spirit within us and offer them to the brethren in the context of shared prayer. It does not matter what form the written prayer takes — poetry, song, formalized prayers, salutations, one word or one sentence. It did not matter to Francis; what he did he did with joy and love.

Contemplation

Celano writes:

"...often, without moving his lips, he would meditate within himself and drawing external things within himself he would lift up his spirit to higher things. All his attention and affection he directed with his whole being to

the one thing which he was asking of the Lord not so much praying as becoming a prayer..' 2 Cel. 95

And again later Celano writes:

"Francis was too often caught up in such sweetness of contemplation that, caught up out of himself he could not reveal what he had experienced because it went beyond all human comprehension.." 1 Cel. 98

Here we see the beginnings of the process of contemplation and the end product of contemplation both of which are first and foremost gifts from God. Francis deliberated whether he should give himself over to a life of contemplation or action until finally leaving it for Clare and Sylvester to decide through their own prayer and discernment. The La Verna event is in a true sense contemplative excess. What I mean is that the contemplation of Francis is not a process of A then B followed by C resulting in D. It is the essence of spontaneity. But spontaneity does not mean instant — spontaneity is the end of a whole process of identification with Christ so that Francis' contemplation is rather "Christemplation" — the total losing of one's self in the mystery of the person of Christ.

As friars we are called to the same "Christemplation" — that attunement to God's creative, loving power in our lives and our world and not just the instancy of immediacy. The development of this contemplative centre is a long process, at times painful yet deeply rewarding and fruitful. In Francis it becomes the will at one with self and Other; the same is granted to us as we strive to attune our wills to God's loving power. The end of the contemplative process is complete Christemplation — and it is not always necessary to "go into the desert", or always be alone. The cell to the eremetical life of contemplation is not given to us all, yet each of us is called to cultivate and develop within ourselves a Christemplative hermitage where we can meet and dialogue with God in serene solitude.

The Tangible

Francis had a keen eye, not just for the innovative or expressively unusual but also for the way in which objects showed him the God he so resolutely followed. He was not afraid to use objects such as crucifixes for prayer. Bonaventure writes:

... "the friars obeyed his teaching to perfection and whenever they saw a crucifix, even from a distance, they knelt down and humbly prayed as he had taught them.." LM IV.3

The use of objects for focussing our prayer is of central and crucial importance to us, not simply because it has always been part of the Catholic tradition, but because it is also part of the Franciscan tradition.

It is before the crucifix of Damiano that Francis receives his commission and the importance of such objects of devotion and prayer cannot be lost to us. The use of icons, crosses, statues and religious art for focusing prayer could be enlivened and enriched by the very action of praying before them. Such objects, I feel, are necessary since they affectively put us in touch with the reality they seek to express and which we ourselves seek. Thus any such object which encourages devotion could be used frequently. It will be recalled that Francis had great respect for the cross, statues and images. His experience of God was firmly rooted in the tangibility of the world, and we are called to the same.

... prayer challenged the way he saw himself, the world in which he lived and the God to whom he prayed.

Prayer of Empathy and Compassion

Compassion means to suffer with, empathy to feel the feelings of another beyond surface identification. Francis was granted the gift of compassion and empathy. He had compassion for the lepers, for the suffering Christ and for the Brethren who had "fallen into sin", for animals and for creation. Bonaventure tells us:

"One day when he was riding on the plain below Assisi he met a leper. The encounter was completely without warning and Francis felt sick at heart at the sight of him... but he immediately dismounted and ran up to kiss the leper. The leper stretched forth his hands hoping to get something and Francis put some money in his hand and kissed it.." LM 1, 5(6)

The action in itself is striking for its audacity but more so for the lack of thought of self and the instinctive intuitive response. One simply did not kiss lepers; yet Francis, in the very act of doing so, makes a break with the Francis who was riding on the plain below Assisi and the Francis, who rode back after the kiss.

The kissing of the leper is not only a singular act of profound compassion and empathy, but it is crucial for the Order because with the kiss the Order was born. But the action of kissing the leper is not action per se: it is *prayer*, for through the leper Francis responds to a prompting of the Holy Spirit and touches the compassionate Christ. Bonaventure goes on:

"... Francis now developed a spirit of poverty and a deep sense of humility,

and an attitude of profound compassion. He had never been able to stand the sight of lepers even at a distance, and he always avoided meeting them, but now in order to arrive at perfect self-contempt he served them devotedly with all humility and kindness, because the prophet Isaias tells us that Christ crucified was regarded as a leper and despised. He visited their houses frequently and distributed alms among them generously kissing their hands and lips with deep compassion..” *LM 1,6*

Francis tells us in the *Testament* that this is what he did and also the very thing which he considered a barrier to growth and love i. e. his detestation of the lepers while he was “still in sin”, was the very thing which God used to bring about the beginnings of his conversion.

The compassion/empathy prayer of Francis is not a prayer of words; it is a prayer of and in action. It is orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy because Francis, even in prayer, is a man of action. His prayers were never meaningless or empty babblings but gave rise to a concrete expression both of and in what he prayed. We need not look too far to find the lepers of our own societies and our work with them can also be orthopraxis.

Meditation and Reflection

Bonaventure gives us an insight into the prayer life of the early community gathered around Francis. The young group of friars spent its time in prayer, fasting, and as Bonaventure puts it:

“...devoting themselves to fervant mental prayer..” *LM IV 3*

They use the cross as the source of this meditation and reflection as well as shared prayer and silence. *The Legend of the Three Companions* (7-9) gives us further insight into Francis’ attitude to mental prayer and reflection. The striking aspect of this form of prayer is the amount of time Francis spent in solitude, in quiet and in silence. He reflected deeply in prayer before any action and pointed out in this that unreflective action is sometimes worse than no action at all. But Francis was no quietist; the fervor and frequency of his meditation brought great comfort, hope and solace in what God had shared with him. It is almost as if there are some graces God can only give in silence.

It was after a period of meditation and reflection that Francis began to write the *Canticum*, Praises of God, the Our Father paraphrase. Meditation is not “quiet prayer”, nor the prayer of silence, neither is it the emptiness of thinking “holy things” or thinking “about” God. It is more powerful than any of these; it is rather the intuitive grasping of the silence of the Godhead caught momentarily in time and space and for a brief untimable second, gone as quickly as it arrives — the totality of the person, is caught

up in the mystery of God himself. Meditation, as it comes to us in the prayers of Francis is being aware and in touch with the God who already fills us. It does not need silence as a prerequisite (though it helps) — it needs openness to hear and listen, humility to respond, and attentiveness to be changed so that it is a powerful, peace giving prayer form.

Conclusion

I have said nothing about Francis’ prayers through Creation and Scripture since I am at present working on a project on the topic, nor about his use of the holy Name (*LM X,6; 1 Cel. 115*) as I have in mind an article — reflection on this topic. What then can one say about Francis’ forms of prayer and how can we franciscans derive inspiration for our own prayer life?

Prayer is not “acquired”, nor is it “learned” in the sense that prayer manuals will “teach” us prayer. While such things are useful, prayer is essentially a gift from God and it is HARD WORK! There is nothing easy about prayer: it involves pain and hurt, but also joy and serenity; calmness and oneness in unity with God — but it is all *gift*. It means to be moulded to the form of Christ: Paul’s “potter” analogy is useful here. The potter throws his unworked dry clay onto the wheel and begins to turn, to set the process in motion. He/she gives the dry clay water to keep the clay pliable and manageable — more easy to be shaped; and works the hands with master craftsmanship, with great care and attention — the potter spends time with the clay. God spends time with the clay that is us; spends time with us in prayer — it is not the time that we give God in prayer, but the time He gives us. The form is not IMPORTANT IN ITSELF, though as we arrive at each form of prayer it becomes a stepping point for deeper union.

Through these varying forms of prayer Francis is in touch with every level of his human person and the forms reflect the journey of his prayer which culminated in La Verna. Intimacy is greater than the form which helps bring it about: ALL forms of prayer are useful and helpful, but ALL forms of prayer are gifts — Francis above all found that out. No one form should suit us as Franciscans, but every form could be used with creative, spontaneous expression to draw each and every one of us closer to the Mystery in which we already participate. La Verna is a possibility for us all.

Endnotes

¹Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M., “St. Francis as Dramatist and Poet,” *The CORD*, Vol. 38 (1988), 339-343.

Evangelization and Liberation

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

Until 1975, when Pope Paul VI published his apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi" (to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the close of Vatican II) the word *evangelization* was used very infrequently among English-speaking Catholics. Today the word is used with the utmost frequency even though the meanings attached to it vary considerably. One writer said evangelization has become "the Catholic buzz word." Some confusion is bound to result. For example the general secretary of *Evangelization 2000* stated in an interview that the Church's mission is "supernatural" — the Church is concerned with "saving souls". He was frankly critical of the 1979 Latin American Bishops' conference in Puebla and the "liberation-minded church people" whose understanding of evangelization includes the need to address the social injustice of our times.

The purpose of this article is to make a modest attempt to demonstrate the solid basis for viewing evangelization as proclaiming "salvation, this great gift of God which is liberation from everything that oppresses human beings [in the official latin text "liberation ab iis omnibus quibus homo opprimitur"] and which is above all liberation from sin and the evil one, in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him, of seeing him and of being given over to him." (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 9) While all would accept the final clauses in that description of evangelization, not all are enthusiastic about viewing salvation as "liberation from everything that oppresses human beings." It may be useful to look again at the scriptural and patristic tradition, at the teaching of the church's magisterium and the Franciscan tradition, to find a justification for understanding salvation

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as liberation from all oppression. This is evidently a basic tenet of the Theology of Liberation

Scripture

In his introduction to the book of Exodus in the "Christian Community Bible [Catholic Pastoral Edition]" Fr. Francis writes:

The Exodus is the liberation from Egypt. This in the Bible [i. e., the Hebrew Scripture] is the great deed of God... God-liberated his people "with great power, with strong arm and outstretched hand" opening a way in the sea.

The Exodus is the heart of the Old Testament and what gives it significance is that it shows us a God who liberates people. How is it that many people (non-believers) say: "Fear creates gods." And Lenin adds to his book *Socialism and Religion*, "Religion teaches patience and resignation to those who toil during a lifetime of misery, and puts them to sleep with the hope of heavenly reward."

But it is not so. In the Exodus, God does not come to instill fear, he listens to the cry of the oppressed — giving them trust, awakening in them the hope of a real and total liberation and raising a generous leader for them. The Exodus is the model of all genuine human liberation.

The Exodus was not "a purely spiritual" event — it was also and very prominently so, economic, social, political and cultural liberation.

In a similar vein, the book of Deuteronomy expresses concern eight times for the "have-nots" of that era: "the alien, the widow, and the orphan." (Cf 26, 13) And a curse is reserved for those "who do not respect the rights of the alien, the orphan and the widow" (26, 19).

If Israel's prophets were "the conscience of God's people," one of their major concerns was surely the defense of the poor. The first of the classical prophets Amos is rightly called "the prophet of social justice" — his entire work is concerned with this theme. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah (1:1-15) God issues a scathing denunciation of Israel and its worship. How can Israel set things right? "Seek justice, give hope to the oppressed; give the orphans their rights and defend the widows" (1:17). For Jeremiah, a good leader is one "who defends the poor and the needy." To do this is "to know Yahweh" (22:16).

