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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

Form Viv: 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).

In Memory and Praise of Franciscan Women Unsung Saints Among Us

'Twas Thanksgiving Day when I was told that Sister Death had come to greet and had been gracefully welcomed by Sr. Clement Mary. "Clem" had been a Franciscan sister for over 50 years and, though very arthritic for years, had been ill but briefly. It fell to me to celebrate the funeral liturgy and, when the sisters declined to offer their reflections during the funeral mass, also to preach. Thus, I set out immediately to hear about "Clem" from her sisters; I asked for information and stories about Sr. Clement Mary. The very next morning, before mass, I listened to the sisters speak words - wonderful words, almost as if praying - describing their sister, Clement Mary. As I listened to their melody - "Clem was a *Lady*, a quiet, holy presence... unique in the whole house of 120 sisters; not one person would have a negative word to say about her..." - the image of Clare immediately came to my mind, and at that moment I decided to re-visit the *Acts of the Process of Canonization of Saint Clare* in preparing the homily. I hoped to capture their words of praise, their heartfelt gratitude for their sister by mirroring their memories of her life with memories of Lady Clare. The homily thus took the form of some paragraphs from those *Acts*, with gloss.

Several things have brought me to share now that homily: my own re-visiting of the *Acts of the Process of Canonization of Saint Clare*; my later remembering with my Franciscan sisters other Franciscan "saints" who have gone before us; my heartfelt gratitude for those women of faith whose courage, strength, commitment, and love encouraged me in my Franciscan vocation; my strong belief that in speaking their stories we continue their witness; my fervent hope that many might remember, and celebrate, and so believe... remember the many great Franciscan women who have gone before us, and celebrate the saints among us. My hope is, therefore, that the *gloss*, which humbly proclaims one specific "saint," may be but a spark to rekindle memories, may be but a beginning note to inspire melodies of those who "shone forth in life," and are "radiant after death," that we might remember those Franciscan women and celebrate the unsung saints among us.

[From the *ACTS OF THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION* (1253)]

Within two months of the death of Saint Clare, Pope Innocent IV issued the papal bull, *Gloriosus Deus*, October 18, 1253, in which he entrusted Bishop Bartholomew of Spoleto with the responsibility of promoting the Cause of her canonization. The Bishop of Spoleto, who had previous experience in these matters, took as his associates the archdeacon, Leonardo of Spoleto, Jacobo, the archpriest of Trevi, Brothers Leo and Angelo of the Friars Minor who were close friends of Saint Francis, Brother Mark, chaplain of the monastery, and a notary.

It happened that a "somewhat young" friar, a teacher at St. Bonaventure University, was assigned masses at the Motherhouse the week of Thanksgiving break, the last week of the Liturgical Year. Thus, when Sr. Clement Mary died on Wednesday, November 25th, it fell to that friar to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial and to preach at Sister's funeral. He set off in haste, therefore, to gather information from the sisters who had known "Clem." His associate, Sr. Barbara Sipple, interviewed many of the sisters of the convent and produced a written record of their responses. Sr. Natalina also wrote some recollections.

The First Witness

Sister Pacifica de Guelfuccio of Assisi, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath she knew Saint Clare while that holy woman was in the world in her father's house; and that she was considered by all those who knew her [to be a person] of great honesty and of very good life; and that she was intent upon and occupied with works of piety...

¹²She also said the blessed mother was humble, kind, and loving to her sisters, and had compassion for the sick. While she was healthy, she served them and washed their feet and gave them water with her own hands. Sometimes she washed the mattresses of the sick. Asked how she knew these things, she replied she had seen her many times.

One of the sisters who lived with Sister Clement Mary reported that she was "hospitable; had an attitude and manner of serving, not to be served..."

The Second Witness

Sister Benvenuta of Perugia, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath Lady Clare, former abbess of the monastery of San Damiano, had marvelous humility...

¹⁰She also said her speech was always about the things of God. She did not wish to talk about worldly things or for the sisters to remember these things...

Another of the sisters who lived with Sister Clement Mary reported that sister was "a wonderful listener. She did not speak much but the words she spoke were words of wisdom...

She would be pained when she observed uncharitableness...

She never, never participated in the rather popular indoor sport of listing the faults and failings of another..."

The Fourth Witness

Sister Amata, daughter of Messer Martino of Coccorano, a nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath she had been about twenty-five years in that Order and had known Saint Clare...

⁴She was assiduous in prayer and contemplation. When she returned from prayer, her face appeared clearer and more beautiful than the sun. Her prayers sent forth an indescribable sweetness so her life seemed totally heavenly...

"Sister had an aura of holiness... patient endurance... truly a woman of hope...

Sister had an air of peace about her. She was devoted to the Eucharist and for the past year has really put out great effort to *make it* to chapel for the Liturgy of the Eucharist daily..."

The Fifth Witness

Sister Cristiana de Messer Cristiano de Parisse, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she did not in any way know how to explain the holiness of the life of Lady Clare as well as her uprightness of habits. But it might be, as she firmly believed, she was full of grace, virtue, and their holy operations. She believed all that could be said about the holiness of another woman besides the Virgin Mary, she would say truly about her...

One sister said of Sr. Clement Mary: "Maybe she was the kind of woman Mary, the Mother of God, was ... gentle, unassuming..."

The Tenth Witness

Sister Agnes, the daughter of Messer Oportulo de Bernardo of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she could in no way express the humility, kindness, patience, and the greatness of the holy life and virtues of Lady Clare, as she saw them during the entire time that she stayed in monastery. She said it seemed that every good was in her and nothing reprehensible, so that she could be considered a saint.

One of the sisters reported that "Sister was very prayerful, did lots of spiritual reading..."

Sr. Veronica found words and images from a homily earlier that week to be most appropriate to describe Sr. Clement Mary: "She was a woman of prayer, led by the Spirit, rooted in God..."

The Eleventh Witness

Sister Benvenuta of Lady Diambre of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

²...she had always been under the direction of most holy mother, Lady Clare. The Lady had taught her to love God above all else; secondly, taught her to confess her sins totally and frequently; thirdly, instructed her always to have the Lord's passion in her memory.

Sr. Clement's personality "led her to see the best in everyone. She encouraged people. In the presence of people who might be at odds, she seemed to be *mediator* simply by her presence, not by advice but by her silent concern and graciousness..."

The Thirteenth Witness

Sister Cristiana, daughter of Messer Bernardo da Suppo of Assisi, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath the same as Sister Beatrice about her manner of living...

²She also said then, ... that she was under the discipline and guidance of Lady Saint Clare whose holiness of life enlightened the entire monastery and infused it with all the virtues and customs required of holy ladies.

Another one of the sisters spoke thus: "Sister was a beautiful person. She was a peaceful presence, quiet, holy..."

It was these qualities that made it so very pleasant to be in her company -she was truly an edification..."

The Fourteenth Witness

Sister Angeluccia, daughter of Messer Angelico of Spoleto, nun of the monastery of San Damiano, said under oath:

⁷...the death of lady Clare was wonderful and glorious, but one evening a few days before her death, she began to speak to the Trinity and to say very softly other words to God many educated people would hardly understand.

Sister Natalina said: "Sister told me one day when I was taking her to the doctor - a month or so ago (and things weren't looking so great) - that she was aware that she might not have too much time left, but it was OK. She told me that day that she tried to live always in the present of the Lord, that she renewed her vows every day at Mass and she was ready... if or when the Lord called her.

I feel that Sister had a special love relationship with the Lord, that she loved him with her whole heart, soul and mind - and that inner peace of the Lord was the Sr. Clement Mary we saw each day!"

[From the *BULL OF CANONIZATION* (1255)]

O the ineffable brilliance of blessed Clare!
The more eagerly she is sought after for something
the more brilliant she is found in everything!

This woman, I say, was resplendent in the world,
shone brilliantly in her religious life;
enlightened as a radiant beam in her home,
dazzled as lightning in the enclosure.

She shone forth in life;
she is radiant after death.

Sr. Clement Mary was resplendent in the world;
She shone brilliantly in her religious life.
By her silent, graceful presence she has enlightened this home;
by her faith and devotion she has been light for the sisters,
by her love of God and service for others she has become His spouse.

Sr. Clement Mary shone forth in life;
she is radiant after death.

Fr. Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M.
St. Bonaventure University
The last day of the Liturgical Year 1992

THE HUMANITY OF DUNS SCOTUS

A Reflection on the Spirituality of Franciscan Christology

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND O.F.M.

John Who?

Recently I was asked to write an article in a British spirituality magazine on "Duns Scotus for the masses," a somewhat daunting task when one is writing for an audience who may never have heard of Duns Scotus. My brief was: "keep it simple..." Can anyone tell me *how* one simplifies the thought of John Duns Scotus? He is after all called "The Subtle Doctor." However, I began to write the article, all the time hearing the echo in my head "Keep it simple"! My own brief was to try to introduce ordinary British readers to the thought and spirituality of this great Franciscan thinker so that they should come to admire and love this great man. It proved an unenviable task. But it struck me as I read and used other material I had written on Scotus that, in the words of the Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, "...Duns Scotus is one of those many prophets not recognized in his own land..." Yet, he is a great European having lived and worked in four different European countries, one of the great minds of the Church, and one of the great thinkers in the Franciscan Order.

I was even more determined that when people asked "John who," they would know who Scotus was, what his principal preoccupation was, and what

Fr. Séamus Mulholland, a Franciscan who now ministers in a parish in London's East End, has pursued advanced studies at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury, England. Much of his study has focused upon the thought of John Duns Scotus.

his contribution to the history of Christian thought had been. The more I read, studied and revised my previous thinking on Scotus, the more I became increasingly aware of the profound humanity of this man. His vision of the universe is breathtaking, and his understanding of Christ within the cosmos can only be described in spirituality terms as a sustained reflection born out of the loving intimacy achieved in the union described in the "Unitive Way." Scotus, I have come to realize, is one of those figures in the great tradition of the Fathers of the Church who knew personally and indescribably intimately the God and Christ about whom they thought and wrote.

This reflection attempts to explore some aspects of Scotus' thought on the Predestination and Primacy of Christ, the Passion and the Immaculate Conception, with a view to highlighting elements of Scotus' spirituality of humanity and the humanity within his spirituality. All this, hopefully, without the academia that research and writing on Scotus at times necessitates - so that like the British readers for whom I have just written, others may come to admire and love this great Franciscan friar, scholar, thinker, writer and unrecognized mystic.

Like St. Francis, to whose vision Scotus always remained faithful (despite what some scholars think), Scotus died in his early 40s without getting the opportunity to revise his works. It is, perhaps, because he died so young and was unable to do this which makes Scotus' thought so complex and difficult to understand. We can only speculate on what might have been had he lived longer, but when we realize such speculation is useless, we can grieve for what might have been. Notwithstanding the fact of the complexity of his thought, careful study of Scotus repays fruitful dividends.

When we study Scotus there is no doubt that one knows one is in the presence of a singularly brilliant and keenly perceptive mind. But one also realizes that these thoughts on such a diversity of theological subjects can only come from a profoundly saintly man. Those who castigate Scotus through using the epithet "subtle" in a pejorative sense, do so because they fail to see beneath the subtlety. They see only the sharpness of his intellect, yet cannot see his heart. They fail to see the prayer and the experience of intimate union with the God about whom he is writing.

John Duns Scotus stands for us today as an example of how the mind and heart can work in harmonious union to bring about not just brilliant intellectual, theological, or philosophical insights, but also the lived experience of the meaning of love and in which to proclaim the Gospel which is the rule and life of every Friar Minor who attempts to seek union with God.

Duns Scotus and St. Francis

It is not for nothing that Scotus is called "The Subtle Doctor" but if we set aside the pejorative use of this epithet we can come to a deeper understanding of the dynamism and vitality of his vision of the cosmos. Scotus can drain the last ounce of meaning out of any word, yet he is attuned to the nuances of language, and at the same time understands the limitations of language. There are moments in Scotus' thought when we are faced with the reality of Wittenstein's dictum of "That whereof we cannot speak, thus we must pass over in silence." Even in his doctrine of the Primacy of Christ we can explain and explore it, see its beauty and its glory, yet perhaps feel that we are intruding in one man's deep, loving expression of his own spiritual life and quietly retire to a respectful distance lest we interrupt this dialogue between Scotus and his God.

When one studies Scotus it is like watching the sophisticated movements of an acrobat, the graceful movement of a ballerina, or the beauty of an ice-dancer. Scotus is an intellectual choreographer - for he unites clarity of thought and vision with the intricate movement of language. Each statement is precise, without being pedantic; and each statement carries with it its own unabashed Christian conviction, a tremendous intellectual and spiritual power.

However, lest anyone think whilst reading this that Scotus' thought is nothing more than a raid upon the theologically and philosophically inarticulate, let me hasten to say that such is not the case. Scotus is above all a Franciscan. We may think at first that the area of such intense intellectual speculation does not lie within the parameters of the vision of the universe as St. Francis saw and experienced it, and that, therefore, such intellectualism is out of place compared to the simplicity of St. Francis. But this is not so, especially in the case of Duns Scotus. Scotus did not join the Dominicans, nor the Benedictines; he joined the Order of Friars Minor and his formation was **Franciscan** formation. Scotus and his theological thought are deeply rooted in the Franciscan tradition. And this is most evident in his doctrine of the Primacy of Christ. It is Scotus' vision of the Cosmic Christ within the hierarchy of love which places him next to St. Francis both in vision and feelings.

What Francis gave expression to in the simplicity of his poetry, song, drama and mysticism, Scotus gives expression to in his unbridled speculation and profundity of thought which is so combined with a richly toned clarity of vision that it may be truly called mystical. Scotus' theology is not just the result of the application of the mind to the great problems and questions which beset us all, but also the application of the heart, soul and spirit. Scotus' theology is not just "theo-logos," words concerning God; it is also "pneuema-logos," words of the Spirit. The words of the Spirit that can only come from a life lived in prayer and

contemplation of the most inaccessible of the Mysteries: God Himself. Scotus and St. Francis stand side-by-side in the beauty and simplicity of their vision and their experience of the Most High God - for each comes to their conclusions as a result of intimate loving union.

The Beginning, Middle and End of Scotus' Theology

So, yes, Scotus is difficult to understand but he may be easily understood if we consider what the beginning and end point of Scotus' theology was. Like St. Francis, Scotus bases his theological endeavors and vision on Love. For Duns Scotus, the beginning, middle, and end of all his study, teaching, thought and explanation was Love. Even in his ethical thought it is Love which predominates. In his understanding of Christ it is Love which is the hermeneutic, and always remains so. It is the same hermeneutic principle which is applied to his understanding and explanation of the Redemption.