In its turn the New Testament also shows a "preferential option for the poor." This is especially obvious in the writings of Luke. As Donald Senior, C.P. notes: "Luke's stress on the prophetic character of Jesus ministry as well as his confrontation with issues of justice fit the powerful concerns of liberation theology" (*The Biblical Foundations For Mission*, p. 255).

When Paul and Barnabas visited "the acknowledged pillars [of the early Church of Jerusalem] James, Cephas and John," those leaders made only

one stipulation: Paul and Barnabas "were to be mindful of the poor." Paul notes that that was "the one thing I was making every effort to do" (Gal 2:10). That apostolic "preferential option for the poor" is also part of the apostolic tradition!

Is it any wonder that a number of military dictatorships in Latin America forbade the singing of Our Lady's Cantic of Praise (Lk 1:46-55) calling it a "subversive hymn?" For regimes that oppress the poor it is subversive to sing:

The Mighty One has scattered the proud with their plans.
He has put down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up those who are downtrodden.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but he sent the rich away empty.

Pope John Paul II, on his first visit to Poland called Our Lady the "Queen of Social Justice." In the Americas, the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe conveys the same message.

It comes as no surprise therefore to learn that during the shameful decades of slavery in north-america, slave-masters saw the bible as a threat: in many places it was a crime to give a bible to a slave. (See *Before the Mayflower* [5th ed.], p. 87 by Lerone Bennett Jr.) From beginning to end the bible proclaims liberation! The God of the American slaves was the God who delivered the Israelites from slavery. A Negro ditty said:

Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel.
then why not every man?

In a system that sanctions the enslavement of human beings, that is a subversive question.

The bible is still seen as a threat by those who oppress the poor in our own day. Fr. Charles Beirne S. J., vice-rector of the University of San Salvador (the successor of Ignacio Martin-Baro S. J., murdered by the Salvadoran military in November of 1990), said: "I know women and men in El Salvador who have been arrested and tortured because they had a subversive document in their homes. The subversive document was the Bible." (Address to the National Catholic Educational Association, Boston, 3 April 1991)

The central message in Jesus' preaching is "the good news of God's Reign." So important is this that everything else becomes "the rest" which "will be given besides." (See Mt 6:33) As Paul VI notes: "Only the Kingdom therefore is absolute and it makes everything else relative". (EN 8) The Kingdom of God is not built up only within the confines of the church; it is built up also in secular human history. Whenever and wherever people are open to God's saving intervention in their lives, freeing them

from whatever form of oppression, there the Kingdom comes into being. While all human beings are invited to belong to the Kingdom, the poor have a specially privileged place. In *Redemptoris Missio* (14), Pope John Paul II wrote:

The Kingdom of God is meant for all mankind and all people are called to become members of it. To emphasize this fact, Jesus drew especially near to those on the margins of society and showed them special favor. To all who are victims of rejection and contempt Jesus declares: "Blessed are you poor" (Lc 6:20). What is more, he enables such people to experience liberation even now. The liberation and salvation brought by the Kingdom of God come to the human person in his physical and spiritual dimensions.

The Pope then drew the conclusion:

Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness.

The Patristic Tradition

Since early Christian teachers were thoroughly immersed in the Scriptures it comes as no surprise that they were deeply concerned about justice. Patristic teaching about the rights of the poor will perhaps seem very radical to many Christians today. A few examples:

Didache (end of 1st century): "Never turn away from the needy. Share all your possessions with your brother and do not claim that anything is your own. If you and your neighbor are joint participators in things immortal, how much more so in things that are mortal."

St. Ambrose: "God has ordered all things to be produced so that there should be food in common for all. When you give to the poor you are not giving what is yours, you are giving back to him what is his."

St. John Chrysostom: "The rich are in possession of the goods of the poor even if they have acquired them honestly. Do not say: 'I am using what is mine.' You are using what belongs to others. All the wealth of the world belongs to you and to the others in common, as the sun, air, earth and all the rest."

St. Augustine: "Of whose possessions do you give if not from Christ's? If you were to give of your own it would be largess; but since you give of what is His, it is restitution."

The North-American Catholic bishops wrote in their pastoral *Economic Justice For All*: "From the patristic period to the present, the Church has affirmed that the misuse of the world's resources or appropriation of

them by a minority of the world's population betrays the gift of creation since 'whatever belongs to God belongs to all' (St. Cyprian)." For a good study of the patristic teaching on justice the pastoral refers to *Ownership: Early Christian Teaching* by C. Avila (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983). Another excellent resource is *The Faith That Does Justice* ed. John C. Haughey.

Magisterium

It needs to be recognized honestly, at least in passing, that the first social encyclical was not Leo XIII's 1891 letter *Rerum Novarum*, but *Nostis et Nobiscum* of Pius IX issued in 1848. Pius had little sympathy for liberation movements (which deprived him of the papal states). He considered the existing social order to be willed by God, and any attempt by the poor to better their lot to be sinful. In a similar vein, the bishops of Brazil, in a 1915 pastoral letter, instructed their priests to inculcate in the faithful "a spirit of obedience and submission" and to lead the faithful to accept their proper situation and the conditions into which they were born and not to hate the modest and difficult life in which Providence (sic!) has placed them."

Leo XIII saw things differently, and subsequent Popes have shown an ever increasing interest in social issues and the plight of the poor. This interest has been especially intense since the pontificate of Pope John XXIII. The second Vatican Council devoted special attention to questions of justice and peace in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. The plethora of magisterial statements on these questions makes even a sketchy summary impossible here. A few samples must suffice. I have chosen those that have special relevance because of the new conditions that have arisen with the happy demise of marxism.

Pope Paul VI was simply repeating the centuries-old Christian tradition when he wrote: "Private property is not an absolute or unconditional right for anyone. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities" (*Populorum Progressio*, n. 23). That teaching caused chagrin in some quarters. The Wall Street Journal in an editorial entitled "A Blessing For Secular Error," dismissed the encyclical as "an entirely worldly analysis" and "warmed-over marxism" (sic!).

Pope John Paul II has repeatedly reaffirmed the teaching of his predecessor. For example, during his 1986 visit to Columbia:

Nobody should forget that the gifts which God has conferred on humankind have a universal destiny, and therefore cannot be the exclusive property of the few, be they individuals, groups or nations. Because of this, those carrying out the responsibility of administering the gifts of creation must take into account — according to the divine will — not only their own

The bible is still seen as a threat by those who oppress the poor in our own day.

needs, but also those of everyone else in such a way that no one, especially not the poorest, is excluded from access to those gifts.

See also John Paul's "On Social Concern" (n. 43) with the references in notes 78 and 79.

The blissful demise of marxism presents very welcome challenges to the magisterium. In his May 1990 visit to Mexico, Pope John Paul II claimed that it is "superficial" to "view the setbacks suffered by contemporary socialism", as proof that capitalism "is the only path for our world." In his "On Social Concern," the Pope claimed that both the capitalist and the collectivist systems "are in need of radical correction." He insisted that "the Church's social doctrine adopts a critical attitude towards both." (p. 21)

In *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991) John Paul takes up the same theme: "It is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called real socialism leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization" (no. 35). In speaking of the ideal economic order, the Pope prefers not to call it "capitalist" but rather a "business economy, market economy or simply free economy" (n. 42). This acceptable economic order is one which "demands that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by the state, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied" (n. 34). (Does anyone seriously think that "the basic needs" of all north-americans are being met, or even that there is a serious attempt to do this?) John Paul quotes with approval the teaching of Leo XIII: "If the question is asked how must one's possessions be used? the church replies with hesitation that man should not consider his material possessions as his own, but as common to all" (n. 30). In harmony with the patristic tradition, John Paul states emphatically: "God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods" (n. 31). To bring about a more just social order, the Pope asks for "a concerted worldwide effort ... which also involves sacrificing positions of income and of power enjoyed by the more developed economies" (n. 52). This truly revolutionary perspective is not what the west understands by capitalism. as economist Arthur Jones notes in *The Tablet* (17 Feb. 1990).

Capitalism, meaning the capitalist system, could provide the mechanisms through which the world's needs could be met. But capitalism will not do

that; it has no motive for doing so. There is no buck to be made. And all that capitalism can do — and at its best it does it brilliantly — is find new ways of making a buck. Capitalism by its very nature quickly conditions the world to extract, for itself, the maximum for the minimum. That is its sole goal, its unique purpose, and in the final analysis an insufficient and unworthy end when measured on the yardstick of Christian values.

In *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), Paul VI noted that the inequitable distribution of wealth is one of the problems that “jeopardizes the very future of the human race.” (n. 7). Capitalism continues to foster that inequality which increasingly gets worse.

Consider the United States of north america. During the 1980's the wealthiest 400 Americans *tripled* their fortunes even as more and more homeless families were being driven onto the streets. In 1981 there were about 600,000 U. S. millionaires. By 1990 they numbered 1,500 million, together with 100,000 decamillionaires; 1,200 centimillionaires and 51 billionaires — “an unprecedented concentration of U.S. wealth” (Thomas C. Fox). At present, the top 1% of the U. S. population makes more than the bottom 40%. Over the last 15 years, the wealthiest 10% received a 36% tax cut, while the poorest 20% had their taxes increased by 21%. Meanwhile federal domestic programs were cut \$129.6 billion dollars from FY 1982 through FY 1988. In the presidential budget for 1991, discretionary program for low income families are only half of what they were adjusted for inflation, ten years ago. One effect of this is an increase since 1981 of nearly 20% of the number of *children* living in poverty. (See “The Washington Spectator” 15 May 1990, p. 2 f.) The U. S. national debt has exploded from \$908 billion in 1980 to an estimated \$3.1 trillion, (sic!) in 1990, much of the increase due to the military buildup. The national debt grows at the rate of \$4,000 a second (!).

Thus in the U. S. today, while enormous sums are spent on “an insane arms race” (CA n. 18) basic human needs go unmet. The U. S. takes 1st place in military power; 13th place in public healthcare; 16th place in per capita support of education; 19th place in infant mortality.

For the Christian conscience, issues of justice and the plight of the poor are important moral issues and are of the greatest concern to the Church. They impinge on the very understanding the Church has of its mission. It is difficult to exaggerate the influence that the declaration of the 1971 Roman Synod of Bishops had on the Church's understanding of evangelization.

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.

Transformation of the *world* and liberation from *every* oppression —

all this is part of the church's *mission*. in *Centesimus Annus* (n. 5) John Paul insists:

To teach and spread her social doctrine pertains to the church's evangelizing mission and is *an essential part of the Christian message*” (emphasis added).

The new evangelization, which the modern world urgently needs and which I have emphasized many times, must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the church's social doctrine.

That very clear statement cries out for implementation. The ignorance of our Catholic people, including those who frequent Franciscan churches, schools and other institutions concerning Christian social teaching is appalling.