Love brings with it its own simplicity, and if this central preoccupation of Scotus is applied to the structures of his own thought, then we can say in all honesty that Scotus' brilliant intellectual capacity has its basis in this same simplicity, for what Scotus gives us is not typical dry Scholastic theology. Rather, we are offered a vision of humanity that is rich in its grasp of what is most essential to the human condition, Love. And this is also the key to understanding the humanity of Scotus' theology and spirituality. In the theology of Duns Scotus there is no contradiction or distinction between mind, heart, spirit. Intellect and Will, Logic and Love, Mind and Heart are so intimately bound together in close union that we may say that Scotus' logic and intellect are merely the paint and brushes with which he paints his picture of Love on the canvas of Medieval thought. Scotus understood and experienced God as Love first and foremost, and so in the Franciscan tradition he sees that theology has practical consequences - and is not just about abstract thought or intellectual indulgence. Perhaps, after St. Paul, he is the Theologian of Human Liberation.

*Scotus is difficult to understand but . . .
offered a vision of humanity that is rich in its grasp
of what is most essential to the human condition,
Love.*

Scotus and the Purpose of Theology

Scotus saw the basic purpose of theology as union with God in *this* life. It was not for some glorious future, it could be realized here and now. This is so because as far as Scotus was concerned God is Love. This and only this. Even when he is philosophically speculating in the realm of the Univocity of Being, he always says that God is Love. This is God's Being. This is His life. If God is Love, says Scotus, then the ultimate purpose of theology is the love of God and to love God above all else. For Scotus, there is only one subject-object in theology: the God Who is Love and the Love Who is God. Here Scotus makes a connection between philosophical theology and theology per se. He notes that God reveals himself in Exodus 3:14 as "I am Who am," which is abstract and ontological. Yet, he goes on to say, we know from St. John what thisontos of God is: Love (*1 John* 4:8). So even the abstraction of ontology is revealed as Love.

God is Love, says Scotus, and this being the case, since everything has its origins in God, everything has its origins in Love. It is not necessary for God to create; He does not have to do it, yet He does do it, why? - because God is Love and so He creates out of Love because He wishes to reveal and communicate Himself to others as the fullness of His own Love.

The Hierarchy of Love

God is Love. But Scotus does not leave it there. He begins the process of breaking down this love in understandable terms of a hierarchy. It sounds complicated but it is not because for all Scotus' intellectual complexity his insistence is always on the simplicity of God as Love. In this hierarchy, the highest and greatest manifestation of God's Love is the Man-God, Jesus Christ. In Scotus' understanding Christ is predestined from all eternity to be this highest manifestation of the Trinity, the God who is Love. Thus here is humanity at the heart of the Godhead *before* its historical or existential facticity and it is already loving God in his own mystery. Christ is the *greatest* manifestation in this hierarchy of love, all others are willed to be a predestined to grace and glory in relation to Christ. What Scotus means by this is simple enough and further evidence of his own spirituality and humanity: Christ is the *FIRST* lover of the Trinity, all others are "co-lovers" with Christ. But yet again, Scotus does not leave it there, more needs to be said and this he does. His understanding is that in view of this end i.e. Love of the Trinity by all creation, God also wills the means for this - Grace. Nature, therefore, is the lowest in this hierarchy but it too is directly ordained to the supernatural order of grace and glory. What is clear thus far is that Scotus begins and ends with the Love of God and the God Who is Love for all his theological reflections and his lived spirituality. In this light,

he is surely, not only a true son of St. Francis, but also THE theologian of the Love of God in the Franciscan tradition.

The Primacy of Christ: Scotus' Crowning Achievement

On the basis of what has already been said concerning Scotus' preoccupation with the Love of God and the God Who is love, I would like to offer a different approach to his crowning glory - the Doctrine of the Absolute Predestination and Primacy of Christ. While staying true to Scotus' doctrine I would like to reflect upon its human and spiritual consequences for it is here that we meet the mystic, the poet, the Franciscan, the man of simple faith, trust, humility, but above all we meet the lover of the Lover. This is Scotus' greatest and unequalled bequest to theology, the Church and to a glorious anthropological vision which has for its center God made Man. Once again it appears extremely complex, but if we keep in mind Scotus' starting point - the God Who is Love - then it is more readily understood.

Scotus encounters and reflects upon Christ within the context of His being the greatest manifestation of the Blessed Trinity. Using his own understanding of 2 Cor. "*...all things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ...*" Scotus goes on to experience and explore an understanding of Christ, which while speculative, is not only within the Franciscan tradition but owes much, spiritually, to the Fathers of the Church. For Scotus the Incarnation of the Son of God is itself a manifestation of God's infinite Love in the historicity of human terms, and this Incarnation is willed by God from all eternity quite apart from His knowing that humanity would fall.

Unlike others who were exploring the Reason for the Incarnation, Scotus does not begin with any hypothetical question as to what God would or would not have done in the event of sin. He begins with what God has already done. Indeed, even when Scotus does mention this question he does so from an entirely different perspective and considers the question in the light of what he has already said concerning Christ's predestination and primacy as Son of God. Scotus asks a radically different question, which has powerful implications for our contemporary understanding of the nature of man's goodness: Is the Predestination of Christ to grace and glory necessarily dependent on the Fall of Man in Adam? Scotus admits that many authorities suggest that such seems to be the case but, while not denying the necessity of Redemption Scotus argues against this view. Even at this early stage in his thought, sin in relation to the Incarnation does not occupy too high a place.

Scotus' vision is based on what he has already said concerning the hierarchy of love in the mind of God. God predestines all things to grace and glory *before*

His own prevision of their fall. And Scotus goes on to say, this is even more the case in respect to the soul of Christ which was predestined to receive the fullness of and highest glory possible before the fact of the Fall. This need not cause us any headaches trying to understand it because Scotus bases this part of his thought on the orderedness of God's creative activity. He says that since God wills in order and not in contradiction, God first intends what is closest to the end. So, just as God intends one to have glory *before* they have grace among those whom God has already predestined to glory, He would seem to intend *first* the glory of the one He wishes to be nearest the end, that is, Christ. Therefore, God wills glory to the soul of Christ before any other, and He wills to glory every other soul in relation to that.

The Predestination: The Highest Love in Scotus

In part III of the *Ordinatio* dist. no. 19 Scotus gives his own position on the Incarnation. It is a vision which is rich in love and mercy, which has a wonderful vision of the residual goodness in humanity, and which gives to the Incarnation the central place in the Universe so that all things come from God through it and so will eventually return to God through it. The depth of spirituality is evident and his own experience of not only being redeemed by Christ, but being loved by God in Christ is obvious, for his reflection on the Incarnation is yet another mystical experience - as if Scotus has glimpsed the deliberations in the court of Heaven before Creation and hears God say, "Let us make man in our own image" and sees the Incarnation already form in the mind of God.

Scotus' argument is that the Incarnation of the Son of God was not foreseen as being brought about by humanity's sin. On the contrary, it was seen by God from ALL eternity as a good nearer the end. So, Christ in his human nature is foreseen as closer to the end than any other (Scotus is here speaking of all the predestined - including ourselves) because each soul was ordered to grace and glory *before* the foreseeing of their fall. To understand this even better we might say Scotus sees the prevision of God in the following order:

In the **first** place God sees the highest good; in the **second** place God saw all creatures; in the **third** place God predestined some to grace and glory; in the **fourth** place God foresaw all those who would fall in Adam; in the **fifth** place God foresaw and preordained a remedy for that Fall, namely the Redemption through the Passion and Death of Christ, the Incarnate Son. Scotus adds to his argument by asserting that this being the case, Christ, as regards his Incarnation, as with the elect was *first* predestined to grace and glory *before* the Passion was seen as a remedy for sin (in much the same way, says Scotus, that a doctor wills the health of his patient before curing him).

So, Scotus' conclusion is that just as all the predestined were first predestined before the Redemption was foreseen as a remedy against their fall, so the Blessed Trinity first preordained the predestined to grace and glory, before seeing the Passion and Death of Christ as a medicine (Scotus' words) for those who would fall in Adam. So what is Scotus really saying? What is really going inside his heart in this explanation? Well, from Scotus' argument it may be safely asserted that the Incarnation was not brought about by, nor is it merely a response to, the fall of humanity from grace. On the contrary, Christ takes his place in creation before the foreseeing of sin. It is also clear that for Duns Scotus the Redemption is only PART of the total Christ-Event in the Incarnation of the Word.

So, Scotus does not consider the necessity of Redemption as the Primary motive for the Incarnation but rather that the Incarnation of the Son of God was always in the mind before, during and after the fact of the Fall. Surely something wonderful is being said here about how God loves humanity in Christ predestined to grace and glory as Center of the Universe? In his doctrine of the Predestination and Primacy Scotus was certainly going against the mainstream of Scholastic thought, even though one may argue that there is a good case for asserting that many of the Fathers of the Church held to such a position. However, Scotus remains unshakable in his theological conviction, precisely because it is born out of deep prayer and experience of intimate union. His doctrine is a simple, yet profound reflective explanation resulting from his own deeply rooted theological, prayerful, mystical and poetic exploration of the reality, as he sees and experiences it, of the God Who is Love and the Love of God as it is made manifest in the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.

Scotus defines **predestination** as "*...the preordaining of a rational creature to grace and glory and the means to attain that glory...*" He has already argued against the commonly held theory of the Incarnation as being necessitated by the Fall of humanity. His argument for this is quite stunning for it is a leap into the very heart of the Love of God and the God Who is Love. Once again we may explain his argument in terms of a 1,2,3,4,5, that is, in an ordered way. However, while we are dealing strictly with a speculative theological position here, what it most certainly clear is that intellect and logic are at the service of spirituality and speculative intellect is submissive to the Will which is the seat of Love in Scotus' thought. The outcome of Scotus' doctrine of the Predestination of Christ is an unforgettable experience of the Love of God and the God Who is Love permeating every facet of the universe and as John Donne has written on the love of God it batters our heart, and ravishes us.

Scotus' argument for the Predestination and Primacy of Christ is as follows: **Firstly:** God loves Himself. **Secondly:** God loves Himself in others and this is

a most holy and ordered love. **Thirdly:** God wills that He be loved by another who can love Him perfectly (and here Scotus is referring to someone's love outside God). So, he argues, **Fourthly:** God foresees the union between Himself, the Word and the creature Christ, who owes Him a supreme love *even if there had been no sin*. **Fifthly:** God sees Christ as Mediator between Himself and God coming to suffer and redeem His people from sin. Now, because God is Love, He necessarily loves Himself first. God knows Himself and He knows that He is infinite blessedness. This Divine Life is sealed in the procession of the Holy Spirit who is Personal Love.

So at this point Scotus has moved beautifully from a consideration of the Love of God, the place of Christ in the Universe, to a profound spiritual reflection on the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity. The reason for ALL the Divine activity is found in the very nature of the Love of God Himself: a love that is ordered, free and holy and in which He loves Himself forever. God also loves Himself in others and this love is unselfish since God is the cause of all the creatures. This Divine Love tends to "spill over" or diffuse itself, here is Scotus at his most Platonic (though closer to neoplatonism), and God wills that He be loved by another who can love Him as perfectly as He loves Himself, that is, Christ. God also wills that other creatures love the same object that He loves since it is the very nature of love to want the object which is loved to be loved by others since such love knows no jealousy or envy.

*Scotus was a man who knew Christ. . .
He is the embodiment of his own principle that the
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God in this life...*

So, for God to will others to love the Divine Essence that is Himself is to will others to have this love in them and it is at this point in the Divine intention that Scotus places his understanding of Predestination. He quotes Richard of St. Victor, when he says "Love loving perfectly, wishes the Loved to be loved." And now Scotus has arrived at the most sublime, cosmic exploration and reflection on the generation of Eternal Love: God, loving Himself, wills to have co-lovers because He is Love. Scotus goes on to assert that since the motive of all God's activity outside Himself is the glory of the Divine Essence by Love, in Love, for Love and through Love, God first decrees the existence of Christ in whom God is glorified in all creatures in the highest possible way.

Scotus and the Perfection of Christ's Love

This homage of the Incarnation contains, for Scotus, the most perfect love and so bears within itself the love of ALL creatures. But Scotus continues to insist that the final reason for God's activity outside Himself is the Incarnate Word in whom Creator and creatures are united for ever. It is Christ who is the first intended of these co-lovers. Because of His perfect love, and as a consequence of Predestination, God wills the whole of the order of grace and nature. In other words, there is creation only because there is Love. The Love of God and the God Who is Love is also the supreme purpose of Revelation. The truths which have been made known to us are not there simply to offer perspectives to our intellects, rather, they are there so that we should and foremost love God.

It is in this sense that Scotus understands there can be no separation between Theology and Spirituality and certainly there is no such separation in Scotus' own life. Revelation was made to direct the activity of the Will to its final end and its highest and most noble endeavor: the love of God Who is Love. So, we have come full circle and have returned to our starting point: God and God's Love. It is within this understanding of Love that a brief exploration of the spirituality of Scotus' understanding of the necessity of Redemption and the Passion and Death of Christ can be explored. When Scotus does consider this issue he does so beautifully and in a profoundly moving way because once again it is Love which is the central preoccupation.

The Necessity of Redemption and the Passion in Scotus

When Scotus considers those authorities who say that sin is the reason for the Incarnation, he argues that this position can be explained in the sense that Christ would not have come as Redeemer if there had been no sin to redeem. Scotus accepts this saying that since there had been no sin to redeem there would have been no need of redemption. But Scotus' position vis-a-vis the Primacy and Predestination of Christ is not based solely on the necessity of Redemption and he argues that it was not because of the Redemption that the soul of Christ was predestined to glory. Why not? Well, Scotus argues with a stunning simplicity, because the redemption or even the glory of ALL souls that are to be redeemed cannot be compared to the glory of the soul of Christ! Scotus pushes this even further when he says that it is unlikely that the highest good in the universe, that is the Incarnation, is a chance occurrence dependent on the fall of humanity. In other words, it does not make sense that the highest good took place only because of a lesser good. He concludes by arguing that it would be most unlikely, as well as contrary to God's ordered act, if the soul of Adam was predestined to such a good before the soul of Christ. So, on the basis of this what is Scotus'

The Incarnation is the greatest expression of God's love for Humanity. That Christ has come as a Redeemer is secondary in the mind of God because Scotus cannot allow that the highest good is dependent on an inferior good, that is, the need for Redemption. God, he says, freely chose to create angels and humanity with free will, He foresaw their fall, and having foreseen their fall, he also willed Christ as Redeemer through his suffering and death. So, as always, the context is that of Love. Scotus views the Primacy of Christ and the Redemption as a loving expression of the highest justice, mercy and love of God. This mercy is shown in the Blessed Trinity who sent Christ, the Word Incarnate, who offered himself up on the cross for humanity which was alienated from God through sin. Justice is to be found in the repairing of the damage done by humanity and in the reconciliation of that humanity with God.

When Scotus speaks of the Passion of Christ and considers the blood that was shed, it is simple, prayerful, reverent and moving. He saw the Passion and Death of Christ as the culmination of his love for the Trinity and humanity - the ultimate service he was predestined for. By this service Christ became humanity's unique means of salvation and the only Mediator between God and Creation. This vision of the Redemption, where Love is made central and not sin, could not have come from anyone who had not already lived out the effect of Christ's redemptive act in their own life. It must come from Scotus' life of prayer: a life steeped in Christ, a life steeped in God Who is love and the love of God. In the theology of Scotus everything is subordinated to the spiritual life with Christ as the Center. There can be no doubt that John Duns Scotus is at one with the vision of St. Francis of Assisi and there is much we ourselves can reflect upon.

Some Final Thoughts

Scotus was a man who knew Christ, not just intellectually but in his own heart. His work shines with a radiant vision of humanity perfectly expressed in the Incarnation from all eternity and the predestination of Christ to glory. He is the embodiment of his own principle that the purpose of theology is union with God in this life - and that is the essence of his mysticism. Scotus' spirituality is undoubtedly Franciscan. The recent beatification of Scotus is a source of great joy to the whole order, my own Province and the people of Scotland which gave him birth. There is a singular warmth and attractiveness about this man who put an awesome mind at the service of the great love of God and the God Who is Love. So once again we have ended where we started: with the Love of God and the God Who is Love. There is where John Duns Scotus, Franciscan, priest, scholar and lover of the love of God began and ended. And it is this which gives the theology of Scotus its great accessible humanity - for Love is humanity loved in the Incarnate Christ in Duns Scotus.

ON THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BROTHERS GATHERED AT THE PORTIUNCULA JOINTLY WROTE THE SO-CALLED "RATIO FORMATIONIS FRANCISCANAE"

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. In the year of grace and freedom 1990, the year in which the brothers of the young Provinces of Brazil began to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of missionaries from Saxony in Germany and in which they themselves took the action of sending their first missionaries to Angola; the year in which several frontiers disappeared, never again to be instruments of separation between people of good will but rather to unite them and enable them to share in a common destiny; while the Fraternity prepared for the Chapter of Pentecost under the protection of Blessed Diego of Alcalá; following the commemoration of the transitus of Francis, our Father and Brother, behold, about one hundred and twenty friars, all of them masters and formators, gathered under divine inspiration, each with his letter of obedience from the General Curia in Rome. This meeting in the Portiuncula was for the purpose of studying the "priorities" of Franciscan "Formation" and of drawing up a document that would be important for the whole Fraternity and for the world. This document they decided to call a "Formation Plan" or "Ratio Formationis."

During the four weeks of their stay at the "Domus Pacis" their sharing of ideas in an atmosphere of peace enabled them to gain a profound understanding of what the Holy Spirit is saying today to the Provinces and to the brothers. They

Fr. Hermann Schalück, O.F.M., General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, whose creative and insightful reminiscences have been applauded by many readers of The CORD, here offers an inspiring reflection on how the Brothers came together to write a Franciscan Plan for Formation.

followed an inductive rather than a deductive method, while they were full of joy at the sight of the many signs of life and growth which became obvious throughout the Fraternity. All of this they gave expression to in the "Ratio" we have mentioned, as a means of helping all the friars, as time went on, to enliven and cultivate all the gifts of the Spirit which may lie dormant in them; to wit, the gifts of contemplation and of action, the gifts of the word and of silence, of animation and of organization, of teaching and of study, of preaching and of working with their hands, of caring and of consoling.

Some of the results of that meeting are set down here in simple words for the edification of all those who may come to this Curia after us and as a help for all those sent by God who may desire to improve their formation and to instruct their brothers.

2. First of all, they dedicated themselves to contemplation in all its aspects, under the guidance of a certain Brother Premanand of Bengal. The name of this dear brother means: "The Beloved of God." So as to introduce us into the mystery of education in the Spirit of God and make us become conscious of the grandeur, and the beauty, as well as the difficulties of the task of educating young friars, he availed himself particularly of the profundity and the mysterious complexity of art, especially the art of MUSIC. He began by quoting John Crysostom, doctor of the Church, and spoke to us, using his words: "There is no greater art than that of education. The person to whom this art has been given must be a more complete artist than a composer, a painter, a sculptor or a musician." Granted what he called the "dynamic character" of Franciscan formation and education, he then quoted a mystic of his own country, distant India. "Does not the sorrow of unsung songs break the strings of my lute?" (R. Tagore). Finally he quoted an anonymous German poet who, upon seeing the walls of Europe collapsing, had exclaimed: "When the Lord intones the ode of history, I want to be flute, guitar, harp and cymbal. I would wish him to inspire me with sweet music and melody."

Brother Premamand earnestly exhorted all to come to know and learn new songs, new rhythms (cf. *Ps* 32:2): the music of wind and sea, the unfinished symphony of the universe, the hymn of flowers and the murmur of rocks, the melody of a pure heart and the "steady chant" of the other cultures of religions, particularly those of the poor; to remember also - if it should be necessary - that after the example of certain figures who have preceded us in the faith, it is possible to sing in a furnace (cf. *Dan* 3) as also in the belly of a whale (*Jonah*).

So, thanks to these suggestions, all reflected on the best way to proceed in the future in the "Formation of oneself and of others."

3. Next came the discourse on holy THEOLOGY. A certain Brother Anthony, a most learned man coming from a university situated in the holy city called Eternal Rome, gave an exposition on "theology as a science according to St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and Blessed John Duns Scotus." After this all shared their own experiences and reflected on what they should say in the "Ratio" apropos to this sacred science. They recognized more clearly than ever how important it is for the Friars Minor to interpret at once courageously and humbly, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the signs of the times both past and present (cf. *GS* 4), and to conceive liberating utopias for the future; for they should remember that it is a matter of general experience that those without utopias or dreams become transformed into slaves and are filled with hatred. They came to understand that for all people there is a propitious time: a time for meetings, articles and scientific symposia, but also a time for attending the school of the poor and working in a soup kitchen (G. Gutierrez). Was it not true that the Lord had explained his word to our Father Francis when through the "inductive method" he led him among the poor, in order to show mercy to them? (*Test*) So from now on, the younger friars, wherever they may be, should understand more clearly and with eyes and hearts illumined, announce as "minors" the good news of the "God who is forever minor." This means that with a watchful eye and in solidarity with the suffering Christ in the heart of the today's world, we should look more carefully into the face of the poor. It was not necessary to look for anything else - Br. Anthony confirmed - in the living heritage that our illustrious predecessors, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and others have left us. And they all reflected on how to proceed better in the future, "in the formation of themselves and others," thanks to these suggestions.

4. Then the important treatise of history was taken up. A certain Brother Francis of the empire of the Aztecs and the Mayas gave another notable exposition on the subject: "Whoever has no memory, has no history." He declared that in the Fraternity, as in the universal Church, it was important to write and to understand history, not as a history of victors and conquerors, but as a history seen from the perspective of the humble, of the oppressed, and of all those who had been outcasts from their countries, but who, according to the promises of Our Lord, will one day possess the land (cf. *Mt* 6). He knew how to stress in a gentle but convincing manner that for those of us who have promised to become genuine "minors," the history of evangelization should neither be written nor taught with the eyes and hearts of those who manned the ships of the "conquistadors," but with the eyes and the anguished hearts of those who in those past centuries were standing on the seashore and looking out at the approach of the ships of the conquerors. In this respect he advised us to "structure" the study of history, of our faith, of our Church and of our Fraternity in such a manner that

it could be of interest to all marginalized brothers and sisters of all the continents, who are nameless, with no one to console them, and have even been forgotten by "official" history.

All began to reflect on how to proceed better in the future in the process of "renewing themselves and others," thanks to these suggestions.

5. The brothers gathered together in the Portiuncula did not neglect to reflect upon a new PEDAGOGY and a new PSYCHOLOGY which could be very useful at least for the internal growth of the Fraternity. A certain Brother Hyacinth of South Africa gave a learned discourse on the theme: "The road is open ahead of you but the obstacles on the way are within you." With great sensitivity he showed how he who is called "master" and formator, must himself be constantly learning; how we as "minors" can learn from the poor; how active

*"If you wish to provide for one year, sow
some grain.
If you wish to provide for two, plant a tree.
If you wish to provide for a hundred years,
consecrate yourself to your brothers.
Because if you sow grain, you can only
harvest once.
If you plant a tree, you will be able to
harvest ten times.
But if you form human beings,
you will harvest a hundred times."*

non-violence is not a virtue of the weak but rather of the strong and courageous, of those who are pure of heart (cf. Mt 6). How important it is to accept the dark shadows in one's life, "to transform one's anger into strength," to have the patience and the bravery to advance by slow steps, never looking down upon the small and insignificant. He exhorted all in the words of the famous Thomas More, not to abandon ship because the wind is so much stronger than we are "Utopia", but rather to learn thoroughly and patiently the strength of helplessness. He ended his words by saying: "If many little people in many little places of the world do very many little things with a little bit of courage, something great

happen." When they heard this they realized that in the new "Ratio" reference should be made to love for the "smoldering wick" (Mt 12:20) and the glance full of love for the "broken reed" (Is 42:3). For even in this age of computers and satellites the most effective techniques of communication continue to be attentive listening, fraternal conversation and "fraternal correction." So all the brothers, wherever they may be, should be convinced that the only constant in their life is the need for continual change.

Again all reflected on the best method of making further progress in "their own formation and that of others," thanks to these suggestions.

6. A short but important chapter was devoted to ASCETICISM. Br. Nicholas of North America spoke about the hurt that can come both from the struggle against the unjust suffering of the humble and the poor, and of the commitment, not to capitalism or socialism but to a more just order for all. He complained vehemently that among the Fraternity there are still ministers and brothers for whom one of the most dangerous sounds in the world was that of brave, committed people who thought in a loud voice. He said it was a question of sharing with "compassion" in the passion of Jesus in the poor of today. He wished all brothers, wherever they may be, to recognize more clearly that "he who suffers enriches and heals the world." He demanded that the friars, both clerical and lay, exercise without distinctions and with equal dignity and competence the "ministry of reconciliation, peace and of solidarity with the weak"; and that which they found repugnant should be considered a grace, with the disposition of the spirit of Poor Man of Assisi.

Again all realized that something should be inserted in the "Ratio" concerning this renewed asceticism.

7. Finally he developed the theme of EVANGELIZATION and the third "priority" of these six years: formation in a missionary spirit. In the "Preliminary and Marginal Notes" of this important theme of a certain Germanicus of Freiburg, it was stated that a fraternity which is not a serving fraternity is of no practical use. The Church of Jesus, he said, should at all times, including our times, be the valiant bearer of the "memoria" of Jesus by being in the front line of the struggle in favor of the utopia of the Reign of God, of peace and justice and the reconciliation of human beings with the entire cosmos. There is question, he said, of sowing in many places, in the spirit of creative fidelity and of faithful creativity, the gospel seed of hope in the future and being able to wait patiently for growth and the harvest. Something which should not be one of the lesser preoccupations of the fraternity is that of being a sign of salvation among men and women even under new forms (cf. CCGG 84; 87,3).

The brother called attention to the necessity of studying other languages and of establishing numerous international fraternities as witnesses of the new world and new forms of evangelization. For it matters little - and this was his final word - that a brother came from Bavaria or Bengal, France or Guinea, Thailand or Germany, Saxony or Siam, since all are equal in Jesus Christ (cf. *Gal 3:28*). He exhorted each member of the Fraternity to undertake a "new exodus," using the words of a Buddhist proverb: "The frog that lives in a fountain has no idea of the immensity of the ocean." Therefore all must learn to see further than their noses in order to recognize with new and pure eyes the traces of the Reign of God in the entire world and in all of creation.

All took to reflecting on what they should do in order "to be formed themselves, and to form others," thanks to these suggestions.

8. By way of ending this memorable reunion, the Masters held a silent prayer meeting around the little chapel of the Portiuncula, in that very place where Brother Francis had been "formed" by the Lord. Having spent one hour in silent contemplation, all heard, each in his own language, the words which Brother Francis spoke from high up on the ancient walls:

"If you wish to provide for one year, sow some grain.
 If you wish to provide for two, plant a tree.
 If you wish to provide for a hundred years,
 consecrate yourself to your brothers.
 Because if you sow grain, you can only harvest once.
 If you plant a tree, you will be able to
 harvest ten times.
 But if you form human beings,
 you will harvest a hundred times."

He then added in a low voice:

"You are only followers. Pray to the Lord, the only Master (cf. *Mt 23:8*), that you may also be precursors."

Then they all went home consoled and strengthened, filled with salutary restlessness - Masters to their Provinces, and the rest to Rome, to the place called the Curia.

In praise of Christ. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit, vixit
 et fideliter conscripsit
 Frater Hermannus Transalpinus
 in civitate Lipsiae Saxoniae,
 die 1.1 A.D. 1991

The Canonization of the Czechs' Agnes

PETR PIT'HA

(TRANSLATED BY SERGIUS WROBLEWSKI, O.F.M.)

On the 12th of November 1989, Pope John Paul II canonized in Rome the Czech, Blessed Agnes. From the day of her death (March 2, 1282) more than 700 years have elapsed. It is well to remember her life and works in order to understand the meaning of the canonization.

Agnes (Aneska in Czech) whose nation calls her "a royal daughter" was a princess from the Premysl family, the only native dynasty which ruled the Czechs. Known in the world as the Czech Agnes, or Agnes of Prague, she had among her own the name Anezka of Premysl and that indicated the fact that she belonged to a family which symbolized Czech independence and sovereignty. The Czechs emphasize that she was a daughter of the same family as the patron saint of their land, St. Wenceslaus, and the first Czech saint - St. Ludmila.