A spirituality that is so “otherworldly.” that it is not concerned about justice, liberation and the transformation of this world is thoroughly inadequate. A “Jesus and me” spirituality, that says in effect “the rest of the world be damned,” is thoroughly unchristian and unfranciscan. Evangelization is above all proclaiming Christ, and as St. Ambrose wrote: “When we speak about justice, we are speaking of Christ. When we are speaking of peace, we are speaking of Christ. When we speak about truth, life and redemption, we are speaking of Christ.” (Explanation of the Psalms [ps 36])

Pope John Paul speaks of “the personal sins of those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so ... producing specious reasons of a higher order” (*Reconciliation and Penance* n. 16; repeated in *On Social Concern*, note, 65). The clearest example of a “specious reason of a higher order” is precisely that which claims the Church should be concerned only with “saving souls.” The Pope brands that attitude as sinful.

To exclude justice and peace questions from the church's mission would be to deprive whole areas of human activity — and areas of the greatest importance — from the saving influence of God's word. It is a grave disservice to the Christian tradition to make it appear irrelevant, and nothing would make the tradition appear more irrelevant than the claim it has nothing to offer in solving the most urgent problems of our times, Justice, Peace and Respect for Creation are among those most urgent questions.

It is one of the great merits of the Theology of Liberation that it has kept the world's most compelling challenges before the ecclesial conscience and continues to seek a solution in the authentic Christian tradition. No doubt that is why Pope John Paul II in his letter of 9 April 1986 to his brother bishops in Brazil said: “the theology of liberation is not only opportune but useful and necessary.” And necessary not only in Brazil!

In a very important statement the 1987 Synod of Bishops said: “The

Holy Spirit leads us to understand more clearly that holiness today cannot be attained without a commitment to justice." No commitment to justice = no holiness! That very emphatic statement surely is enough to alert us to a very serious obligation to communicate the church's social teaching to the people to whom we minister. At the heart of that teaching is the "preferential option for the poor," an option "to which the whole tradition of the church bears witness" (*On Social Concern*, n. 42). Putting that option into practice is at the heart of our continual conversion, just as for Francis his ministry to the lepers, led him to redefine what was bitter and what was sweet. (See *Test 3*)

Putting the preferential option for the poor into effect requires the cooperation of all people of good will, and especially the commitment of public officials, economists and business people. The church's teaching authority has been enunciating the moral principles for decades — what more can be said? In a very important address to business people in Mexico, in May of 1990, the Pope said: "The magisterium has fulfilled its mission, and now it is up to you, the experts, who are also the church, to make a serious effort to find real, courageous and practical solutions."

Conclusion

In almost every instance where St. Francis uses the word "just" or "justice" in his writings, he is speaking of an attribute of God. Thus "You [Lord] are justice." (*Laud Dei* 4); "... the one true God...Who alone is just." (*RegNB* 29,9). The closest Francis comes to using the word "justice" in the modern sense of "social justice" is in *Fragm* (76): "Alms are the inheritance and *justice* that is *owed* to the poor, and was acquired by Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Francis did not set out to be a social reformer. He did call people to conversion to the gospel. Living the gospel himself with his brothers and sisters in such a radical way was a powerful summons to abandon self-centeredness and live a God-centered life. When people respond to that summons, social structures are changed to conform more to God's plan. The vices that Francis most warns against are those that cause the injustices of our times also: pride, arrogance, greed, vanity.

Most importantly Francis' strong conviction about universal brotherhood of all men and women provides the most secure basis for our concern for justice. The millions of people whose most basic needs are not met, "the many millions who are deprived of hope" (*On Social Concern*, 13), are indeed our brothers and sisters. It is impossible to really believe that and not strive for a more just, peaceful and fraternal world.

God alone is the "great almsgiver" (2Cel 77) and proprietor of all creation: "The earth and all its fullness belongs to the Lord" (24,1). Hence

the brothers are never to "appropriate" anything to themselves. The theology of liberation and the preferential option for the poor are of the service of God's plan for the creation that rightly belongs to God alone. What is God's plan for creation? St. Paul answers: "there should be a certain equality among you" (2 Cor 8:13). *Equality* is God's plan, and we've a long way to go.

Reflection Questions (preferably in common):

1. In *Centesimus Annus* (n. 5), Pope John Paul II claims that the church's social doctrine "is an essential part of the Christian message ... [and] an essential element" in the new evangelization. In your *experience* (listening to/giving homilies, participating in religious education programs, retreats etc.) is Christian social teaching given its due? If not, why is this so?

2. In his first visit to the U. S. as Pope, John Paul II said: "You will want to seek out the *structural reasons* (emphasis added) which foster the different forms of poverty in the world and in your own country, so that you can apply the proper remedies. You will not recoil before the reforms — even profound ones — of attitudes and structures that may prove necessary" so the poor can have "a fresh chance in the hard struggle of life." (Homily, Mass at Yankee Stadium, 25 October 1979). Why is it important to identify the "structural reasons" that cause poverty? Can you identify some unjust structures? Are you aware of any attempts to reform, them?

3. All Franciscans are invited to work for the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressors. (See, for example, "The Vocation of the Order Today," Madrid OFM General Chapter, 1979, n. 15.) Why do oppressors also need liberation? How can we work more effectively for the liberation of both groups?

* * *

Hold back nothing of yourselves

for yourselves

so that

He Who gives Himself totally to you

may receive you totally.

LETTER TO THE ENTIRE ORDER, 29

Skywatch and Advent

clear as water, only drier
on the night-chilled face
the winter air abrades
with the fine grit
of stardust (hardness: infinity)

eyes gritty too, water
through the long watch
and waiting

finally — —
face fully polished
bright with expectation
upturned in longing

a great streak of light
sizzles through the darkness
a pathway of momentary dazzle
that encounters earth
as a humble lump — —

heaven's gift

Sr. M. Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

Book Reviews

Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why. By Kenneth L. Woodward. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990. Pp. 461. Cloth, \$24.95.

Reviewed by Bonaventure F. Hayes, O.F.M., Library Director and Assistant Professor of Sacred Scripture, Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, NY and Archivist of Holy Name Province, O.F.M. (NYC).

Kenneth Woodward, religion editor of *Newsweek* magazine for 26 years, well-known writer, and articulate and apparently committed Catholic, has given us in this fascinating study an account of the beatification/canonization process currently in use in the Roman Catholic Church which is at once fair-minded, probing and, above all, eschewing any and all sensationalism. It is a noble feat! Its twenty pages of detailed notes and eleven closely-packed pages of bibliography, to say nothing of the numerous and lengthy accounts of personal interviews with many of the principal 'players' involved in the handling of concrete cases both on the local scene and in the Roman congregation for the Causes of Saints, all attest to the thoroughness of his research into this complex and intriguing world of 'saint making.'

Woodward devotes chapter-length treatment to the following topics: local promotion of causes; historical development of the concept of sanctity within the Church, the cult of saints, and the beatification/canonization process (most recently changed — and rather radically

so — in 1983 from a substantially legal process to an historical one); the various persons/offices involved in the process (including a survey of what it all costs); martyrs and the evolving concept of martyrdom; mystics, visionaries and wonder-workers; the role of miracles in the process; proving heroic virtue; interpreting holiness; papal saints and causes (and the politics thereof); sanctity and sexuality; the causes of intellectuals; and questions about the current process and possible future directions.

The completed (at least as far as beatification) and on-going cases of the following persons receive more than a passing mention, indeed, at times a lengthy discussion: Cardinal Cooke, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Romero, Edith Stein, Titus Brandsma, Maximilian Kolbe, Marcel Callo, Padre Pio, Theresa Musco, Alexandrina da Costa, Anne Catherine Emmerich, Junipero Serra, Phillippine Duchesne, Katherine Drexel, Cornelia Connelly, Louis & Azelie Martin (the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux), Cardinal Newman, Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, and Popes Pius IX, Pius XII, and John XXIII.

Woodward gets to the heart of the matter in the closing chapter, which centers on several questions surrounding the current process, its presuppositions, and its candidates. All of these questions need to be attended to by those directly involved in the process with utmost honesty and all seriousness. The author takes the occasion to also address contemporary society which all too often finds it hard to take the matter of saints seriously due, according to Woodward, to a notable lack

of a sense of connectedness, dependency and particularity in our society. For the cult of the saints, when all is said and done, is about the interconnectedness of all humanity, how the story of God revealed in Jesus is made our story, and how Christian holiness is essentially incarnational. Woodward ultimately reveals why he has so thoroughly engaged himself in this subject and why his presentation is, thus, so thoroughly engaging:

In the course of preparing this book, a number of people, including several at the Vatican, asked me why I was interested in the making of saints. My initial answer was: because no one has adequately explained how and why it is done. But now that I have observed the process firsthand, I recognize another motive: because saints matter. It follows, therefore, that the way saints are made also matters — not only to those Roman Catholics who venerate them but to anyone who seriously asks, "What does it mean to be fully human?" (p. 403)

Any reader of this journal is likely to find this book a worthwhile and enjoyable reading experience; anyone even vaguely interested in promoting the cause of some servant of God will ignore it to his or her peril.

Miryam of Jerusalem: Teacher of the Disciples. Ann Johnson. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press. Pp. 161. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.F., M.A. (Franciscan Institute, member of the editorial board of The Cord, parish minister in Baldwinsville (Syracuse)).

Ann Johnson's *Miryam of Jerusalem* is an experience no one should miss.

The author dramatically places flesh and blood over the otherwise stereo-typed women of the Bible. We see these women, including Mary, as the very center of Christianity: the very pulse and heartbeat of a new society of Christians. Mary recalls and aptly tells the stories that we have longed to hear about those valiant women who have come before us and who have survived tragedy, passion, and temptation in their lives and used these as means to come to a greater conviction that Jesus is the Messiah; Jesus is alive and Jesus loves us with a personal love. She artistically weaves themes of justice, healing, holiness and fidelity into beautiful prayers which enliven the soul.

In our present day, when women are trying to find a place in society and wipe away the stigma of being second class citizens, Ann Johnson brings great hope from the past using the women who lived complete lives of Christian faith and service. I found this book inspiring for spiritual reading, information, prayer and have used many of the prayers to uplift other persons who were suffering from various hardships.

I recommend this book to any person (male or female) who is interested in living more deeply a Christian life of faith and love.

Naming Your God. The Search for Mature Images. By Pat McCloskey, O.F.M. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1991, 192 pp. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M. (Ph.D. Fordham). Assistant Professor of Theology, St. Bonaventure University.

Too often people retain the image of God formulated at the time of Confirmation, graduation from re-

ligious instruction, if you will. While sophistication develops in an understanding of the sciences, politics, economics and literature similar growth is neglected or even avoided when it comes to understanding the Holy. Unfortunately this can leave God and religion on the sideline of life or lead one to reject the God who cannot meet the complex questions of the modern world.

One can comprehend the resistance to growth. Pat McCloskey points out quite sharply the risk of wrestling with our understandings of the Holy. "Our images of God do not exist in a vacuum; they are connected to our own self-image and the way we see other people" (p. 89). An adjustment of our image of God requires a good hard look at ourselves and an honest evaluation of our relationship to our neighbor. To go beyond images of God developed in a small, safe and local world involves taking the risk of adventure into the larger, more diverse and unknown world. Quite correctly the author observes that one will make such a move only when they decide that searching for the new image is less risky than living with the old image.

McCloskey's text offers a solid spiritual theology. He articulates some profound theological insight along with personal experience into a language which lends itself to good spiritual reading.

In the chapter on the images of God in the Hebrew scriptures the author firmly establishes the relationship between the image of God, self-image and the way one sees other people. This point is worth careful pondering. In the same chapter he offers another pow-

erful insight. "A particular culture sometimes limits God's self-revelation in the same way that a child's level of maturity limits a parent's possibility of self-revelation" (p. 40). Without suggesting the "immaturity" of a particular culture the author helps the reader appreciate that the self-revelation of the Holy always occurs in the context of culture. Those who live in that culture can then articulate the encounter with the Holy only within the parameters of that culture's strengths and limitations. One can find here the foundation for appreciating the development of images in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. One might also find here the foundation for a deeper appreciation of non-Christian religions.

The author's presentation on modern methods of biblical criticism offers a fine introduction. His wide sweep of the Hebrew scriptures serves to peek the reader's curiosity. Some might view his approach as a bit "simplistic." Yet, there is value to well-founded broad strokes which suggest the richness of the biblical text. The book makes one want to return to the biblical well to draw more fully of its images of God. The same can be said of the author's survey of Paul and the Gospels.

Beyond the biblical text McCloskey points out how the image of God grew in the lives of people like Francis of Assisi, Dorothy Day and Simone Weil. Again, his brief introduction to these people combines the depth of sound scholarship with a sense of excitement that one wants to learn more.

The weakest chapter of *Naming Your God* is the one entitled "Growing with the Scriptures." The author intends to develop a very significant

point — the believing community provides a critical element for personal growth. McClosky provides solid historical information in a readable fashion. But this, the “most scholarly” chapter, touches on too many issues making it too difficult to appreciate the author’s direction and intent.

One instance of too much information centers on a discussion of Marcel Lefebvre. The case does exemplify the Christian tension of personal commitment and communal life. However, this example would seem to be of little value except for those attracted to the archbishop’s perspective. One won-

ders if such people would be reading McClosky’s book. A discussion of Teilhard’s work could demonstrate a more satisfying resolution. The example of Lefebvre, however, might spark the less conservative Catholic to take more seriously the struggle of the traditionalist Catholic and that would be good.

There is no need to be in a rut with one’s images of God. Pat McCloskey shows the importance and the possibilities of growth. He suggests the rewards. Above all he declares that the risk, while risky, is also safe, for God is more than one has ever dared imagine.

☆ ☆ ☆

“Embers”

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Brittle integrity scattered day after day,
Sinful faults brought stinging nays.
Stoicism! True self irresponsibly and naively hushed.
A nightmarish upbringing, (forward) to a man slowly crushed.

Enrapture desired. The battle engaged.
Ambivalent heart always enraged.
The flame grows brighter; the embers glow.
A heart revives with love to sow.

Now, man rises forth armed with maturity,
Leading to victories of goodness and sincerity.
So, rest not in your heart’s desire,
Lest sin prevail and destroy the fire.

My God, my God, why have I abandoned You?

J. W. Harrington

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| Jan. 17-20 | “THE POWER OF MYTH” REVISITED
Vianney Devlin, OFM |
| Jan. 25-26 | “LET THE CHILDREN’S LAUGHTER REMIND YOU...”
Lynne Lavelle |
| Feb. 14-16 | THE SPIRITUALITY OF ECOLOGY
Justin Carisio, SFO |
| Feb. 21-23 | PRESENCE IN PRAYER AND LIFE
Celeste Crine, OSF |
| Feb. 28-Mar. 1 | “ABUNDANT LIFE”
Mary Ellen McAleese, OSF |

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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo

CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun

EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony

EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹

EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God

LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion

OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix

RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221

RegEr: Rule for Hermits

SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady

SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues

Test: Testament of St. Francis

UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare

VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy

¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis

2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis

3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

CL: Legend of Saint Clare

CP: Process of Saint Clare

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

LP: Legend of Perugia

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

SC: Sacrum commercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

What the Chapter Did Not Discuss

Reflections on the General Chapter of 1991

DAMIEN ISABELL, O.F.M.

Introduction

No chapter can talk about everything. Each chapter focusses on certain limited issues and tries to deepen the Order's understanding of them. Evangelization was the theme of the Chapter of 1991. This theme is complex. We want to thank the Chapter for all the positive things it has accomplished and we want to reflect on some of the things that were not discussed. Hopefully these reflections will contribute something to the future.

I. Avoid Disputes, Peace-making Activity. Influenced by the Rule of 1221, 16 and the example of Francis before the Sultan, the friars acknowledge that peace-making is essential to their vocation. Over and over again this theme was heard in Chapter discussions.

What was not said was that today there are institutions which study peace-making. These institutes of conflict resolution exist in the United States and elsewhere. They study very specific ways of analyzing crisis situations, conflict, and very specific strategies for dealing with them.

Our tradition shows us Francis taking an active role in peace-making: recall the dispute between the bishop and the mayor of Assisi, his activity

The author, a missionary for several years in Zaire, was a member of the secretariat for the General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor held in San Diego during the summer of 1991. Though specifically reflecting on this chapter, Father Damien offers provocative questions for all Franciscan capitulars.

in Siena and Gubbio, and when there were problems in the Order itself. "Doing" was as important as "being".

It seems that if we are to make peace-making a priority of the Order, we should logically free up at least a few people who can study what science can contribute to our active peace-making tradition. The Chapter never got specific enough on this matter.

Another dimension of peace-making that was not discussed is that between the middle class and the poor. "Option for the poor" is only a slogan if its profound meaning is not understood by the friars. A very large number of friars come from and work with the middle class. According to some theories this class is also "oppressing" others and by doing so is "oppressed" and needs liberation. What does evangelization of the middle class mean today? Many of the new sects appeal to this class. While we were at Chapter at San Diego University, a few miles away the Horizon Church was actively evangelizing the middle class in a way that spoke to their problems: use of wealth, drugs, divorce, loneliness, acceptance, aid for the poor, services for children, spiritual direction, communications media for evangelization... Many of those middle class and middle age (35-45) people were Catholic drop-outs because the Church was not addressing their problems. What does option for the poor mean in this context? How can we friars bring peace to this level of society, the better educated, the more wealthy? Very often these people are our best benefactors.

Yet another dimension of peace-making is found in African traditions which may be of some use to other cultures as well. If reconciliation and peace-making are important to our Order, the Africans certainly have something to contribute to the discussion, and probably other cultures as well.

In the beginning we were known as the "Penitents of Assisi". Penance was related to the Sacrament, and we know that before absolution could be given there had to be accomplished the work of satisfaction. We recall the story which concludes the *Letter to the Faithful*. We Franciscans have a lot to contribute to this broader dimension of the Sacrament of Penance to which peace-making is closely related.

This leads us to a final question which touches the sciences and our Franciscan spirituality: the role of psychology in peace-making on an individual basis. America and Europe have contributed a psychological approach to the person which has helped modern persons attain greater peace inside themselves. How can these insights be used in a Chapter? How have they affected our spiritual direction? Do these developments touch our tradition in some way?

2. Inculturation was mentioned by the Chapter, its importance underlined. By definition it will create very different forms of Franciscan life and of evangelization. What are these differences? Can their sharing enrich us mutually?

Inculturation of the Order will be better seen at the next Chapter when our first black African brothers will be present, Inculturation in the Order and of the Order will require a very profound reflection from each continent: on authority and obedience, on brotherhood, poverty, humility, simplicity, formation. All of these questions are uniquely interpreted in each culture. Hopefully a future chapter will speak concretely about this wealth of interpretation.

Inculturation of evangelization must take into consideration the rituals of peoples by which they cope with the deepest questions of life, birth, initiation, marriage, healing, death, ancestors... Some of these rituals can deeply touch our way of living fraternal life and our way of evangelization. There is a certain compenetration of life and evangelization. Perhaps we can better use the communication media (video, films, slides, books) at the next chapter in order to communicate with one another how evangelization is being done elsewhere and how we can better collaborate. A "ratio evangelisationis" could profit from this interchange.

3. Studies have received a new endorsement in this Chapter but it seems to be too general. True, the Pope made it clear that studies are in function of evangelization. But what are the implications of this on the provincial level? Which studies should be encouraged? Which studies have a relation to evangelization? These aims should be more precisely defined.

Then there is the question of "option for the poor" and studies. Studies are beyond the reach of the poor; how do we reconcile solidarity with the poor and the promotion of all sorts of studies? Does the "option" begin after studies are completed? Is there enough solidarity in the Order so that friars of the Third World can prepare themselves intellectually, or are higher studies in the best centers reserved to the First World countries? Should the proposals for studies be always made at a provincial level, or should the central administration pin-point certain needs and sponsor certain friars for its perceived needs?

4. Another theme that was mentioned in the Chapter was "non-violence". Many Franciscans are convinced that Francis was non-violent, even actively non-violent. What is the relationship between his non-violence and the non-violent approaches of today? To which kind of non-vio-

lence should we commit ourselves, especially in the formation programs of our young men?

What is our stance vis-a-vis the violence in our society — towards women, children, minorities, nature? Concretely, how do we face up to those questions as an Order, province, formation house? Have all communities looked at the violence within: towards our underpaid workers, for example, or toward those brothers who are still not accepted as brothers? It is not enough to say that we are in favor of non-violence without explaining what is meant and without a program for putting into action our conviction.

5. Certain ecclesial events influence evangelization for generations, such as Medellin and Puebla. But in 1993 there will be another event which may have the same impact: the African Synod. I did not hear it mentioned in our Chapter, even though we have an Africa Project. If we are committed to Africa, we should commit ourselves also to this Synod so that it will be a success, and it will renew evangelization in Africa. Our Africa Project cannot be separate from what the Church in Africa is about. As an Order can we make some contribution to this Synod?

6. Chapter liturgies were designed to please everyone as much as possible in an international meeting. We did see some examples of inculturation at San Luis Rey and at Ensenada. But in our own liturgies we had very little contact with liturgies of other cultures. Were there other ways of sharing liturgies: video tapes, leaflets, actual use of other rites? Should a Chapter of Penitents celebrate a penitential service, or/and a healing service? Could evening prayer be done in the context of the celebration of the Word?

7. Another reality that was mentioned from time to time was AIDS. Many provinces have responded to this problem. But in some countries, such as Malawi, Uganda and probably Zaire, in a few years some villages will be decimated; only babies and old people will be left. What does this reality say to our African Project and to its form of evangelization? What kind of response is called for? What does it mean for the acceptance of candidates, for AIDS in Africa is often transmitted by lack of hygiene in clinics. Should candidates be tested? Should we move into greater service with AIDS' patients?

8. The Chapter recognized that contemplation is the soul of evangelization. Does the Order understand what is involved in contemplation? In the old days, Jesus Crucified was the "content". What is the relation between studies and contemplation? What kind of formation to contempla-

tion should be used in our provinces? It seems that a committee has been set up to study this issue. We hope it studies such questions as: the relation of contemplation to the reading of the signs of the times. Christian and Eastern contemplation...

9. The question of death touched the Chapter. Pictures of our friars who were martyred in the Sudan were distributed. We heard of friars imprisoned and killed. We heard of a friar's brother who was assassinated. Louis Brennan's mother died. Provinces are dying. In Franciscan tradition we have never been afraid to face the question of death. It puts many realities in perspective and it checks the false understanding of self-fulfillment. Talk of death, even in a General Chapter, is not out of place.