The exact date of the birth of Agnes is not known but it occurred at a time when two outstanding events took place in the history of the Czech people: in the year 1204 Pope Innocent III canonized St. Prokop, and in 1212 Emperor Frederick II conceded to Czech authorities the hereditary royal title. In this way,

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according to medieval standards, the Czechs were fully recognized as a nation from the cultural and political point of view.

Agnes' father was the powerful king Ottokar I of Premysl. Her mother was Constantia, daughter of the Hungarian King Bela III. The fate of royal daughters at that time was only seemingly a happy one. For, in fact, the daughters of magnates were, above all, pawns in the political game of their fathers. Armed tensions and conflicts in those times were as a rule resolved by marriage proposals that bound countries according to the will of politicians. In this way the personal lives of little children were often predetermined. The Church tried, though totally ineffectively, to defend their rights to a free decision in the question of marriage, at least their free consent. Anna of Premysl and her younger sister Agnes (probably a three year old at the time) were engaged to the sons of Prince Henry the Bearded from Silesia and his wife, St. Hedwig. Both princesses were brought to Silesia to be educated in the environment and customs of that country, where they were to live at the side of their husbands. St. Hedwig herself brought up the older Ann. The little Agnes was cared for at the monastery at Trzebnicy; Hedwig's daughter looked after her.

The sudden death of her fiancée freed Agnes who was able to return to the land of the Czechs. The nuns in the Norbertine monastery at Doksan looked after her education. The talented Agnes acquired here a solid foundation. But even that stay did not last long. The young girl, more or less 18, was again engaged and taken to Austria where she was to be brought up as the wife of Henry, son of Emperor Frederick II. The quiet Agnes was somewhat out of place at the plush and lively court of the Babenbergs. For she always sought obscurity and avoided parties. Instead she searched out the needy and the poor in order to serve them with alms and by works of mercy.

The young Henry, influenced by the magnates of the Emperor and against the will of his father, suddenly rejected Agnes and took as his wife Margaret Babenberg, the daughter of her protector Leopold. This move actually unsettled the political equilibrium in Europe and resounded in all the European royal courts. Such a betrayal and offense was a cause for war. As the rejected Agnes was returning to Prague, both countries mustered their armies. But it never came to a serious armed clash, because Agnes herself argued against a punitive expedition of Czechs into Austria. Contemporary witnesses saw in this a miracle that she pacified her father's anger before whom knights and magnates trembled like an aspen leaf.

Once more protracted negotiations were carried out to marry Agnes off. There came to Prague delegations from the English king Henry III and from the Emperor Frederick II who had become a widower. In those times it would not have been surprising for Agnes to have become the wife of a would-be father-

in-law. But she herself was already giving her heart and strong will to a different Lover. For a long time she was fascinated by the work and spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, so that she had decided to leave the world of magnates and the rich and to go among the poor and the needy; to leave the realm of intrigue and war for the realm of service and love. Hence she rejected the emperor's crown and entered the Poor Clares. Her decision and solemn taking of the veil caused a sensation which many contemporary chronicles mention.

Her entry into a convent was not the gesture of a disillusioned and bitter woman nor the flight of a weak creature incapable of carrying life's burdens. Agnes did not despise the world and its positive values, but rather chose higher ones: service and love.

With a vigor worthy of a sovereign, she founded three churches, a Franciscan friary, a Poor Clare monastery and a big hospital just opposite the royal residence at Hradczanach on the shore of the Vltava river. This complex of buildings built on the gothic style then current was situated in the midst of the rich Czechs, as a center where life was differently understood and guided by different laws. Agnes established in her homes an oasis for God's Kingdom.

Her long cloistered life was not a quiet one; she had many battles to wage. The first of these was the battle for the preservation of the original Franciscan ideal.

Her long cloistered life was not a quiet one; she had many battles to wage. The first of these was the battle for the preservation of the original Franciscan ideal. Agnes got to know the Franciscans at the royal courts in Austria and Prague to which came outstanding representatives of the esteemed Order, often as diplomats of the Church. In Eastern and Western Europe the Franciscan movement at first affected the upper classes of society, although it was otherwise in Italy at the beginning. Nevertheless, Agnes was to come to know the original ideal of St. Francis based on pure poverty. A few nuns from St. Clare's circle at St. Damian's in Assisi came to the newly erected monastery at Prague. These nuns showed Agnes the new, and until then unknown to her, deep sense of the Franciscan ideal and informed her about St. Clare's futile efforts to allow the Order to keep the original severe rule. For practical reasons the Church authorities did not want to allow the Poor Clares absolute poverty, such as

practiced when Francis and Clare had around them a handful of brothers and sisters. That became in practice difficult and almost impossible when both male and female branches of the Order started to develop and grow numerically. For that reason the Roman curia gave the Sisters a changed version of the rule.

The sensitive Agnes was taken up with the original ideal of total poverty. The sister of the powerful and influential Czech king stood with St. Clare and initiated a struggle lasting many years to recover for the female branch of the Order the primitive Franciscan rule. She carried on a lively correspondence with St. Clare, but unfortunately only four letters of Clare written to Prague survived. She also carried on a lengthy correspondence with the pope. She succeeded in obtaining a series of minor concessions for her monastery in Prague as far as the primitive rule was concerned but in the end she was told not to speak or think about the matter any more. It seemed that this severe verdict prejudged the fate of the female Franciscan movement. Shortly afterwards, however, the Pope visited the dying St. Clare and, overcome by the spiritual power that radiated from her in her agony, gave permission for the restoration of the primitive rule for the convent of St. Damian in Assisi. Very likely, because this privilege was given to the maternal convent, it was likewise extended to Agnes' convent at Prague. On that score Agnes could be at peace.

One more fact was linked with the battle for the ideal of poverty in the spiritual history of the Czechs. In order to live in true poverty Agnes had to separate the hospital she founded from her convent. Indeed, the maintenance of the hospital required a certain economic base which at first was assured by the great wealth of the convent which received rich donations from members of the royal family and from numerous magnates. Agnes brought about the independence of the hospital and gave it all those possessions. This separation of the hospital from the convent was not for her a simple matter, because it meant that from then on she would not be able to serve the sick personally at their bedside. However, she kept her involvement with the needy and succeeded in getting her fraternity of nurses recognized as a separate religious congregation, as "the Crusaders of the Red Star" which became the only native Czech religious community. Even during Agnes' lifetime, and undoubtedly by her initiative, that hospital and religious congregation spread throughout the Czech lands and created a network of social services noteworthy for those times, the first on Czech lands. Not long after, it widened its activity into Silesia and its charitable activities took in also Poland (Cracow, Breslau and other cities), then Hungary and Austria.

Agnes' social interests were not only an expression of her religious life but also a farseeing vision into one of the most important problems of the Middle Ages. Agnes pointed to the problem of urban poverty which was not understood and neglected in the following period of great growth: in the times of the Premysl dynasty and during the reign of Charles IV. Eventually, it brought on a social

crisis, and a blood bath in the Hussite era. Her Christianity was not divorced and separated from life by a religious abstraction. Her Christianity reached out to life by way of works of mercy.

The peace of the convent that Agnes sought was everlastingly disturbed by stormy events, when the Czech nation was divided by two rulers and civil war followed. Agnes pursued peace in the country. It was in her convent and by her effort that peace was made by her brother, King Wenceslaus, and his son Ottokar of Premysl. And when the conflict with Austria ended tragically for the Czechs and Ottokar II of Premysl (Ottokar received that number only after becoming king) fell in battle, her convent became a refuge for the women of royal descent. Later, during the regency of Otto, the Brandenburg Margrave, at a time of misery and hunger and at a time when the Czech successor to the throne, Wenceslaus II, was imprisoned in the castle at Bezdez, that convent became the last hope for the impoverished multitudes but also a symbol of Czech independence. The steadfast daughter of Premysl endured by the strength of her spiritual and moral authority as a sign of Czech rights in the face of all the representatives of foreign powers in the country. The fate of Agnes is significant: that Agnes who abandoned the comfort of royal apartments in order to share the life of the poor, died in the midst of her nation's misery from exhaustion and hunger. An unknown foreign monk presided at the funeral because none of the more important prelates dared to take part for political reasons. But an enormous multitude of the poor and the oppressed Czechs bade her farewell as a saint and an uncrowned monarch of the Czechs.

St. Agnes comes to bless and protect those who took up her work according to her spirit. Her canonization is the threshold through which the Czech people enter a new era in their spiritual life.

Czech kings and Archbishops of Prague have in the course of 700 years agitated for her canonization a number of times. It is astonishing that it took so long to elevate on the altar a woman whose sanctity no one doubted. But everything has its sense and time. The symbolic significance is in the fact that the canonization of Agnes of Premysl took place shortly after Francis Cardinal Tomasek, archbishop of Prague and primate of Czechoslovakia, together with all the bishops of Czechoslovakian and Moravian dioceses announced an extensive program of spiritual renewal of the nation - the decade of St. Adalbert. It is significant that the first year of this decade was committed to the protection of Saint Agnes and is called the year of respect for life. Within this space of time the faithful prayed not only for the sick, the elderly and the abandoned but also

for physicians, for workers engaged in health services and generally for all who serve those needs. They raised questions of medical ethics and they pondered the problems that nowadays arise in modern health care which frequently fails to look to the spiritual dimension of human beings and becomes one-sided (and therefore is ineffective) care of the sick body. They took up the cause of the human dignity of the dying and of the unborn. In the course of the year individuals and groups of the faithful began to complete Agnes' testament by a simple and quiet service to the needy. In the episcopal curia of Prague there sprang up a lay Christian committee of help which organizes charitable activities that reach those that even the best social institutions do not care for.

The Church has made progress also in the area of reconciliation which meant so much to Agnes. In his Easter message for the first year of the decade Cardinal Tomasek appealed to all Christian Churches and to the whole nation and called for cooperation in the work of spiritual renewal in that which all have in common, because cooperation in a good work is the best way to remove disunity.

When we take all this into account, it is clear that the canonization of Agnes comes at a time when her nation began to honor her, not only in thought and word but in deed; and what was always neglected was finally done. It is also evident that the new appearance of Agnes on the Czech scene is not the culmination of efforts at her canonization nor, even more, a solemn conclusion to her history. St. Agnes comes to bless and protect those who took up her work according to her spirit. Her canonization is the threshold through which the Czech people enter a new era in their spiritual life.

It is indisputable that this canonization has an entire special meaning for Czech lands, and surely for all of Czechoslovakia; for the cult of Agnes was always alive in Slovakia and its influence was known in Bratislava when "the Crusaders of the Red Star" were active there. Agnes, of course, has been declared saint for the whole Church. One ought to ask what has the 13th century saint to say to the contemporary world. Poles likewise — neighbors of the land where this event will be celebrated solemnly — cannot be satisfied only with a "historical" reply and leave it at that: that Agnes came from the family of the princess Dabrowka; that her sister was the wife of Henry the Pious; that through her Prague convent the Poor Clares came to Poland; and that the congregation she founded was active in Poland. The delay of her canonization for 700 years is not the payment of old debts, but has a full and clear meaning now. At a time when in the whole world there appear dangerous restrictions and one-sidedness in the institutional resolution of social and medicinal care, the stature of Agnes of Premysl calls us to personal responsibility towards people in need in our circle. She calls for a christian stance expressed in good works. In an era of tensions arising from decrees of authority, she calls us to reconciliation and strongly reminds us that to govern means to serve.

GRECCIO

Earth no longer stands brash and bold
In the decaying embers of winter's cold.
The often flexed muscle of the world
Is slack and fatigued. Winter has come.
And the long promised time is unfurled
In the silent damp of a woman's womb.

Time stands still in silence. Expectant
moments, fragmented, are still pregnant
With hope long born from the icy fear
That becomes strong and tall as it waits:
For what cannot strain cannot hear
All is deaf in hearts speaking in hate.

The concrete ground is bruised and torn;
Buildings are tombstones to ingenuity;
Blood and destruction content to be sworn
Enemies of the weak framed humanity -
Yet they too collapse into irrelevance
And not as mere consequence.

Somewhere (in a brief pain-filled bought
Second) meaning finds its own meaning
In the almost unbearable screaming
Of a gasping creation: a roaring torrent
Of despair is held, caressed and brought
Into being after too long dormant.

The desert wastes; the post-flood dry,
Cry in a hoarse underlying voice, a drip
Of pure water, life-giving, sustaining
Water of chaste clarity. It is time.
All is blind for the unseeing eye,
Nakedness nothing left to strip

And eternity's heights still unclimbed.
All is hushed in Greccio, all star gazing
The massive mountains are laid low;
The valleys filled with their debris,
The plains raised as highways -
At Greccio imagination in reality-

The world bursts from a single stem
The Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Book Reviews

A Speechless Child is the Word of God, by James A. Mohler, S.J. New Rochelle, N.Y. New City Press, 1992. 174pp. Paper, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Kevin M. Tortorelli, O.F.M. Fr. Kevin, former Director of Classics at Siena College, is now Campus Minister at the University of Georgia. He has published articles on Augustine in Vetera Christianorum and other journals.

The reader may wonder where to locate yet another book devoted to St. Augustine within that great body of literature that bears his name. The present book is clearly a source book or a compendium of Augustinian text arranged under the following headings: Trinity, Christ, Mary, Church, Authority, Sacraments, Prayer, Hope and the Two Cities.

I found that the book has the kind of strengths and weaknesses often associated with the genre of a "Reader", in this case, an "Augustinian Reader." The author has a great competence in Augustinian texts and he has put together a judicious assembling and collating of them to illustrate his several headings. The effort clearly brings the riches of Augustine's thought to an increasingly large theological readership. It is a rich feast with several courses, pleasures and delights.

But there is a weakness to this approach. The collection of texts asks for a context, for the significance and meaning of texts critically chosen, for a thematizing of the issues Augustine has raised. I note the lack of an introductory essay, biographical or theological, to the volume. Perhaps the temptation should be resisted but one sees the shadow of Peter Brown or

W.H.C. Frend who have set high standards for interpreting Augustine. Or indeed there is little classic of Romano Guardini which sifts the meaning of Augustine's life and conversion in the form of a deeply moving and learned meditation. One tends to invoke them to turn their hand to the extensive corpus of Augustinian texts assembled in this book. This tradition of Augustinian scholarship adds critical and explanatory grasp to the assembled and collated texts.

There are some points of detail. Regrettably, on page 10, we read, "But some such as Melitus of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem and Basil of Ancyra preferred *homoousion*, namely, that the Son is of like substance to the Father." But the relevant Greek term should read *homoiousion*. There is of course more than an iota of difference here and on that distinction, in its time, many a future hung in the balance. Two variant spellings of the name "Volusian" appear on the same page (page 36). Similarly, on page 164, we read "Augustianism" and "Augustinianism" in the same sentence. Also, on page 164, the reference cited as footnote 4 lacks a publication date.

I believe the discussion of Neoplatonism (pages 120-123) would be more pointed if it were contrasted with Augustine's experience of moral impotence which accounts for his passage from Plotinus to Christ and which is majestically set forth in Confession IX: 9-10. Lastly, a final heading on grace and freedom should be added to the others.

This book is a labor of love and generous in tone. Clearly, it lets Augustine speak for himself.

Discovering God: Life's Adventure, by John M. Scott, S.J., Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992, 160 pages, Paper \$6.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English, and Campus Minister at the University.

Jesuit Father John M. Scott has been a high school science teacher for more than thirty years. His little book, *Discovering God: Life's Adventure*, reveals his background. His scientific knowledge allows him to see God's grandeur and God's power in the whole of creation. Convinced that wonder is a natural characteristic of young people and of older people as well, the author finds evidence of God's presence in all things of a person's living experiences.

In twelve chapters, Father Scott presents in his own words, and in the words of many different writers, thoughts about God as suggested by all things made, from electricity to solar energy, from clouds to wind

and rain, from flowers to stars. In his first chapter, quoting Hugh Lavery, the author writes, "Every child wonders, and feeds on surprise. The dawn of wonder is the dawn of divinity" (page 9). In his twelfth chapter, Father Scott writes, "The person who looks upon creation as a love letter from God, finds God everywhere" (page 145).

From our everyday experiences, from all the wonders of nature that we observe, we can see a reflection of or an image of God. The author encourages the reader to reflect upon what he or she experiences through the five senses. Such reflection will result in an awareness of God's presence to us and in us and all around us. What a wonderful world we live in! What a wonderful world God created for us to enjoy!

This reviewer recommends this book to readers of all ages. For some readers, the scientific explanation of the phenomena will be a learning experience. For other readers, it will be a confirming experience. For all readers, it will be an inspirational experience.

Books Received

Albertus, Karen. *Recover and Heal: Meditations on the Twelve Steps*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. vii-308. Paper, \$12.95.

Apicella, Raymond. *Journey into Luke. 16 Lessons of Exploration and Discovery*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. 64 with Bibliography. Paper, \$5.95.

Barnecut, O.S.B., Edith. ed. *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels Year A*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 168. Paper, \$9.95.

Barr, Robert R. *Scriptural Comfort for Trying Times*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992. Pp. 204, inc. Index. Paper, \$8.95.

Bodo, Murray. *Clare: A Light in the Garden*. Revised and Expanded. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger, 1992. Pp. xi-126. Paper, \$6.95.

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Convey, Stephen R. *Principle-Centered Leadership*. New York: Simon Schuster, 1992. Pp. 334, inc. Index. Paper, \$12.00.

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Davies, Oliver. ed. *Gateway to Paradise - Basil the Great*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. 125. Paper, \$7.95.

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DeCoursey, Drew. *Lifting the Veil of Choice - Defending Life*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992. Pp. 126. Paper, \$4.95.

Dryer, Elizabeth, Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., and Mary Francis Hone, O.S.C. *Clare: A Woman for All Times*. 3 cassettes. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. \$29.95.

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Goodhue, Thomas W. *Sharing the Good News With Children: Stories for the Common Lectionary*. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992. Pp. 322, inc. Indices. Paper, \$19.95.

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Mohler, S.J., James A. *A Speechless Child is the Word of God*. New York: New City Press, 1992. Pp. inc. Index. Paper, \$9.95.

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The Knight-Errant of Assisi. By Hilarin Felder, Capuchin. Reprint. \$7.00 plus postage.

Clare Among Her Sisters. By Rene-Charles Dhont, O.F.M. Translation in 1987. \$9.00 plus postage.

A Poor Man's Legacy. An Anthology of Franciscan Poverty, 1988. Edited by Fr. Cyprian J. Lynch. O.F.M. \$37.50 plus postage.

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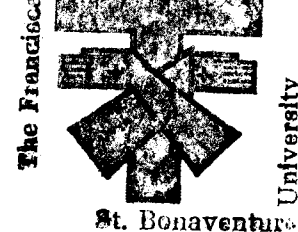
Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before 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,
Form Viv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

ICel: 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 commercium
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).



THE REFORM OF RENEWAL: **"A CRITICAL REVIEW"**

REGIS J. ARMSTRONG, O.F.M. CAP.

Five years ago Benedict Joseph Groeschel and seven others dramatically broke away from their Capuchin brothers and declared their intention to establish a community of reform in the spirit of the first Capuchins. At the time, it was not clear what was behind their action. So much of what they intended to say was hidden in personality conflicts, in hurt and angry feelings, and in political maneuvering so that the central issues of their "reform" were never clearly articulated. Groeschel's latest book, *The Reform of Renewal* (Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R. *The Reform of Renewal*. Foreword by Bishop Sean O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990, 228 pp.), is a contribution welcomed by anyone attempting to comprehend the undercurrents of the small group that has now assumed the name "Franciscan Sisters and Friars of the Renewal." The strength of the written word is what makes *The Reform of Renewal* so valuable. We become far more responsible for what we write and, therefore, we usually strive to become more concise and forthright in declaring our intentions and views. Thus *The Reform of Renewal* is more than a work of spiritual literature; it is a statement of Groeschel's 'Franciscan' philosophy and, perhaps unwittingly, that of his followers.

Originally published in the Collectanea Franciscana, this review has been reprinted so that it might be more widely read in the English-speaking world. Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., a member of the Franciscan Institute, worked for eight years with Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R., as Associate Director of the Office of Spiritual Development of the Archdiocese of New York.

The book is divided into ten chapters, an epilogue and a conclusion. After considering the need for reform in today's Church, the author proceeds to place the call to reform in historical and biblical contexts. The third chapter deals with the theme of initial and ongoing conversion. This is followed by four different perspectives on conversion: of the mind, of the emotions, of the body, and of the ego. It is only when the author reaches the eighth chapter that he deals specifically with the reform of religious and, in the following chapter, that of the clergy. The tenth and final chapter returns to the reform of the Church and its implications for society. In the epilogue, Groeschel "confronts" all segments of his Catholic audience - conservatives, liberals, moderates - with questions meant to stimulate their consciences in terms of reform. Finally, the book ends with a conclusion and an appendix based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. *The Reform of Renewal* contains a foreword which is written by Bishop Sean O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., presently the Bishop of Fall River, Massachusetts, but at the time of publication, the Bishop of the Virgin Islands.

This is a disturbing book. After reading its foreword readers might come to it expecting so much more than it delivered and return to it suspicious that they had missed something. It is disturbing because it makes strong claims but provides little substance; it is frequently repetitious, meandering, and even contradictory. While Groeschel refers to a variety of theologians, e.g. Karl Rahner, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, et al., he relies upon those of the Middle Ages, e.g. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, and of the more modern era, e.g. Alphonsus Liguori, Jean-Pierre de Caussade, et al., to support much of his call for reform. Nevertheless, the reader continually wonders about the depth and scope of Groeschel's knowledge of their writings, especially in view of the contemporary issues that face the Church and, more especially, religious life.

Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses is Groeschel's failure to define reform, renewal and refounding. He has this difficulty with defining terms in his *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development* in which a lack of precision causes considerable confusion regarding the relationship between the spiritual and the psychological. In this case, however, we are never quite sure of the direction in which Groeschel would take us once we have begun his journey. The terms, reform and renewal, appear interchangeably with revitalization (pp. 17-18), repentance (p. 21), conversion (pp. 46, 49ff.). Unfortunately, the author does not reflect the vast amount of literature centering on the theology of reform that finds its foundations in many of the patristic, monastic and scholastic authors whom he quotes. Gerhart Ladner, one of the most prolific authors in this field of reform theology, defines the idea of reform as "the idea of free, intentional, and ever perfectable, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated efforts by man to reassert and augment values pre-existent in the spiritual-material compound of the world" (G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*, New York, Evanston

and London: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 35.) The definition is an important one because it provides a key to understanding many of the reform movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of which the Capuchin reform was part. It becomes more important considering the judgment of Bishop Sean O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., author of the foreword, who praises the author's initiative because it "is not an academic [topic] but rather part of a personal passion and spiritual odyssey which has led him to participate in the founding of a new community of Franciscans in the Capuchin tradition" (p. 11). In many of Groeschel's more recent tapes and writings, he has repeated the same sentiments and proclaimed quite forcefully that he and his followers are true disciples of the first Capuchin reformers.

Nonetheless, part of the genius of the first Capuchins was their insistence on looking at the form. Callisto Urbanelli, in line with Rainald Fisher, Octavian Schmucki, and other prominent historians of the period, states this quite precisely: "The Capuchin reform sets as its avowed goal a return to the original Franciscan dream" (cf. C. Urbanelli, "How the Order Sprung Up and Took Root," in *The Capuchin Reform: Essays in Commemoration of its 450th Anniversary, 1528-1978*, trans, Ignatius McCormick, Youngstown: Catholic Publishing Company, 1983, p. 13). When reading the literature of reform and, more specifically, of the Capuchin reform, we quickly discern a picture of reformers who continually struggled with expressing the *forma vitae*, the Gospel, according to the *forma minorum*, Francis, in the world in which they lived. Unlike other groups that attempted to reform their communities through legislation and concern for external form, the first Capuchins strove to keep the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit of Francis, as the dynamism of their lives and to express it in new ways (cf. O. van Asseldonk, "The Franciscan Significance of the Capuchin Reform in the Light of Authentic Sources of the Spirit and Life of St. Francis," in *The Capuchin Reform: Essays in Commemoration of its 450th Anniversary, 1528-1978*, trans, Ignatius McCormick, Youngstown: Catholic Publishing Company, 1983, pp. 59-74).

In light of the Capuchin reform movement within the Franciscan family, Groeschel's lack of awareness of the primitive Franciscan fraternity becomes one of *The Reform of Renewal's* most salient weaknesses. Whereas Clare of Assisi is highlighted as a model of reform, the author does not provide adequate reasons for this conviction beyond noting "[her] tender love and [her] burning personal commitment and desire to follow Christ that were the essence of medieval piety" (p. 17). Yet Groeschel does not touch upon the strength of her conscious commitment to the charism of Francis, the *forma vitae* that he bequeathed to her, that prompted her to resist the pressures of popes, cardinals, and friars to compromise her vision of Gospel life. It was that awareness of and commitment to the uniqueness of Francis, reflected so strongly in her Testament, that singles her out as a reformer, not those qualities that were characteristic of

medieval piety. Groeschel's treatment of Clare, however, is a reflection of his treatment of Francis: selective and superficial. This is unfortunate for he could have advanced his position and contributed to the contemporary understanding of renewal and reform by bringing to light many of the rich insights of the Franciscan tradition.

With each page this reviewer searched for a clear declaration of Groeschel's program of reform or renewal. Was the author dissatisfied with the renewal of the Christian life, of the Church, and of the religious life that has taken place since the Second Vatican Council? Did he want to reshape or redirect our energies in other ways? If so, what were they and, once re-routed, where would they lead? Was it a reform or a renewal that he desired? Or was it simply to challenge his readers to a more serious embrace of commitment? Sadly, the answers to these questions could not be found, possibly because the questions were not clearly asked. As a result, *The Reform of Renewal* stumbles in three serious areas: the anthropological, ecclesial, and religious.

In his review of Groeschel's *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development*, Daniel A. Helminiak criticizes the author's use of psychology and points to this weakness as one of the principal difficulties of his approach (D.A. Helminiak, *Spiritual Development: An Interdisciplinary Study*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987). We might say the same about *The Reform of Renewal* that attempts to present an Augustinian understanding of the human person but shies away from the more biblical, patristic, and, we should note, Franciscan understanding of penance as the means by which the human person is re-made in the image and likeness of God. From this perspective we more easily understand Groeschel's pessimism and preoccupation with the evils of the modern world (cf. Chapters five through seven). While we would not deny his emphasis on conversion as the first step of reform, what is disturbing is Groeschel's failure to present the vision of Francis, or that of so many Fathers of the Church, in which the human person is re-made or re-formed through the breath of the Spirit in the form of Jesus. In both *Exhortations to a Life of Penance*, i.e., both versions of the *Letters to the Faithful*, for example, while demanding a life of penance or metanoia, Francis devotes far more time to describing the results of conversion: our involvement in a Trinitarian relationship that transforms our ways of looking at reality. Bonaventure's audacious understanding of the human person, present in the Preface to his *Second Book of Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, would also have furthered what Groeschel attempts to present, a theology of reform (or, even renewal) in the spirit of the Franciscans of the Capuchin tradition. But such a Franciscan approach is sadly lacking in *The Reform of Renewal*; so too are the optimism and joy that permeate so much of the writings of Francis, his first followers, and the first Capuchins.

From this perspective we should also note Groeschel's four levels or perspectives of conversion: of the mind, of the emotions, of the body, and of the ego. Was there any forethought, we wondered, to their manner of presentation? If so, we could not discover any rationale for this fourfold approach and, as a result, found much repetition and some important lacunae. It might have been better to adopt the categories of Bernard Lonergan who writes of conversion occurring on four levels of experience: affective, intellectual, moral, and religious (cf. cf. B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, New York 1972, pp. 237-244; "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan*, New York 1985, pp. 169-183). More seriously, however, was the lack of any consideration of what Donald Gelpi describes as 'socio-political' conversion, that is, taking responsibility to reform "impersonal institutions that influence human life and experience" (cf. D. Gelpi, "Conversion: Beyond the Impasses of Individualism," in *Beyond Individualism: Toward a Retrieval of Moral Discourse in America*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989; pp. 11-13; *Inculturating North American Theology: An Experiment in Foundational Method*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988; pp. 1-30). To describe conversion as Groeschel does is to overlook an essential dimension of the Franciscan call to conversion. "The Lord led me to begin to do penance," Francis writes in his Testament, "when I was in sin it seemed too bitter to see lepers. But the Lord himself led me among them and I showed them a heart full of mercy and what before seemed bitter was changed into sweetness of body and soul." This spirit moved the first Capuchins to work among the plague stricken populace of Camerino and to win their first followers. It is surprising that Groeschel did not introduce this aspect into his treatment of conversion for it would have provided us insight into his vision of the complicated involvement in the movements of justice and peace that present so much tension to contemporary religious.