Conclusion

Many people will be writing about the accomplishments of the Chapter. Perhaps few will write about what the Chapter did not accomplish. I want to be among those few in order to encourage the Order that the next Chapter will be less "general" and more concrete.

☆ ☆ ☆

Vidi Aquam

Mesmerized inside —
reeling from
winds of change,
and only God knows
how many false prophets,
dreams and voices,
I saw water gushing
from a hydrant
on Hudson street
near the church
where the Child
touches Anthony
so gently
so gracefully.

Water flooded the
streets
pouring out
like a miraculous
healing font,
and once it
touched and swirled
around my feet,
there was
Peace.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

Rivulets of Goodness: Reflections of a Poor Man

Part One

EDMUNDO B. VALERA

Incipit speculatio pauperis in deserto.
St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium I*

A letter appeared in an issue of *Commonweal* calling for more attention to environmental issues. "I wonder how prepared we Catholics are," the author wrote, "to jump into the fray and to contribute to efforts to meet this challenge.... What do Catholic leaders say about global warming, endangered species, or off-shore drilling?"¹ In response, the editors pointed to an article printed in the same issue entitled: "The Sacrament of Creation: Toward an Environmental Theology."² The authors very strongly underscore the contribution of the Christian tradition to our contemporary ecological dialogue and state:

The cultivation of sacramental vision is the richest way of recovering the companionship motif of the Genesis stories that the Christian tradition has to offer in the current global ecological crisis. The discovery that every creature, including oneself, is a sacrament of the love of God that causes all things to be, provides the deepest foundation for reverencing creation.³

The author is a Ph.D. candidate at Fordham University; he has also taken courses at the Franciscan Institute. Though he does not treat of the Incarnation directly, all that Valera writes enables us to discern why and how their deep convictions regarding that mystery enabled both Francis and Bonaventure to attain to their unusual sacramental view of creation. This, in turn, should awaken all Franciscans to creative thought and action regarding the current ecological crisis. This is the first of a two-part article.

While these authors highlight the outstanding contribution to this theology, they fail to consider *the* Franciscan theologian, St. Bonaventure, and his profound articulation of the vision of the little poor man, Francis.

To begin with, one of the most characteristic aspects of his writings is a concern for the spiritual life or for the soul's ascent to God. Early in his professorial endeavors, Bonaventure writes in the *Third Book of Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*:

God is known in what traces there are of him, known in his *image*, known in the effects of *grace*, and known through the intimate *union* of God and the soul, according to what the Apostle says: "The man who unites himself to the Lord becomes one spirit with him." (1 Cor. 6, 17) And the most perfect knowledge is that which Dionysius teaches, which results from ecstatic love and raises us up above the common knowledge of faith.⁴

We find him saying in the *Soliloquium*, a work that is undated:

I shall pass from exterior things to interior ones, and from the interior to the higher. And thus from knowledge of myself I shall climb towards knowledge of God (Sol. 1,2).

While these passages capture so much of Bonaventure's thought, they also synthesize the scheme adopted in *The Soul's Journey Into God*. Bonaventure's approach, one that seems to permeate every aspect of his writings, is a process of moving *transire* (through the traces of God in bodily natures), *intrare* (into the mind which is the image of God), and *transcendere* (to pass to God himself).⁵ In an age in which creation has become a distraction or an obstacle to our way to God, Bonaventure's plan is an invaluable tool, not only to understand his thought but also to benefit from his insights in our own journey into God. In our attempt to focus on a theology of creation, however, we will concentrate on his understanding of creatures as they reveal the vestiges of God.

God known through and in His vestiges

In our human condition, we do not have the faculty of directly and immediately perceiving God. The Omnipotent God remains a mystery for us and what we know of Him comes indirectly through His vestiges or traces. The vestiges or traces, found in all material things, are the most distant of God's reflections. A beautiful sunrise or sunset, the simple delicate opening of the tulip, or the majestic pounding of waves on the shore: these are so many indications of God's presence that make up the lowest and first rung of the ladder that leads to God. "The universe," Bonaventure writes,

is itself a ladder by means of which we can ascend into God... In order to contemplate the First Principle, who is most spiritual, eternal and above us, we must pass through his vestiges, which are material, temporal and outside us. This means *to be led in the path of God*.⁶

From the observable beauty and perfection of creation, Bonaventure maintains, we naturally arrive at the beauty and perfection of the Creator. From the observable creation, in other words, we rise to a knowledge and understanding of the invisible attributes of God. An unwillingness to recognize creatures as such would be tantamount to a refusal to be "transported out of darkness into the marvelous light of God," an aspect of Franciscan thought that is in contrast with the earlier spiritual tradition that was almost fearful of created things.⁷ Thus, the ideal that Bonaventure places before the religious person is as follows: "In every place and time a man should endeavor to keep God in his mind, seeing God mentally as if standing in His presence."⁸

Thus passage from creature to Creator, from finite to infinite, is actually carried out by a rational operation which Bonaventure calls "contuition." In a broad sense, he sees this as vision or intuition. But he maintains that contuition is not the intuitive or beatific gaze in which we naturally and simultaneously pass from the idea of the creature of Creator, from the idea of a finite perfection that we see in created objects to an idea of an infinite perfection.⁹ Nature, therefore, is offered to us for the *contuition* of God.¹⁰ Creatures are "vestiges, representations, spectacles proposed to us and signs divinely given so that we can see God."¹¹ No one exemplified this better than Francis himself, as Bonaventure writes in his *Life of Saint Francis*:

In beautiful things he saw Beauty itself and through his vestiges imprinted on creation *he followed his Beloved* everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace him *who is utterly desirable*.¹²

But following the example of St. Francis, Bonaventure contemplates God not only *through* the intermediacy of creatures. He recognized and acknowledges these as two different ways or grades of contemplating God.¹³ It is certainly one thing to know God *in* creatures, and quite another thing to know him *through* them.¹⁴ Reaching God *through* (or by means of) creatures gives us the notion of a distant God whereas to contemplate God *in* creatures is to see Him Who is present in all things. "To know God in creation," Bonaventure states, "is to recognize his very presence and his effect on created things. ... To know God *through* his creation, however, is to be lifted up from the knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of God by way of an intermediary stairway. This is the

mode proper to the earthly condition."¹⁵ Once again we see how Bonaventure saw this in the *Life of Saint Francis*. "With a feeling of unprecedented devotion," he writes, "[Francis] savored in each and every creature — as in so many rivulets — that Goodness which is their fountain-source."¹⁶

This awareness of God's presence in creatures imbued Francis with a sense of immediacy in his response to God. It also prompted him to have a profound respect for the human person upon whom God not only left His vestige but whom He also made in His own image. Bonaventure realized, therefore, that the macrocosm, the world, was found in the microcosm, the human person, and so he looked more closely at the human creature to discover more clearly the presence of God.

But where, we might ask, did Bonaventure discover the foundation of this theology in which God is revealed through and in creation? In Francis. His *Life of St. Francis* is filled with so many "animal stories," most of which he took from the earlier lives of Thomas of Celano. But we cannot overlook St. Francis' *Cantico di Frate Sole*, the Cantic of Creatures, which the saint wrote shortly after his mystical experiences on La Verna. Although Bonaventure does not quote from this most famous work, he must have known of its existence for his theology of creation reveals a marvelous understanding of it.¹⁷

We would like to focus on the first section of the Cantic, verses 1-9, that Francis' companions tell us was written at one time.¹⁸ These verses most clearly reveal Francis' vision of creation. The appeal of the Cantic lies both in its literary style as well as its spiritual underpinnings. As a literary piece, many were — and still are — drawn to it because it was composed at a time when Latin was gradually becoming Italian.¹⁹ As a spiritual document, it intrigues many for its profundity of meaning as well as its implicit mystical depths in each and every verse, which we can surmise, springs from Francis' deep faith in God's immanence in creation. G. K. Chesterton wrote of the Cantic: "It is a supremely characteristic work and much of St. Francis could be reconstructed from that work alone."²⁰ For our purpose, however, the observation of Eloi Leclercq has more meaning: "The manner in which Francis here looks at the created world is a key to his inner self for the Cantic undoubtedly has elements that reveal in a special way the personality of its author."²¹

A footnote in *Francis and Clare: Complete Writings* suggests the difficulty in translating the word *per* in the cantic.²² "It is important to penetrate the meaning of the word *per*," the editors maintain, "which Saint Francis uses throughout the remainder of the first section. It suggests a corruption of the Latin *per*, or the French *pour*, and the developing Italian *par*. Thus it may be translated "for", suggesting an attitude of thanksgiving; "by", expressing a sense of instrumentality; or "through", indicating instrumentality as well as a deeper sense of mysticism in per-

ceiving God's presence in all creation. ..." A scholarly article written by Susanna Peters Coy, *The Problem of "Per" in the Cantico di Frate Sole* of Saint Francis, traces the development (or history) of the interpretation of the preposition "*per*" and, in a nuanced way, proposes an interpretation which is more in keeping with the spirituality of Saint Francis. Coy suggests that perhaps the passage that sheds most light on the meaning of the preposition is the third verse, 'Praised be You, My Lord, with all Your creatures...' We might wonder what Francis was thinking when he composed this verse for he seems to imply that creatures are praised together with the Lord or that the Lord's presence was praised through and in His creatures. In praising the beauty of a sunset, for example, we are also praising the Lord Who created that sunset. God is praised, in other words, together with His creatures. If this were the case, then we can easily see how Bonaventure interpreted Francis' 'insights' or 'contuition'. In any case, Bonaventure, tremendously attuned to his Franciscan tradition, perceived that creation was indeed a 'sacrament', an outward sign of an inner reality, that leads us to God.

Knowledge through and in God's image

Unable to rest in these material traces of God's presence, however, Bonaventure passes from the *vestige*, which is outward or external, to image, which is inward or internal. After proposing that the universe is a ladder in our ascent, he continues: "We also enter into our souls, which is God's image, everlasting, spiritual and within us."²³ While the vestige is found in material things, the image is found in the soul alone. Thus, Bonaventure concludes, the path into God through his vestiges leads us into our mind where the divine image is thought:

Here it is that, now in the third stage, we enter into our very selves; and as it were, leaving the outer court, we should strive to see God through a mirror in the sanctuary, that is, in the forward area of the tabernacle. Here the light of truth, as from a candelabrum, glows upon the face of our mind, in which the image of the most blessed Trinity shines in splendor.²⁴

The Seraphic Doctor, alluding to the biblical image of the Temple of Jerusalem, recognizes the soul's three powers and likens them to the Holy Trinity. Memory corresponds with the image of the Father, intelligence with the image of the Son, and will or love with the image of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the mutual relationships of the powers of the soul are reflective of the mutual relationships between the three Divine Persons.²⁵

These powers lead us to the most blessed Trinity itself in view of their order, origin and interrelatedness. From memory, intelligence comes forth as its offspring... From memory and intelligence love is breathed forth as

their mutual bond... When, therefore, the soul considers itself, as it rises through itself as through a mirror to behold the blessed Trinity of the Father, the Word and Love.²⁶

What we have, then, is what F. Coplestone called an "express resemblance" in which the Blessed Trinity expresses itself as it manifests itself to some degree in the constitution of human nature.²⁷ Just as creatures present themselves to us as 'vestiges' of God, human beings themselves are marvelous expressions of the Triune God in whose image and likeness we were formed.