But this leads us to the ecclesial considerations of *The Reform of Renewal*. This is one of its more confusing aspects for it presents a pessimistic picture of what many people describe as manifestations of new life. Groeschel's descriptions of "The Conflict in the Church" - to which he returns several times - do not present any of the positive aspects of the Church's presence in today's world, e.g., in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, in raising profound questions in the Western world concerning the pursuit of justice, economic policies, and the dignity of the human person. Unfortunately, the author does not spell out his vision of the Church nor does he offer any bibliographical references that indicate his awareness of the profound ecclesiology brought about by *Lumen gentium*, (e.g., Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, Garden City: Image Books, 1978, or *The Reshaping of Catholicism: Current Challenges in the Theology of the Church*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988). It is no wonder that Groeschel

sees conflict within the Church as a negative, enervating force rather than one reflecting its intellectual growth and vitality.

A reader could only speculate about Groeschel's thoughts concerning the tenacity of Clare and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano when confronted by the conflicting vision of Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV concerning the poverty proposed by Francis; or his view of a similar tenacity maintained by his former Capuchin confreres in defending their understanding of the Franciscan charism of fraternity against the differing interpretations of the Holy See. While *The Reform of Renewal* unabashedly maintains that personal reform is the starting point of ecclesial reform, its author does not reflect upon the tensions that exist between institutional and personal charisms or upon the structural and attitudinal changes that we might consider in light of the signs of the times. All of which highlights Groeschel's inadequate theology of the Church. Had he offered us insights into his understanding of its presence and mission in today's world, we could more easily perceive his theology of its reform. Instead, we confront a highly selective reflection on the Church that is bolstered by references to struggles of Catherine of Siena, Savanarola, and Ignatius of Loyola.

Groeschel's confused anthropology and deficient ecclesiology redound to the pessimistic analysis of religious life. Once more it is difficult to determine what the author wants in religious life; once more his confusion and repetition are evident. His quotation of a Franciscan bishop - "There are many good religious, but there is little religious life!" (p. 143) - conveys a sense of the confusion that fills this chapter. What is religious life, we might ask, if it is not the life of religious.

Groeschel's analysis of the state of religious life is particularly sad not because of his sweeping generalizations but because of his simplistic and somewhat superficial understanding of the issues that confront religious. His observations on the role of Bishops are extremely sympathetic to them while excessively critical of religious. There is no question of the bishops' efforts to understand the religious life or of their attempts to use religious for their own ends rather than to respect their charism as a means of enriching the Church. Curiously, the author underlines neglect of the apostolate in his analysis of the problems of religious life; most contemporary observers lament the frenetic pace that religious maintain and point to the lack of a serious dedication to personal, interior prayer as the salient reason for the decline in the number and enthusiasm of religious. The words of Pope Paul VI seem to be far more applicable here: "Do not forget the witness of history: faithfulness to prayer or its abandonment are the test of the vitality or decadence of the religious life" (*Evangelica testificatio* 42).

While many of us are struggling to understand the tensions between the sacred and the secular, between corporate commitments and individual creativ-

ity, between the dehumanizing lack of justice and peace and the attempts to bring about the kingdom of God, it is difficult to know where Groeschel stands. This reader could not but wonder at his individualistic view of religious life and conversion. Has he ever lived an intense community life, devoid of those pre-Vatican II structures, that is shaped by the day-to-day rubbing of elbows or by a wide range of understandings of theology? Has he ever been a superior who has had to deal with those suffering from personality disorders or chemical dependency? Has he ever been responsible for a formation program in which there are divergent points of view?

After reading *The Reform of Renewal* a few times, this reviewer began to admire its author for his courage in being so convinced. Popular, charismatic preacher that he is, the enthusiasm for reform that fills his latest endeavor will no doubt touch many people who are searching for direction and stability in this turbulent time. Yet this only enhanced the uncomfortable feelings that troubled this reviewer initially. We live in such an age of transition that it is difficult to express age-old values in new and pluriform ways. Perhaps what is most disturbing about *The Reform of Renewal* is the undercurrent of anti-intellectualism that pervades it. For all the references the reader finds to Augustine, Francis, or Clare, to Rahner, Brown, or Schnackenburg, the reader might wonder how much Groeschel has struggled with their thought and the application of that thought in today's world. Does he read his sources too much through the prism of his own concerns so that we are left with unnuanced generalizations and contradictions?

In conclusion, we wish to return to Daniel A. Helminiak's assessment of Groeschel's *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development*. Helminiak's conclusion of this earlier work is very apropos for *The Reform of Renewal*. "Overall," Helminiak states, "this book is oblivious to the central issues in contemporary theological circles: history and hermeneutics. Indeed, because of its outdated and uncritical position and despite its solid wisdom at many points, this book may even be unintentionally harmful to the spiritually inexperienced, 'those who seek,' to whom it is addressed" (Ibid., p. 8). Nevertheless, it is good that Benedict J. Groeschel has expressed his thoughts on paper. We are now in a better position to reflect upon and discuss objectively and leisurely many of those issues that prompted him to take such a rash, dramatic step and to create another sad division in a Church that needs more than ever to exemplify the unity for which Christ prayed.

The Integrity of St. Francis

CONRAD HARKINS, O.F.M.

Coming to the Catholic Worker to speak of St. Francis of Assisi on the occasion of his feast, I am moved to speak on those aspects of his life so close to the charism of the movement: of compassion, of poverty, of peace, and of the land. But while I will mention all of these, I would like to speak first of that wellspring which gave life and nourishment to all the others. For all these are externals, the fruits by which the interior of the human person are known. The wellspring could go by the name of holiness, or wholeness — I prefer to call it integrity.

My old Webster's Collegiate in a bright new blue cover, but whose yellowing pages reveal its age, defines integrity: "the state or quality of being complete, undivided, or unbroken, entirety." Before his conversion, people would never have used that word to describe the merchant's son who squandered his money with the largess of a noble, delighted in bazaar dress, extravagant banquets and the "weird" behavior of an undisciplined youth, who set out one day in quest of knighthood and returned the next disillusioned. And after his conversion there were many others who doubted the integrity if not the sanity of a man who wanted to establish a religious order without property, without money, and whose members would have nothing but a single patched tunic, a cord to hold it together, and a pair of breeches.

There was an unsettled period of about four years before Francis's conversion. A bloody battle, a year's imprisonment, a long illness, a convalescence with time for some soul-searching, aspirations to the chivalric order of knighthood, which to an idealist like Francis seemed a noble way indeed to serve the

Lord. A temptation to vainglory said his stern biographer, Thomas of Celano. But he dreamed of his father's house usually filled with bails of cloth transformed into a palace filled with armor, and heard a voice say all this was for him and his companions. He set off for Apulia, journeyed only twenty miles when he received a "corrective vision." "Francis, who can do more for you, the Lord or the Servant." "The Lord, Lord." "Then go back to Assisi and you will be told what to do." And Francis went home and he withdrew from the family business and from the carousals of his friends, he sought out the caves and ravines and deserted ruined churches where he prayed over and over, "Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my mind, grant me right faith, certain hope, perfect charity, perception and comprehension, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command."

Seeking that command, seeking to know what he must do, he discovered he was asking the wrong question. Thomas of Celano says that one day as he prayed it seemed to him that God said to him in spirit, "Despise yourself, if you want to know Me." Francis might have said, "If You want to know me. . . I want to know what You want me to do, but you are asking me if I want to know You. Before Francis would discover what God wanted him to do, he would discover God.

And that is what I understand by the integrity of St. Francis. He encountered the reality of God. His discovery of God made him whole. Because God is, all Francis is a gift of God. He has come forth from God, he is held in existence by God, he will return to God. One might say that he is complete because he knows he is incomplete. Francis, however, does not simply know this, for Satan also knows this and rebels against it. Francis does not simply accept and endure this, as any believing Christian might do. Francis accepts and embraces this. He glories in the glory of God. This is to say, that Francis falls in love with God, and cries out, as Bernard of Quintavalle, one of his early companions heard him pray over and over again, "My God and my All." Using the language of romantic love, he declares to his friends, "I shall take a more noble and more beautiful spouse than you have ever seen; she will surpass all others in beauty and will excel all others in wisdom." (1 Cel 7). The exuberance of St Francis the Mystic in his discovery of the loveliness of God could hardly be contained in words. In the great Prayer and Thanksgiving inserted into his Earlier Rule, he exults: "Let nothing hinder us, nothing separate us, or nothing come between us . . . Wherever we are in every place at every hour at every time of day, everyday and continually let us believe truly and humbly and keep in our heart and love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless glorify and exalt magnify and give thanks to the most high and supreme eternal God Trinity and Unity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Creator of all, Savior of all who believe in Him and hope in Him and love Him. Who is without beginning and without end, unchangeable, invisible,

*Fr. Conrad delivered this talk at the Catholic Worker of New York on October 2, 1992. Regarded as a leading authority on Franciscanism, he has lectured and written extensively in this area. Besides his teaching duties at the Franciscan Institute, he has served for several years as editor of *Franciscan Studies*.*

indescribable, ineffable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, blessed, worthy of praise, glorious exalted on high, sublime, most high, gentle, lovable, delectable and totally desirable above all else forever." St. Francis fell in love with God. He had come to know God, and now he could hear what the Lord was calling him to do. Francis's integrity showed itself in love, but how did this love reveal itself.

Human compassion is not a mark of St. Francis's conversion. It was part of the exquisite sensitivity of soul that was part of his nature as he came forth from the creating hand of God, or perhaps a lingering remnant of baptismal innocence. St. Bonaventure is the only biographer to say it was there from the beginning: "God implanted in the heart of the youthful Francis a certain openhanded compassion for the poor," which grew "from his infancy." Perhaps it was strengthened by the code of chivalry which he seems to have emulated more than his noble companions. But Francis' discovery of God transformed human compassion into divine compassion. As every Christian knew, to serve the poor was to serve Christ. When the streets and piazzas before the churches were filled as today with the poor it was difficult to turn a totally deaf ear to the words of the Gospel "I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, naked and you clothed Me. I was ill and you comforted Me, in prison and you came to visit Me." When the bell of the leper sounded in the valley, it was difficult not to hear the words of Isaiah which were read in the Church every Holy Week: "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."

Oh but the transition from a sensitivity to the poor to true compassion was so difficult. He could not even look in the direction of the leprosarium from a distance of two miles without holding his nose. If a leper received an alms from Francis of Assisi it was through an intermediary. In those painful days of his conversion he saw himself for the first time: the pampered son of a rich merchant who liked to think about God and serving God but lived surrounded with attention, never ate anything he didn't like, dressed like a lord, and entertained like a prince. What would bring those Gospel texts from his ears to his heart. His biographers say that one day as he prayed he realized that the words of Christ were addressed to him: "If you want to be a follower of Mine, take up your cross and follow Me." What happened then, he relates himself: "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." On this occasion, the biographers tell us, Francis not only gave an alms, he embraced and kissed the leper. Bonaventure says the leper disappeared. It is all a mystical interpenetra-

tion of the divine and the human. The leper is Christ and by his kissing of the leper Francis is transformed into Christ. He has become the leper. It is Christ who serves the leper; it is Christ who is served in the leper. For the Christian who understands this, human compassion is impossible, all compassion is divine. Dorothy Day understood this.

He has come forth from God, he is held in existence by God, he will return to God. One might say that he is complete because he knows he is incomplete.

The author of the **Legend of the Three Companions** spoke well of the change in Francis: "His whole heart was entirely bent of seeing, hearing, and attending to the poor, and he gave them generous alms in the name of God." We do not speak of St. Francis's service of the poor but of his compassion, his accepting, affirming, loving, co-suffering with the poor. He could no longer be satisfied with meeting, encountering, aiding, healing the poor — he identified with the poor. Once he would change clothes with a poor beggar and beg with beggars at the portal of St. Peter's. It was the closest he could come to entering under the skin of the poor. Of course, Francis envisioned that the brothers who joined him, those who said "We want to be with you and to do what you do; tell us what to do." And so he told them in their Rule: "And they must rejoice when they live among people (considered) of little worth and who are looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside."

There is a story about the compassion of Francis I would like to share. At Collestrada, a place not far from Assisi was a hospital where friars once cared for lepers. Among the lepers was one who caused the friars many problems, so many that they became convinced he must be possessed. They bore his complaints, his insults, even his blows, but his blasphemies were so great that they became convinced it was better to leave him alone than to approach him and provoke him all the more. Such was the situation when St. Francis came to visit, so the whole matter was put before him. First he approached him and wished him peace. That brought an explosion: "Peace, how can I have any peace with this suffering and the stench of this disease, and those idiot brothers of yours who do nothing but cause me grief." Exhortations to patience being of no avail Francis asked if he could serve him. The man finally asked Francis to bathe him, because

he said he could not stand his own stench. And so Francis had a tub of warm water with herbs prepared, undressed the man, and began to wash him with his hands as another friar poured the water. It is said that as Francis washed the man, the leprosy was healed. I'm not sure. He died two weeks later. But there was a greater miracle. As Francis began to wash the man, the man's eyes filled up, and from deep within him came great sobs, as all the bitterness which was shut up within him found release. What a great gift of healing the Lord has given to all of us in the ability to show compassion.

There is another story concerning Francis's compassion which I love to tell. It happened at the hermitage of Monte Casale high in the mountains of Tuscany. Some highwaymen used to come to the friars begging, and the friars became scrupulous about feeding them lest by doing so they cooperate in their crimes. When Francis came, they asked what to do. What do you do? Well, get some wine and some good bread and put a table cloth down on the ground, and invite the robbers to a picnic, and serve them with humility and good humor. And when they have eaten, ask them for the love of God not to strike or harm anyone from whom they rob. Another day, invite them again, and this time in addition to the wine and the bread, give them eggs and cheese. And then ask them why they stay there enduring such hardships of cold and hunger in the wilderness, causing so much suffering, and bringing so much evil upon themselves." Well of course, some of these robbers became friars and other penitents. What greater sermon is there than compassion. Indeed, is this not an example of "the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism," of which Peter Maurin spoke?

It is possible, of course, for compassion, even divinely motivated compassion, to be abused. I read the other night a brief paragraph entitled "How Long?" from the Worker of December, 1947. A priest had called asking if some of the men at the House of Hospitality were not "unworthy and using you." "And we replied that they probably were if there is such a person as an unworthy case. However we don't feel competent to decide who is unworthy and who is not. Another one of those things we prefer to leave up to God. We were concerned with the present need and taking care of that." The possibility of the abuse of charity is not an invention of the twentieth century, but St. Francis would not tolerate the rash judgments against the poor that are as common today as ever. Not every medieval poor man seeking alms in the vestibule of old St. Peter's in Rome was an honorable man. Francis once heard a friar challenging a poor man by saying, "See here, perhaps you are only pretending to be poor." "Who cures a poor man, injures the poor Christ whom he represents," said Francis as he sent him to apologize.

Refusing to give an alms was nearly impossible for Francis. From the earliest days of his conversion he resolved never to refuse an alms requested for the love of God. Not only did the poor man represent Christ, but the very manner in which he requested the alms tore at Francis's heartstrings. "An alms for the love of God, an alms for the love of God," the poor man chanted in that age of faith. In this age without much faith, we tend to hear those words as some kind of curse: "For the love of God, give me an alms," or at best, "Because of the love of God in your heart, give me an alms." But Francis was a merchant's son and he understood them differently. "An alms for the love of God" meant "Give me an alms and in return I will give you the love of God," that is "The reward of giving an alms is the ability to love God." What a noble exchange. For this paltry alms, I will receive the love of God in my heart, and with that love I can purchase heaven. To refuse to give an alms is to put no value on the love of God. St. Bonaventure says it so beautifully: "He used to say that to offer the love of God in exchange for an alms was a noble prodigality and that those who valued it less than money were most foolish, because the incalculable price of divine love alone was sufficient to purchase the kingdom of heaven. And he used to say that greatly should the love be loved of him who loved us so greatly." (Leg. Major, 9.1).

Until now we have been speaking of Francis's integrity, his discovery of God, manifesting itself in compassion for the poor. But that is not the only dimension of the poverty of Francis. He did not only serve the poor, he became so poor that history knows him as the *poverello*. At the time of his conversion, according to Thomas of Celano, Francis "was striving with his whole heart to become poor." He could not find the poverty he was seeking within established forms of religious life: "He looked in vain in those around him for that real poverty which he desired above all earthly things and in which he wanted to live and die." (L3C 10).

But why this desire to be poor? It is certainly true that Francis saw what avarice had done to his own father: the preoccupation with money, usury, dishonesty, violence, arrogance, blindness of spiritual values. It would be his mother who would break his chains, set him free and make him truly "Francesco." But the deepest reason lay in his discovery of God, his falling in love with God. If what he was to do for God was become a poor man, he could bring himself to do that only when he discovered the beauty of God. Once he grasped the riches of God, he could put no value upon a pile of coins or a tract of land. When one is in love, all but the beloved pale into insignificance. His written prayers are filled with this thought: "Lord God, all good. You are Good, all Good, supreme Good, Lord God, living and true. You are love, You are wisdom. You are Humility, You are endurance. You are rest, You are peace. You are joy and gladness. You are justice and moderation. You are all our riches, and You suffice for us." (Praises of God).

Several years after his conversion, Francis's poverty took on a new aspect. He had at first thought his call to "rebuild the church" was a summons simply to the life of a hermit or penitent. After two years he came to realize it was a call to preach. Now his life underwent a further change. He had since his conversion been attracted by the poverty of Christ, the poverty he found in the poor. Now he discovered the poverty lived by Christ and the apostolic band of preachers who took nothing for their journey, not money, not lunch box, not suitcase, but relied as beggars on the good will of those who listened. This life he embraced with all his heart, and it was this life which attracted those men who became his "friars minor" or little brothers. He wrote them a Rule of life, which the Pope confirmed for them, and which required that they sell all their property and give it to the poor, that they own nothing, that they receive no money, and in the earliest days, "that they take nothing for their journey." What Francis and the Pope did not foresee in 1209 was that six years later a great ecumenical Council would establish a new program for the Church in which preaching would be linked to education and the priesthood. How could the Friars Minor own nothing, eschew money, beg their sustenance, and at the same time operate schools for the education of their preaching clergy. The history of the Friars Minor is indeed the history of a community's struggle to do just that.

But it is another point that I want to make here. It is not correct to think that Francis envisioned a society in which there was no private property. Indeed not. The very existence of a band of mendicants presumed the existence of a populace from which to beg. Jesus and the Apostles according to the Gospel of St. Luke were supported by a band of women "who were assisting them out of their means" (8.3). Francis and the friars had their supporters also, for while the poverello was humble, he had some powerful friends and admirers. Not everyone dined at the house of Cardinal Hugolino dei Segni, or of Cardinal Leone de Brancalione, or of Orlando Count of Chiusi in Casentino, or of the Lady Jacoba dei Settesoli. It is true that friars worked among the lepers; it is also true that friars worked on the lands and in the houses of wealthy. Francis told them that in working among the people they must not exercise the office of chamberlain, or chancellor, or mayordomo. These offices were not found among the poor of Assisi, but among the rich.

We have some of the exhortations of St. Francis to the penitents, those Christians who made a public commitment to live an intense Christian life in the world, the germ from which grew his Third Order, the Secular Franciscan Order as it is known today. There is nothing in this literature concerning renunciation of property. In an early document, Francis's advice is simply to love God, love your neighbor, receive the sacraments, control your passions, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance. A later document, his famous "Letter to the Faithful,"

exhorts Christians not to the abandonment of property but to almsgiving. He writes: "People lose everything they leave behind in this world; but they carry with them the rewards of charity and the alms which they gave, for which they will have a reward and a suitable remuneration from the Lord." Peter Maurin said it much more simply, "Christ says: 'the dollar you have is the dollar you give to the poor'" (p.10).

The difference between having property to give in alms and not having property was the difference between "being in the world," the "secular" vocation and "leaving the world" as Friars were supposed to do. Of course, religious communities before Francis wrestled with the relative merits of a life of property and of poverty. In a famous allegory, religious argue with Lady Poverty: "It is good to continue in works of piety and to have time to bring forth good fruits, to contribute to those who are in want, to give something to the poor." Lady Poverty says only, "I do not deny that what you have said is good, but consider your own vocation." The vocation of the friar minor was to be a living witness, a prophet testifying by his life, that human beings find fulfillment in God, not in property; that the goods of this world must satisfy the needs of all, regardless of the rights of ownership. For this witness they deserved support. "There is a contract between the world and the brothers; the brothers must give the world a good example, the world must provide for their needs. When they break faith and withdraw their good example, the world will withdraw its hand in a just censure." (2 Cel 70).

Was Francis a revolutionary? He certainly set the world of his day on fire with a rekindled charity for God and man. But it is I believe a mistake to think that he envisioned a society in which there would be no private property. In his day governments did not feed the poor; wealthy Christians fed the poor. If there were no wealthy Christians, the world would perish. He could not envision systemic changes in society: the possibility of educating the masses, of eradicating leprosy, of a system of public welfare, of the elimination of poverty itself. These would await new ages, new possibilities, new insights into the demands of justice and the challenge of the Gospel, a new poverello or a new poverella, before the realization of those "new heavens and a new earth" where, according to his promise, the justice of God will reside (2 Pt. 3.13).

And what is said in regard to Francis the poverello, must, I believe, be said of Francis the man of peace. Once he accepted his "creatureliness" then all men and women became his brothers and sisters. It became impossible to think of peace with God without thinking also of peace in this world.

In the days of St. Francis the army of Assisi clashed with army of Perugia, papal armies fought imperial armies, Christian crusaders fought Saracen host, robbers murdered in the countryside, kith and kin clashed in the cities, and the

vendetta was a social institution. Violence was as much a part of thirteenth-century Italy as it is twentieth-century America. Into the highways and byways of this violent world came at first Francis and then his brothers with a greeting of peace, a salutation as radical in 1216 as in 1966. So prevalent a theme was it in early Franciscan preaching that Thomas of Celano, Francis's first biographer, refers to the work of the early friars as a "mission of peace." St. Bonaventure relates, "At the beginning and end of every one sermon he announced peace; in every greeting he wished for peace; in every prayer he sighed for ecstatic peace." An eyewitness to his preaching at Bologna on August 15, 1222 wrote: "Throughout his discourse he spoke of the duty of putting an end to hatreds and of arranging a new treaty of peace. He was wearing a ragged habit; his whole person seemed insignificant; he did not have an attractive face. But God conferred so much power on his words that they brought back peace in many a seignorial family torn apart until then by old, cruel, and furious hatreds even to the point of assassinations" (Thomas of Spalato, *Historia Salonitarum*, in *Omnibus*, pp. 1602-02).

Francis truly tried to remove the causes of war and violence. He would have ended the Crusade by converting the Sultan of Egypt had the sultan proved more cooperative. On one occasion when a scandalous quarrel divided the bishop and the mayor of Assisi, he lamented to his friars that no one could be found who would intervene to establish peace and concord between them. Grievously ill himself, he sent his friars to the piazza to sing before prelate and podestà the **Canticle of Brother Sun**. He had added a final verse: "All praise be Yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon for love of You; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned." It was a simple but successful ploy perpetrated by a peacemaker who knew his beatitudes. While peace is a blessing, it is the peacemaker who is called "blessed" by the Lord.

Yet St. Francis was not an absolute pacifist. The standing army of his day were the very knights among whom he had once hoped to be numbered, and he never lost his admiration for them. He had friends among the knights, and on more than one occasion he accepted their protection. An ideological pacifist would hardly have called his followers, the "knights of the Round Table," and have exhorted them: "The Emperor Charles, Roland, and Oliver, all paladins and valiant knights who were mighty in battle, pursued the infidels even to death, sparing neither toil nor fatigue, and gained a memorable victory for themselves; and in the end they died as martyrs fighting for the faith of Christ." (LP 72). He wept for the Spanish knights who because of their impetuosity died in such numbers at the Battle of Damietta. He regretted the battle, not because he

objected to the Crusade, but because it was fought on the Commemoration of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, which the Saracens observed by mutilating the bodies of the fallen Crusaders.

Every society has had its enthusiasts, and perhaps the Franciscans have had their own in extolling the glories of St. Francis. The growth of the Kingdom of God is like the working of leaven and the development of the mustard seed. The growth of one season follows upon that of past. If Francis of Assisi moved people to become peacemakers, it would take Dorothy Day and **The Catholic Worker** to write: "we are opposed to the use of force as a means of settling personal, national, or international disputes." When growth seems slow we console ourselves with the thought that "in the Lord's eyes, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as a day." And when we are tempted to become complacent, we remind ourselves that we are not only to look for the coming of the day of God but to try to hasten it!

Not only men and women but all the creatures of God are our brothers and sisters. It was a simple insight of St. Francis, but what a great insight Lynn White had when he realized the implications of St. Francis's world-view for our age. I still remember the bulldozers burying barrels on the lot behind our house. If it was under the ground, it was gone and no longer a problem. We hardly asked what "it" was and surely had no consideration for what "it" would do to Mother Earth whose womb was so violated. Francis taught the world not to dominate nature but to reverence and respect it.

Only when Francis rediscovered himself as a creature of God did he rediscover the beauty of nature. In the sickness that came upon him after his release from prison "the beauty of the fields, the pleasantness of the vineyards, and whatever else was beautiful to look upon, could stir in him no delight" (1 Cel 3). But when he realized that all creatures bear in some degree a likeness to their creator, it gave him a new joy to look upon the sun, to behold the moon, and to gaze upon the stars. Whether as prayer said aloud or as exhortation to passersby, he preached to a flock of birds in the meadow and field of flowers in the vale, inviting them to praise the Lord for His goodness to them. He exhorted fields of corn and vineyards, stones, and springs, and forests, earth and fire, earth and wind to praise the Lord:

"All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars'
In the heavens you have made them bright

And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night
How beautiful is he, how joyful! Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with colored flowers and herbs . . .

Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks,
And serve Him with great humility.

"Among the famous saints who loved nature as a marvelous gift of God to the human race, Saint Francis of Assisi is justly numbered. He had a remarkable sensitivity for all the works of the Creator, and he sang that very beautiful *Canticle of the Creatures* in which he gave the Omnipotent and Good Lord due praise, glory, honor, and all blessing for our most powerful Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and the stars of heaven." So wrote Pope John Paul II on November 29, 1979 as he proclaimed St. Francis the celestial patron of ecologists.

These aspects of St. Francis's life and character: his compassion for the suffering, his undying desire for the dereliction of poverty, his passion for peace, his brotherhood with all creation were deeply rooted in his love for God. His daily commitment was grounded in the integrity of his life, the completeness he possessed in being completed by God, the wholeness he possessed in realizing that he was possessed by God. It is this strong religious conviction which we must sustain if we would realize the implications of the Gospel for our own age.

* * *

Clare and Conflict

SR. MADGE KARECKI, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.

Conflict is a part of each of our lives. We cannot flee from it. Handling it well is a matter of understanding and evaluating the issue which has caused the conflict, and of acquiring the necessary skills for dealing with the dynamics at work in conflict situations. When I look at the life of Clare it seems that there were three areas in her life where Clare had to deal with conflict. They are three different, but similar areas and her approach in each gives us an indication of how Clare dealt with conflict.

Conflict with her Family

We know that Clare's family was part of the nobility of Assisi. Her father came from a long line of knights. Indeed the Offreducio family, including Clare's father, Favarone, were known for their support against the burgeoning movement of the merchant class to wrest away power from the nobility.

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF is a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. She is a graduate of the Franciscan Institute and has been a missionary in South Africa for nine years. She is the Director of the Office of Worship of the Catholic Diocese of Johannesburg and is a doctoral student in missiology at the University of South Africa. She also works with the Poor Clare communities of the East African Association giving workshops and retreats. This article was originally presented at the annual Franciscan Convention in South Africa. Because of the situation in the country the topic of "conflict" was chosen and reflected upon from many different viewpoints.

Around 1198 Clare's immediate family had to flee Assisi for Perugia. They stayed with Monaldo, Favarone's brother, for protection during this time of struggle for the independence of the commune. The family remained in Perugia until about 1205-1206. The merchants had succeeded in gaining control of the commune. Thus they set up an economic and political system to benefit themselves. The oppressed had now become the oppressors.

Into this context God raised up Francis to give a prophetic witness to another style of life, a life based on the Gospel. Much to the dismay of the Offreducio family, Rufino, had become attracted to Francis and his other followers. Though history leaves us no record, it seems entirely possible that Rufino shared his experience and his aspirations with his cousin, Clare.