Once again, we might speculate on the influences that shaped Bonaventure's thought. We certainly find ourselves delving into the thought of the Fathers of the Church and, most especially, of St. Augustine. Much of the medieval tradition revolved around the biblical revelation that we were made in the image and likeness of God. But would we be wrong to wonder if Bonaventure is reflecting Francis' encounter with the leper and his vision that among those outcast of society we could best discover God?²⁸ Bonaventure must have realized that, in addition to the discovery of God in nature, Francis perceived His presence in the most abject and disgusting of human beings, the lepers. As they had been for him, so they would be for everyone: the privileged means of conversion. With this mind, it seems only appropriate that Bonaventure should look upon the knowledge of God acquired through and in an image as the entrance into the Temple, that is, into the sacred place of God's dwelling.

The contemplation of God, therefore comes in two ways: (a) *through* and *in* His vestiges and (b) *through* and *in* His image. Contemplating God in this manner, however, still leaves us dissatisfied. St. Bonaventure maintains that this dissatisfaction stems from our human condition in which distractions and preoccupations prompt people to cling to material cares and prevent this "inward" gaze into the self/soul "as into the image of God."²⁹ Because of human frailty, the soul needs the help and grace of God Himself in order to penetrate the soul where Eternal Truth lies:

Our soul could not rise completely from these things of sense to see itself and the Eternal Truth in itself, unless Truth, assuming human nature in Christ, had become a ladder, restoring the first ladder that had been broken in Adam.³⁰

Reaching God through and in the image might seem to be the last stage of the journey to God and, thus, ought to be the most perfect of all the stages.³¹

Knowledge through the Primary Name, Being, and in the Primary Name, Good

The progression of Bonaventure's journey seems clear. It begins in the

contemplation of God *through* and *in* vestiges, *through* (outward) and *in* (inward) images, and finally, from the inward to the highest which is *above* ourselves. *The Soul's Journey into God*, therefore, does not stop in contemplating God within the confines of human nature, either externally or internally. No, Bonaventure maintains that God, in fact, can be contemplated beyond the realm of "sensitive" perception.³²

In both of these sections of Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God* a knowledge of the thought of John Damascene and the Pseudo-Dionisius is most helpful. This discovery, however, does not mean that we can prove the doctrine of the Trinity using the natural light of reason. Rather, guided by the light of faith, we can find an analogy to the Trinity in human rational nature. As the divine nature is to the three divine Persons, so is the human nature or essence to its three powers. But Bonaventure is quite emphatic that the contemplation of God takes place through a "light that shines upon our mind, the light of eternal truth."³³ Therefore, his gaze turns quite appropriately to the Sacred Scriptures where he accepts the insights of the earlier medieval tradition in focusing on God "Who is" (Exod. 3:14) and God who is "Good" (Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19). Once more we cannot fail to see the influence of Francis who never tires of drawing attention to "God Who is" as we can see so strongly in his Praises of God, and "Who is all-Good," as we can find throughout His writings. All of this philosophical mode of affirmation, however, does not transcend the self because in the progress of contemplation or speculation the self is still within itself. In order to reach God, the self must rise above itself not only in thought but also in actual reality. To achieve this we must resort to the abandonment of the self or to lose the self to Christ. Only through the mediation of Christ can we ever completely lose ourselves in God.

Total identification with Christ can only be maintained by overcoming one's self so that one can live in and by God. Thus it is necessary to dispose any philosophical rationalizing and tangible images. This "renunciation" must be done out of voluntary love and not as result of fear or coercion. A renunciation done in love is the truest manifestation of losing one's self in God. However, it should be noted that this is a mystical experience which is revealed only to whoever desires and receives it.³⁴ On mystical experience, the Seraphic Doctor writes:

Since, therefore, in this regard (mystical experience) nature can do nothing and effort can do but little, little importance should be given to inquiry, but much to unction; little importance should be given to the tongue, but much to inner joy; little importance should be given to words and to writing, but all to the gift of God, that is, the Holy Spirit; little or no importance should be given to creation, but all to the creative essence, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.³⁵

To employ a commonly used philosophical classification, the movement of Bonaventure's thought is decisively the abandonment of the *affirmative way* in favor of the *negative way*. Human beings must be freed from the affirmative elements of the human way to reach God both in perception (senses) as well as in intellectual or rotation activities in order to be unified with God who is above all essence and knowledge. In the *negative way*, when the soul leaves the natural mode of knowing, the soul enters into the possession of God. At this stage, meditation ceases because conceptual knowledge and any mental operation are shut. Apart from these ordinary mental operations, the result is nevertheless true wisdom because it is truly experienced. This only goes to show that true wisdom (sapiential knowledge) is above every image and every abstract concept. To know God "really" in the summit of contemplation, one needs to raise one's self "above all the senses and above the discursive operations of the intelligence which are joined to images."³⁶ This knowledge of God is an intuitive and experiential knowledge done in and out of love: Love unites to the loved one more than knowledge unites to that which is known, and love transforms the lover into the loved one.³⁷ Sapiential knowledge is thus a knowledge that affords actual experience by means of unification and love. This sometimes referred to as *knowledge in darkness* because of the absence of any bodily sensation or perception in the process of knowing it. However, Bonaventure insists that "while there is no comprehension on the part of the intellect, the soul nonetheless is illuminated to the utmost extent."³⁸ Beyond this, that is, when the soul becomes completely transformed and shares in the knowledge of God, that is the perfect union possible only in the *Beatific vision*.

In the final chapter of the *Soul's Journey into God*, we find ourselves with Francis and Bonaventure on LaVerna. The journey has reached its conclusion and merited "the sabbath of rest."³⁹ But it is here that Bonaventure provides the most clear-sighted statement of his vision: "In this passing Christ is the way and the door, Christ is the ladder and the vehicle..."⁴⁰ Christ is for Bonaventure the perfect revelation of God and the perfect Sacrament of God revealing all the wonder and perfection of the Father. "With Christ Crucified," then Bonaventure concludes, "let us pass out of this world to the Father, so that when the Father is shown to us we may say with Philip: It is enough for us."

(To be continued)

Endnotes

¹Clare E. Rusowicz, "More on Environment," see Correspondence, *Commonweal* V.CXVII. No. 2, 26 January 1990, p.34 & 61.

²Michael J. Himes & Kenneth R. Himes, "The Sacrament of Creation: Toward

an Environmental Theology," *Commonweal*, Vol. CXVII, No. 2, 26 January 1990, pp. 42-49.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 45-46

⁴3 Sent. d. 24, dub. 4.

⁵Bernard McGinn, "Ascension and Introversion in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*," St. Bonaventura 1274-1974, vol. IV (Grotteferrata: Collegio San Bonaventura, 1974), pp. 537.

⁶*Itinerarium* 1,2. All translations from the Soul's Journey into God are taken from Bonaventure: *The Soul's Journey into God, The tree of Life, The Life of Saint Francis*, trans. and introd. by Ewert Cousins (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978). Hereafter we shall use "Itin" to refer to the first work and "Life" to refer to the last.

⁷Itin. 2, 13.

⁸Cf. *The six Wings of the Seraph* 7,12. *The works of Bonaventure*, Volume III, trans. by Jose de Vinck, Jose de Vinck (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966), p. 194.

⁹Lois Prunieres, "Contuition," *Lexique Saint Bonaventure*, ed. Jacques-Guy Bougerol (Paris: Editions Franciscaines, 1969), pp. 41-46

¹⁰cf. Raniero Sciamannini, OFMConv, *La Contuizione Bonaventuriana*, Firenze 1957, pp. 69ff, 97ff.

¹¹Itin. 2, 11. This is also found in *Conferences on the Six Days* in which we read: "The soul as it perceives created things is lifted up to look on God by 'contuition' (In Hex 5,3).

¹²Life, 9, 1.

¹³Concerning the mirror of things perceived through sensation, we can see God not only *through* them as through his vestiges, but also *in* them, as he is in them by his essence, power and presence. This type of consideration is higher than the previous one; therefore it holds second place as the second level of contemplation by which we are led to contemplate God in all creatures which enter our minds through our bodily senses (Itin. 2, 1).

¹⁴1 Sent d. 3 a.un. q. 3 concl.

¹⁵1 Sent d. 3 a.un. q. 3 concl.

¹⁶Life, 1. c. cit.

¹⁷Canticle of Brother Sun, in Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, (New York, Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 37-38.

¹⁸In *The Legend of Perugia*, 43, the author narrates the circumstances surrounding the composition of the first part of the Canticle. In the midst of all the suffering he had to endure after his stigmatization at Monte Alverna, St Francis announced: For his praise, I wish to compose a new hymn about the Lord's creatures, of which we make daily use, without which the human race greatly offends its Creator." Cf. *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁹*Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, p. 37.

²⁰G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Francis of Assisi* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), p. 132.

²¹Eloi Leclercq, *The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 19078), p. 4.

²²Cf. *Francis and Clare*, p. 38-39, especially n. 5.

²³Itin. 1:3.

²⁴Itin. 3, 1.

²⁵"Consider, therefore, the operations and relationships of these three powers, and you will be able to see God through yourself as through an image, which is to see through a mirror in an obscure manner (Itin. 3, 1)."

²⁶Itin. 3, 5.

²⁷Frederic Coplestone, *History of Philosophy*, Volume II (London: Search Press, 1950; reprint ed., 1976), p. 168.

²⁸Cf. The Testament of Saint Francis, in *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, p. 154.

²⁹Itin. 4, 1.

³⁰Itin. 4, 2.

³¹"Since we can contemplate the First Principle not only by passing through ourselves but also in ourselves, and since the latter contemplation is superior to the former, this mode of consideration occupies the fourth stage of contemplation (Itin. 4, 1)."

³²Itin. 5, 1.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Itin. 7, 4.

³⁵Itin. 7, 5.

³⁶In Hex. 2, 32.

³⁷3 Sent d. 26 a. 2 q. 1 and 2.

³⁸In Hex. 2, 32.

³⁹Itin. 7, 1.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*



The Aurora

Sparks flew
from the cobbler's hammer
which fell
in almost musical
repetition
to making shoes
for half the town
of Gorlitz.
Who could have guessed
what Fire sought
the humble peasant
as he fitted
his people
with the feet
of glad tidings?
These fresh
blessed winged souls
were enough to
cause even the
ancient Hermes
to bend the knee.

Dawn broke through
the gentle,
solitary hermeticist
one day in his
workshop.
The hammer fell
silent
and he turned
suddenly to find
light flare up —
reflected —
from a simple
pewter dish.
In one blazing
flash
was revealed to
Jacob Boehme,
the secrets of
the Light of
the World.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.



Greccio: "Bambino Mio"

Sr. M. Raphael, OSF

The Image of Mary in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*

GEORGE MARCIL, O.F.M.

The reflections¹ that will follow may have some theological significance. That can hardly be avoided. However, these reflections are not made with theological intentions in mind.

Following Karl Rahner, and the marvelous little book by Gerald O'Collins, *What are they saying about Jesus?*² one has to think seriously about the differences between a Christology that is medieval and one that is contemporary. That is, one has to note that a Christology "from above," and this appears to fit in general the medieval approach, tends to accentuate the divinity of Jesus at the expense of his humanity, while a Christology "from below," one based on carefully done scriptural studies, accentuates a humanity that is struggling through its experiences like any other human.

Differences in a Christology affect differences in a Mariology. This is a very general remark and it is not meant to affect the tenure of this paper.

What I do want to develop here is the stature of Mary as a *person* in the very literary work, *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.³ I will do so by studying — first, some of her actions, — then some of her quite special statements. — Third, I will note some of the actions of Jesus in her regard. I will then conclude making a special interpretation of the Mary figure as seen in the flight to Egypt scene.

Fr. George Marcil, O.F.M., a member of the St. Joseph Province of Montreal, did his doctoral studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of America. He taught philosophy at St. Francis College, Biddeford, ME, and has been an associate of the Franciscan Institute for the past 16 years.

The actions of Mary in the *Vita Christi*

The image that I draw from the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (henceforth referred to as simply *MVC*) is of a woman who is very strong and dominant. Whenever she is present in a scene, her being there always makes a major difference.

There is no doubt that the center of the *MVC* is Christ himself. But Mary runs a close second, close enough so that we can think quite seriously about the book being also a *Vita Mariae*.

Having said that, I proceed to skip over the early chapter⁴ that describes the first years of Mary and how, as a young girl, she was presented at the temple.

The life of Christ begins properly with the annunciation. In the *MVC*, the drama of the annunciation is naively introduced by a scene up in heaven with the Trinity making a major decision. They call Gabriel to attention and give him his mission. As he departs, the Trinity, to a man, if I may speak of the three that way, rush on ahead to be present⁵ on the lower stage, so as to watch every reaction on the face of Mary. Already this woman has stature, enough so to make God, as it were, tremble in her presence.

At the nativity, the actual parturition is described in miraculous terms. Mary stands, monument-like herself, against the famous column,⁶ and literally drops the child from her womb to the straw placed at her feet. By some tacit agreement with God, she is both mother and virgin. Even after the birth, she is still completely whole, as amply signified by the miraculous birth. God has respected his promise to her.

In the story line there are two fully described circumcisions. In the first, that of John the Baptist, Zachary, the priest, does the incision. In the second, in the cutting of the flesh of the Christ child, the high priestess is Mary herself.⁷ Let Joseph not be insulted, but at this point Mary becomes a take-charge person. She — not Joseph, nor some other priest — both cuts the child and consoles him in his childlike tears after the sacrificial act.

In this Franciscan narrative, at some quite early point, to set a tone, something had to be said about poverty. According to the Franciscan vision, poverty is a very central test of the authenticity of one's virtue. At the coming of the Magi, a problem is created but also quickly and elegantly resolved. The Magi come to do homage, quite properly. And as wealthy men, they leave gifts behind. These are gold, frankincense and myrrh. O my, "gold"!! What shall we do with that? We shall simply distribute it to the poor, and without hesitation.⁸ The proof that this in fact was done is that when the purification is enacted, shortly thereafter,

Joseph and Mary cannot afford the more expensive offering, the kind that would be wealth asserting.

I move us quickly along, past many of the moments in the early life (the flight into Egypt, the loss of Jesus in the Temple). Jesus, now full grown, has left home and is quietly beginning his life of ministry. He appears at the marriage of Cana. And following the words he preaches later, he takes the last place in the dining hall. However modest Jesus may want to be, there is no escaping some active participation in this quite public moment. His cousin is the one getting married. Also, Mary, his mother, is the person behind the scenes, who is in charge of the feast.⁹ She has planned the meal, had the tables set, and is generally overseeing the festivities. The famous decision about the wine is now quite fitting. The couple celebrating their marriage is from a poor family, so it is not surprising that they run short of the expensive beverage. But we do not want them to be embarrassed for it. So Mary makes the decision and presents the problem to Jesus with the well known outcome.

There are many little scenes in the MVC that reinforce this basic image of Mary. She is present at the multiplication of breads; Jesus has to deal with her again when John the Baptist is beheaded. Her constant presence with her usual image of strength leads to the scene on Mount Calvary where she stands erect,¹⁰ once again, witnessing one of the worst tragedies in the history of mankind.

At Calvary she recognizes the will of the Father. She realizes that she cannot interfere in any substantive way. So again she stands tall, in control of her own soul, even as she watches the terrible events unfolding. So Jesus arrives at the skull place. He is stripped naked. Mary watches in horror. Suddenly, she bolts forward to intervene just this little bit. The shame of his nakedness is more than she can bear. She rips the veil from her own head and covers the loins of Jesus with it.¹¹

Mary, the strong, stands witness to the crucifixion and death of her son. She is spared nothing; she suffers it all. When the body of Jesus is taken from the cross, she rushes forward to grasp in her arms the mutilated head of her dead son. She holds that head, caressing it until the men, who have made themselves responsible for burying the body have to beg her to let go.¹²

The great stature of Mary remains a constant throughout the story.

The last great scene is on the sabbath. Mary has gone off with John, the evangelist, to spend the night in the place of his choosing. On that sabbath after the crucifixion, some of the entourage of Jesus, along with Mary, gather at the cenacle. They are there in mourning, remembering the sad events of the preceding day. A knock on the door startles them. It is Peter. He comes in bearing the shame that is linked to his role in the crucifixion drama. He can hardly face the Madonna. But she comes

quickly to the rescue. She assures them all that the will of the Father was at play in all this and that no action of any of them would have altered the course of events. And she assures Peter that Jesus will be readily forgiving.¹³

She then gathers them around her, encouraging them all with reflections on the promised resurrection, but also inviting them to recount, for the sake of herself and others, the details of the last supper,¹⁴ one scene she regrets having missed.

In all of these moments, from the statuesque scene of the nativity, to the strength inspiring scene of the sabbath, Mary always seems to stand tall and strong. She is a woman of strength, a pillar, a natural leader. If she takes second place, in the story as a whole, it is only because Jesus is there.

... there is a tone created by the writer that depicts a Mary that is a large and monumental character.

Words or Prayers of Mary

Read by a 20th century reader, there is an unmistakable naiveté in the words put in the mouth of Mary in the MVC. The author has a simple and articulate faith in the declarations of the Chalcedon Council, and he transmits that faith anachronistically to the Mary that he writes about.

At no point in the story does Mary forget that she is dealing with one person who is both God and man. Although he is the fruit of her womb, she always bows to him and even prays to him adoringly.

Starting right off with the nativity, just after he has left her womb, and after she has bathed the minuscule body in her own milk, she proceeds to pray in the following words:

"I thank you, most holy Father, that you gave me your Son; and I adore you, eternal God, and, Son of the living God, my Son."¹⁵

When the child is twelve years of age, it happens that Mary and Joseph get separated from one another and from the child. They have to return to the Temple where presumably he still is. In a state of quasi-desperation, Mary rushes to and fro, losing her normal composure this one time. In this state of enervation, feeling even somewhat at fault, she prays to the Father; but she also prays to her Son:

"O most beloved Son, where are you, what are you doing, with whom are

you staying? Or have you returned to your Father in heaven? I know that you are God and the Son of God, but would you not have told me? Or were you taken by someone with wicked intent?...¹⁶

I have already stated above that part of the image of Mary in the *MVC* is that she strives to be present, always, in and to the active ministry of Jesus. Wherever he is, she makes it her duty to be. And so, when Jesus makes the prediction of his upcoming death, she hears about it. And so she approaches him. In this she becomes a quasi opponent, somewhat like Peter was, but she expresses herself with the proper reservations.

"My Son, I am as if dead to hear this, and my heart has abandoned me. May the Father provide, for I do not know what to say and I do not want to contradict Him. But, if it please Him, beg him to delay now, and let us celebrate the Pasch with these friends of ours. If it please Him, He can provide for the redemption in a different way..."¹⁷

Not much later, the cruel events come to pass. And so Mary, unable to prevent the unavoidable, becomes an eye witness to the crucifixion. As she stands there, crushed at seeing her Son so harshly sacrificed, she prays to God... not for herself, but for Him.

"Eternal God and Father, it pleases you that my Son should be crucified: it is not the time to ask Him back from you. But you see what anguish His soul is in now; therefore I beg you to lessen His suffering, if it please you..."¹⁸

After Jesus is dead, and after he is buried, Mary leaves Golgotha with John and Mary Magdalene and others. When they reach the house where they are to stay, she begins talking, reflecting on the devastating events of the day. As she speaks to them, her words change into a prayer to her Son. She continues, saying:

"O Son, in this night you were captured, perfidiously betrayed; in the morning, at the third hour, condemned; and at the sixth hour, crucified; and so you died. O Son, how bitter is the separation from you and the memory of your most shameful death..."¹⁹

At no point in all of this do the words of Mary contradict the image described earlier. The author of *MVC* has created the image of a very strong person, one who knows what her role is and is ready to perform what is here to do, no matter what the difficulties might be. Her words, throughout her career both as mother and disciple, just add the dimension, from a medieval point of view, of the ideal believer. She lives with the faith that her Son, her own offspring, be he child, be he full grown adult, is God, Son of the living God.

All of this makes her a great model of faith.

Actions of Jesus vis-a-vis his Mother

In a literary work, another way to become aware of the importance or stature of a character is to note how others act in the presence of that person.

At the beginning of this paper I noted how the Trinity rushed to earth, as if travel were a problem with them, to be firsthand witnesses of the reaction of Mary when she was approached by Gabriel on her willingness to be the Mother of God. That surely accentuates with words and dramatic setting the importance of the character in question.

In a still more creative moment, the *MVC* narrates in a very original way the gospel story of Jesus fasting for forty days and nights. When all the trials and strain of that fast are over, angels come again onto the stage. They show the fullness of their understanding as they say that Jesus at this point must surely be hungry. They also proclaim that they are prepared to serve him whatever foods he would have an inclination to eat. In my own imagination, I could even think of them presenting Jesus with a fancy printed menu to choose from. But the reply is simple, given without hesitation. Jesus says: "Go to my beloved mother. If she has something at hand, let her send it, for I eat no food as gladly as hers."²⁰ So despite the richness of the angelic menu, Jesus opts for a home-cooked meal, and thus honors his mother and her cooking.

In a small but not unimportant scene, the news has just been published that John the Baptist has been beheaded. Troubled, Mary approaches Jesus in an almost scolding tone asking why he didn't do something to prevent this. Jesus dignifies her with an explanation:

"O revered mother, he did not need that defense. He died for my Father and to protect His justice. Soon he will be in his glory. This Father does not wish to defend His own in such a way... as their home is not here but in heaven... [John's] manner of death is of no importance..."²¹

From the height of the cross, Jesus again shows his awareness of Mary and of how big a role she plays in his own story. Immediately after the author of the *MVC* has shown the compassion of Mary, he quotes also from the compassionate prayer of Jesus:

"My Father, see how afflicted my mother is. I ought to be crucified, not she, but she is with me on the cross. It is enough that I, who bear the sins of all the people, am crucified; she does not deserve the same. See how desolate she is... I recommend her to you: make her sorrow bearable..."²²

In probably as touching a scene as there is throughout the *MVC*, there is a brief but delicately described apparition of Jesus to Mary, staged first thing in the morning. Before appearing to anyone else, "noblesse oblige," Jesus makes himself present to his mother and they have a brief en-

counter.²³ They exchange gentle words. She gets her chance to express her concern that he is still recognized by the stigmata that he bears. She fears he may still be affected by the pain. But he just as gently reassures her that there is no longer any pain for him.

Even in all these moments, moments when Mary is much more the listener, the receiver, and not so much the agent, there is a tone created by the writer that depicts a Mary that is a large and monumental character.

Conclusion: Reflection on the Flight to Egypt

I have been reading from the *MVC* with graduate students in a Franciscan studies program for a number of years. And we have found that there are points that affect the narrative indirectly.

I ask my students who the audience is? The reply is first one sister, presumably called Cecilia; but through her, a large body of sisters, presumably Poor Clares. Of course this is not to exclude other readers. We are only asking who was the primary readership to whom this composition was first directed.

I think therefore of a Poor Clare house and I think of some anonymous, but quite dominant abbess in that house, that might have been the model from which the image of Mary came.

One of my students,²⁴ after studying the flight to Egypt, pointed out to me the great attention given to sewing in that "day's meditation." She said: "I can't help thinking of a group of sisters gathered together doing a large amount of sewing for many different purposes." This is one way that a Poor Clare house can scratch out a living. She also noted that some of the more talented seamstresses in a community tend to do very arty work. The art work might not sell, and meanwhile the boring but income producing work might not get done. Thus the "homiletic" aspect²⁵ of the meditation on Mary and on her support of the family-in-exile.

My reflection here might be strange indeed. But yet if one thinks of the image of some strong characterized abbess and of the influence that image might have on an imaginative writer, then one can begin to suspect how that same strong image might get projected through story telling technique and become the Mary, that was mother of God, and hence by reverse action, model of all Clares, and even of all women.

Endnotes

¹This article is entirely centered on the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*. This is a classical work composed in the early 14th century by some unknown friar. The book has long been attributed, whole or in part, to St. Bonaventure. Modern scholarship has adequately proved that it is not a Bonaventurian composition, but

surely by a Franciscan. Some of the more recent translations of it are by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961) and Sr. M. Emmanuel, O.S.B. (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1934). Dr. Jaime Vidal did his doctoral dissertation on the infancy narrative on these same *Meditations* (Fordham, 1984). The *Meditations* had a very broad readership in the late middle ages.

²*What are they saying about Jesus?* Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 2nd edition, 1983. The central distinction in the book is the older Christology from above vs. the contemporary Christology from below.

³*Meditations on the Life of Christ*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1961. All the quotes in this article will come from this most recent translation by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green.

⁴*MVC*, chap. 3, pp. 9-15.

⁵*MVC*, p. 16.

⁶*MVC*, p. 33. The stone column has been much discussed as a creation of this work. The idea has influenced many a renaissance artist in his depiction of the nativity.

⁷*MVC*, p. 44.

⁸*MVC*, pp. 51-52.

⁹*MVC*, pp. 143-45.

¹⁰*MVC*, p. 335.

¹¹*MVC*, p. 333.

¹²*MVC*, p. 344.

¹³*MVC*, p. 348.

¹⁴*MVC*, pp. 348-49.

¹⁵*MVC*, p. 34.

¹⁶*MVC*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁷*MVC*, p. 309.

¹⁸*MVC*, p. 335.

¹⁹*MVC*, p. 347.

²⁰*MVC*, p. 125.

²¹*MVC*, p. 185.

²²*MVC*, p. 335.

²³*MVC*, p. 359.

²⁴I credit St. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., Grove and McRoberts Roads, Pittsburgh, with the following reflection.

²⁵*MVC*, pp. 68-77.



Book Reviews

Six New Testament Walks in Jerusalem. By I. Martin. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986, 240 pp., \$12.95.

Reviewed by Raphael Bonanno, O.F.M., editor of HOLY LAND magazine and Holy Land Publications in English. He also guides pilgrims in the Holy Land.

Often in Jerusalem a walk is better than a fast tourist bus-ride. You see more details, for example, like the NT tombs on the Mt. of Olives, which you might otherwise miss.

This book in each chapter gives an Orientation Guide for the pilgrim or tourist which contains a resumé of the place or site plus the event that happened there.

In the background section M. gives the best explanation I have seen yet on the Temple with designs and drawings.

For pictures M. uses no color, except for the cover, but uses good, clear photos in black and white. His tone in writing is conversational, just like a personal guide; for example, "Let's sit down a moment on the bench. You've earned it." His skyline map helps the reader to identify the sites more easily. The bus and taxi connections for the weary wanderer are clearly marked out.

P. 181 gives a detailed and living description of the Temple Mount, drawing the reader and pilgrim 2,000 years back in the mind's eye. His section on St. Paul in the Fortress Antonia is unusual and not seen ordinarily, although the new Franciscan Missal of Votive Masses for the Holy Places includes one for Paul's Arrest.

One could argue about M.'s distribu-

tion of material, e.g. 16 pages on Gallicant, but finally it is the guide who determines how much emphasis each place gets. On p. 135 Psalm 8 should be 88. On p. 148 a small detail omitted is the door into the Court of the Priests which, if the book is reprinted, as it probably will be, should be corrected. On p. 150 Jesus is said to visit the Temple during the feast of Chanukah. But most Jewish commentators admit that Chanukah is of very recent origin. It is post-Jesus, although its meaning is pre-Jesus. On p. 178 the caption for the El-Aqsa mosque reads incorrectly the Dome of the Rock. The binding of this book is very poor, which is a shame. It almost seems the publisher meant it to be used once by a walking tourist and then thrown away. On p. 226 the True Cross Chapel of St. Helena is wrongly called the Holy Sepulcher. On p. 232 M. calls Jerusalem the "Magic" City. It seems a weak adjective, considering Jerusalem's glory and fame. It reminded me of one of my pilgrims who when she saw the lights of Jerusalem at a distance at night, exclaimed: "It's just like Albuquerque!" What a comparison! With all due respect to A.

The most glaring contradiction I discovered was on p. 227 when M. says: "The Garden Tomb is considered by many Christians to be the true site of Calvary (Golgotha)." On p. 228 he writes: "Although the archeological evidence does not support the claims of this site as the tomb of Jesus, it has, nonetheless, won acceptance among thousands of Christians." Here in Jerusalem everyone knows the tomb of Jesus and the true site of Calvary, archeologically proven, are in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. The Garden

Tomb is the devotional tomb, a beautiful place for an Easter meditation. Truth, and not false claims, is one of the pillars for ecumenism today. There is no such thing as the Catholic tomb and the Protestant tomb, as some guides mention to their pilgrims. There is only the one, true tomb from which Jesus rose gloriously from the dead.

This book is recommended to any pilgrim who wants to do it on his/her own steam and at his/her own pace. If you are coming in a group, I recommend Stephen Doyle's *The New Guide to the Holy Land* or David Halaiko's *The Holy Land, a Handbook for Christian Pilgrims*. The most complete, informative book is still Eugene Hoade's *Guide to the Holy Land*.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, has called for Christians to come again on pilgrimage to the Land of Jesus. Besides deepening your faith, you show solidarity with the Christians of the Holy land. If you come, do drop in and say Hello at New Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People Through Spiritual Exercises To Life Decisions. By Tad Dunne. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991. Pp. 200. Paper, \$15.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Claude Lenehan, O.F.M., of the staff of St. Anthony Shrine, Boston, Massachusetts.

Walker Percy, early in the novel, *The Moviegoer* sets this Theme: "... The idea of the search occurs to me.... the search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life.... to become aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair."

One thinks of the various counterfeits our culture offers us for "the real thing"; from a soda, to the perfect golf drive, to perfect romance and sex, to perfect (good) feeling through chemicals.

In the book *Spiritual Mentoring*, in the third chapter, "Our Primary Relationship: God," Tad Dunne, a former Jesuit Novice Master speaks of the inner pull of God: "The response has the character of an inner experience of desire. Besides the question arising from the experience of an inner pull, we also experience a commitment, a devotion, a kind of falling in love with an inner source that makes new persons of us." (Pg. 41)

Dunne treats this category of Lonergan (cf. Dunne's book *Lonergan and Spirituality*) as basic for retreatants and those reflecting on their lives, urging them to yield to this pull and let it take control of their lives. All the other desires that motivate us, or pummel us, and distract us are seen in relation to this primal draw. The life decisions spoken of in the subtitle of this book are in the context of a retreatant searching for... "The basic decisions that govern our lives." (Pg. 169). The retreat director or spiritual director should be as non-directive as possible in this process, Dunne says. This discernment hopefully leads from self focus to God focus. The conversion dynamic is an important part of the Ignatian exercises — not just a once-event, since God continues to call and challenge. Conversion is intellectual — the way one thinks about the whole of life in relation to God. Conversion is moral — the way one behaves as a son or daughter of God. Conversion is affective — the way one is moved and responds in love to God and to others. Conversion is religious — the way one reverences him/herself, others and the world in the benefi-

cence of a provident God.

Those seeking spiritual direction or seriously reflecting on their lives are often criticized for narcissistic navel gazing, but global consciousness is included in Dunne's concept of spiritual mentoring. He puts great store on "noticing" (Chapter Five) and the factors of consolation and desolation. Dunne offers that in desolation it is unwise to make a life decision: "In desolation... our value judgements are off. ... Desolation is like a black hole in space sucking in all nearby light by which we might appreciate what is truly good..." on the other hand ... "consolation means appreciating something with God's eyes (faith), feeling empowered to loving someone with God's love (charity), or having confident desires about the fu-

ture (hope)." (Pg. 98) A psychologist might say here "What you think and what you say is what you get." The author then moves to meditation in chapter six and up to contemplation in chapter seven.

The spiritual mentor helps persons fill in the valleys and level the mountains in their lives to make a smooth way for God. The mentor leads people to let go and let God. And not to indulge in the individualism and self-actualization our culture promotes, but paradoxically self actualization in Jesus. With Peter we say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Spiritual Mentoring: Guiding People Through Spiritual Exercises to Life Decisions is a very helpful guide in this process.

★ ★ ★



*The staff of the Franciscan Institute
joins the Editors
in wishing you a very blessed Christmas
and every grace and good
from our heavenly Father
throughout the new year.*

The Medallion of the Holy Child

I saw the Bride once,
five years ago,
in Sea Isle City.
Her face was veiled
by ocean mists and
conjured vapors.
She moved along
the boardwalk
bare-footed and alone
against the trials
of night winds and
the romantic spray
of mirages.
She was the lost Psyche
mourning her abandonment,
searching for his face,
his scent, his footprints
among the broken scallop shells.
Night lights flared and faded
behind a sky of
deep green gauze
.... dawn saw no sign,
nor sound, nor smell,
nor sight
of him.

2.

Word was that she
had disappeared
in the wash of illusion,
or was wandering mad,
word even of her dead
and found floating one
spring morning on the waters,
but I saw her again
this past Indian summer.
Her face was still veiled,
her bridal gown lit golden
shimmering to red-orange,
to deepest scarlet
against the setting sun.
One could sense her burning
and blushing with
new love.
She moved joyfully
on the sand to the
clapping sound of the
breaking waves,
her beautiful, beautiful hands
finding —
then touching,
carrying —
then venerating,
adoring —
then exposing,
a wondrous hand colored
medallion of
the Holy Child.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

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