With interest Clare must have listened to the preaching of the young man clad in poor clothing and radiating a kind of joy which captivated her. Francis, for his part, we are told by Clare's sister Beatrice, sought out Clare. Francis had heard of her reputation as someone who was sensitive to the poor and receptive to his understanding of Gospel living. Her own heart was set on fire by all that they shared and with equal passion she longed to follow the poor Christ. In her Testament she wrote that through the words of Francis her heart was enlightened and she was called to conversion.

This call led to the first area of conflict in Clare's life. The conflict with her family and the values they represented. As sometimes happens, a call can bring us into tension and conflict with those we love. We find that we grow in a way different to their expectations of us. This was the case with Clare.

All of us are familiar with the story of how Clare joined Francis on the night of Palm Sunday, 1212. She left her family home secretly and by night with only her friend and confidante, Pacifica, the sister of Bona Guelfuccio, as a companion. The next day her angry relatives came to the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo. They tried to carry her away and were only convinced of the seriousness of her resolve when she bared her head and showed her shorn hair. This is more than a scene out of a medieval adventure story. Using imagery common to the medieval world, Clare's biographers used this symbolic act as a way to show how she dealt with the conflict with her family.

What can we observe? First, Clare was decisive. She acted upon her convictions. Secondly, she took responsibility for her actions, even in the face of opposition. Thirdly, she handled the conflict with her parents in a way they understood: she used no long arguments, but one convincing action. By showing her family her shorn head she revealed to them the conviction which was behind her action. In medieval times the tonsure was a sign of dedication and

commitment. Clare made it clear that her choice was irrevocable and her choice had led her on a different way. This conflict was essentially over the question of vocation.

Conflict with Hierarchy

Clare and the community at San Damiano were given the Benedictine Rule, later Hugolino gave them his own Rule, and still later they were given the Rule of Innocent IV. We know that Clare and the community accepted these forms of legislation and took them seriously, but also pursued the path of dialogue in the face of the conflict which arose from each of these rules.

The essence of the conflict lay in three areas of life: poverty, the relationship between those in authority and the community members and enclosure. In these three areas the legislation differed from what Clare was inspired to live by the example of Francis and the Form of Life he gave to the community.

The other rules allowed for communal ownership. This militated against the kind of poverty that made dependence on God real. Clare had experienced the wealth of the Benedictine monasteries first hand and found it stifling. She would have no part of it. The rules given to the Poor Ladies did not emphasize the role of the community in decision-making. The abbess was given a place of honor. Clare believed in the power of the Holy Spirit working in each member. She understood authority in terms of service.

All of the previous rules envisaged strict enclosure. Clare saw enclosure as essential to the contemplative life, but she adopted a common sense approach toward going out.

In the face of conflict with the hierarchy Clare obeyed and also acted. Her request for the Privilege of Poverty was a creative way of dealing with the conflict. It assured Clare that the community would have the freedom to be poor. In terms of the role of authority and enclosure Clare took as her life-long work creating a different way, another understanding. She did not denounce nor did she disobey. She and the sisters fulfilled the law and went beyond it.

Clare's own rule, her life project, reflects her mind and the experience of the community in these three areas of conflict. In this conflict with the hierarchy Clare, again, was decisive. She acted and a new kind of monastic community was born. Clare persevered and with utter conviction articulated her own Rule

which was faithful to her unique charism in the Church. At the root of this area of conflict is again the issue of her vocation. Here again we see the same pattern: decisiveness, responsible handling of the conflict in a way that is appropriate to the situation. Clare worked through the channels of the Church structure patiently, steadily and with confidence.

Conflict with the Friars

We know that hardly had Francis been laid in his tomb when the friars wanted to nullify the binding force of his Testament. Some of the friars could not take the kind of lifestyle Francis and the first followers taught them. The poverty and minority did not fit into the picture they had for the future of the community.

The friars sought to sever the connection between themselves and the Poor Ladies. Some authors speculate that perhaps the friars felt guilty about how they were living and could not bear to see the fidelity of the Poor Ladies.

Clare again acted in the face of this conflict. She faced the issue head on. She insisted on poverty - that is why she is called the most faithful follower of Francis. Clare said "No thank-you" to the material help the friars offered unless they would give them spiritual in-put. She forced them to come to terms with the essentials of Franciscan life. Clare would not compromise on essentials: poverty, spiritual growth and the relationships which existed among the brothers and sisters. No doubt this situation prompted her to quote the Form of Life in her *Rule*:

Because by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the Most High King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers always to have that same loving care and solicitude for you as I have for them.

Clare also quoted verbatim the section with regard to poverty:

I, little brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His holy mother and to persevere in this until the end; and I ask and counsel you, my ladies to live always in the most holy life and poverty. And keep most careful watch that you never depart from this by reason of the teaching or advice of anyone.

Both of these texts are applicable and both are at the heart of the conflict which Clare had with the friars. Clare knew that the charism which she and

Francis shared was at stake. She could not let it die. Though she could not stem the tide which eventually overtook the friars, she acted creatively and faithfully by living the charism to the full in her own life. This too, was an issue tied to her very vocation.

The pattern again emerges: reflection, decisive action and honest confrontation of all that was an obstacle to fidelity to the charism.

reflection, decisive action and honest confrontation of all that was an obstacle to fidelity to the charism.

Conclusion

All of the areas of major conflict in Clare's life revolved around the issue of vocation. In her Testament Clare, quoting Paul to the Corinthians, exhorted her sisters with the words "Know your vocation" (1 Cor 1:26). She realized through her own experience the intimate connection that exists between understanding one's vocation, growing in that vocation, and persevering until the end despite opposition.

Without a clear understanding of one's vocation, grace dissipates, life becomes superficial. One gets lost in the unimportant and insignificant and one can be tempted to compromise the foundational values of the charism.

The areas of life in which Clare experienced conflict were not trivial or about nonessentials, but were all related to the charism. Clare resolved these conflicts with strength and courage. She could not change the opinions and convictions of others, but she could live in fidelity and that she did with the rare virtues of perseverance and love.



Beneath the Turmoil

There in the stillness and
peace, you speak more
profoundly than in a million praises

You do not shout with a loud voice. You whisper.
But that whisper celebrates more than a
chorus of voices.

You do not make your presence known with loud
announcement, but with simple and
silent arrival.

Your love, Lord, does not demand, but
enables and encourages.

You do not force, but remain steady
and safe.

Lord Jesus, the stillness and quiet are not
empty. They are full of Your peace. The
peace is full of Your gentle Spirit.

Your quiet oh Lord, is full of music, full
of song. Most of all, Jesus, the
precious silence is full of
Your love.

j m ryan

A PSALM OF CLARE'S PRAYERFULNESS

My soul is aflame with the light of your love, my God.
Within your presence
my spirit is absorbed
into the bliss of eternal sunlight.

In peaceful silence my soul is aflame.
You whisper your love to me.
You fill my moments with tender knowing,
My heart overflows with the secrets of your gifts
and I am filled beyond infinite imaginings.

To rest in your shadow is my soul's delight.
To proclaim your love is my heart's only desire.

My soul is aflame with the light for your love.
With my whole being I meet you, my God,
face to face, whom I love.

In quiet silence I am transformed
in wonder, adoration and praise.

My soul is aflame with your love.
Immersed in tranquil contemplation
you set my heart ablaze
with the radiant light of your tenderness.

My soul is aflame.
I live in your love.
I rest in your faithfulness.
You kindle my flame my beloved, my all,
my light, my lover, my God.

My soul is aflame with the light of your love, my God.
Within your presence
my spirit is absorbed
into the bliss of eternal sunlight

Sr. Marion Zeltmann, P.C.P.A.

How Our Fraternity Received New Evangelical Impulses Through the Intercession of Saint Anthony of Padua

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O. F. M.

About the time of the Paschal Solemnity in the year 1992, the Universal Minister, after much travel on many pilgrimages by water, on land, and in the air, withdrew to a hermitage in the hills in order to do penance, to "apply himself to the contemplative dimension" and there to meditate on the signs in the history of our fraternity of life, death, and resurrection. And behold, it suddenly became clear to him that after being elected Minister General the previous year on the Feast of the blessed Brother Anthony of Padua, he had in fact encountered this universal Saint in the most wonderful way during the first months of his service. Some of these encounters are here set forth quite simply for the edification of others.

1. On the very first day of his service as Minister General, Brother Hermann received from Brother Anthony, the Minister of the Province of the Holy Name in New York, the sad news that armed robbers had - on the feast of the Wonder-worker of all days - stolen several thousand dollars from the cash-box of the shrine of St. Anthony in 31st Street, money which was destined for feeding daily many hundreds of poor people. Thereupon the indignation among the citizens and their feelings of sympathy with the robbed friars were so great, that in an action of solidarity spurred on by the Governor of the State himself, they collected in one week a sum of money twice as great as that which had been taken from the friars. The ministers and servants in faraway San Diego upon hearing of this, wondered and asked themselves what such a sign might mean for the sexennium just begun, for example for the "fund-raising project" that they had just determined upon.

This unique account by the General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor gives us further insight into the marvelous wisdom which guides his life and his travels.

2. Then at the start of the academic year the Minister hurried to the Roman centre of studies, the Antonianum, and there had explained to him by the brothers how it could be further renewed and how it could render an ever better qualified service in the evangelization of cultures. In a brief "Statement" under the title "A Future for our Past", he then spoke of how the Fraternity rightly desires to pursue studies "at a high scientific level", but should not forget at the same time that, according to the example of the Doctor of the Church Antony of Padua, witnesses to the faith are more important than Masters, poets and prophets are more important than advocates of the past, visionaries are more important than administrators of the status quo.

He spoke of how from the "memoria" of the past there must constantly grow a new "prophetia", for, as in the holy Eucharist, from the dynamic memory of the past there grows the certainty of a new life in the future. The minister concluded with these words: "We can summon the courage to be at least little prophets, that is to say 'minor prophets.' And that means for a University which bears the name of Anthony, to face the questions of today, the new questions concerning the life of man and of the cosmos; to place the human being before the Sabbath, not only to recognize and study the truth but to do it; not to mistake the penultimate questions for the ultimate ones; to connect together in our lives divine service and service of the poor; to make possible a multiplicity of voices in the concert of theology and spirituality. For," he concluded, "a vital multiplicity is the best guarantee for any lasting unity."

3. As the new liturgical year began, there was great indignation and confusion throughout Italy and among all those who hold a special devotion to Saint Anthony, also in the Curia in Rome on the Gelsomino hill, because one of his most precious relics, a piece of the bone that hand which had worked so much good and blessed so many people, was stolen by shameless robbers from the Basilica in Padua. Tireless were the investigations of the Carabinieri, countless the prayers and the intercessions of the faithful.

As the forces of order finally found the precious relic in a wonderful way on a green lawn in Latium, the Minister Universalis experienced another sign of the care and protection which the Doctor Mirabilis had clearly wanted to bestow upon him ever since his election on 13th June 1991: a "General" of the Carabinieri, clearly ignorant of the wonderful multiplicity within the Franciscan family, immediately confided as a great secret to the Minister General the happy news of the recovered relic. He offered to bring it immediately and solemnly to the Gelsomino hill. The Minister first thanked the gentleman, praised the protectors of public order, but declined to receive the relic, because it belonged traditionally to other brothers of the same Francis. It was then in fact solemnly returned to Padua in the Venice region.

All the same, some brothers cannot quite rid themselves of the feeling that perhaps Saint Anthony himself had the desire to come into the Curia of the Friars Minor in Rome on the Gelsomino in order to bring a special blessing upon all who dwell therein.

4. In the first weeks of the new calendar year the Minister set out on a journey into the far country of Brazil in order to visit the brothers there and with them give thanks on the occasion of the five hundredth anniversary of the evangelization of their continent while at the same time undertaking an examination of conscience. On the way there he was forced, "for technical reasons" he was told, to wait one day - a Tuesday - in Lisbon in a manner quite unforeseen and unplanned before he could continue his journey on the wings of the wind. So he begged hospitality and a simple lodging for the night of Brother Mario, the Minister of the Province which is in Lusitania. Both were granted him. Brother Mario showed him the historic friary of Varatojo which is dedicated to Saint Anthony, and above all the friary of Saint Anthony is Lisbon, which is built on the spot where the Saint was born. After he prayed there in the grotto, he gave to many of the brothers and sisters of the Franciscan family an address, based on a passage from the sermons of the great preacher:

"Whoever is Guardian and Minister of others must be distinguished by a pure life and by knowledge of the holy Scriptures. He must be able to express himself well, clearly and with conviction. He must be zealous in prayer and show a sympathetic understanding in his relations with others, for he must some day give a reckoning for those who have been entrusted to him. In everything he must have the golden gift of mildness and gentleness. He should be the father and the mother of all." (Sermones)

With the great teachers of his fraternity in mind, he quoted also a saying of William Faulkner, who wrote, "The past is never dead. It is not even past." He ended by wishing all of them after the example of Saint Anthony of Lisbon "a clear head, a merry heart, a humble disposition". Thereupon he continued his journey.

5. Having reached the land under the Southern Cross, he realized that in Recife he had entered the territory of a Province dedicated to the Saint of Lisbon and Padua. The minister who greeted him likewise bore the name Antônio. In Olinda, where the young brothers are introduced to Franciscan life and into sacred theology, the Minister spoke with the assembled friars about the "priorities of Franciscan studies." He encouraged all of them to serve an evangelization which speaks of hunger for bread and hunger for God at the same time, neither separating them nor confusing them. He mentioned that St. Anthony himself had

had an "integral understanding of mission," because in his theology, which was expressly praised by Brother Francis (Letter to Anthony), the bread of Scriptures and of the Eucharist may not be separated from the bread of the hungry and of the poor, for both of them are the expression of God's single love and the sacrament of his "preferential option for mankind."

He pointed out that according to both the ancient and the modern Masters of the Fraternity it is of no importance to amass a great deal of knowledge. The wise man is rather the one who is able to apply his knowledge for the benefit of others and to the service of the world. Finally he told them what he had discovered in Portugal about the pedagogical method of St. Anthony. A novice had left the fraternity in which Anthony was teaching. It seemed that life according to the Gospel was too onerous for him. Secretly he took with him a valuable Book of Psalms which was of great importance for the fraternity. Brother Anthony himself had with his own hand written in it his precious annotations. So they all prayed fervently to the Lord led by the Saint, and their prayer was heard. Not only did the former novice contritely bring back the book. He also asked to be re-admitted to obedience and became for the many years of the rest of his life an exemplary friar minor.

By way of Fortaleza, where he visited a certain Cardinal Aloysius who many years before had been a professor at the Roman Antonianum, the Minister Universalis arrived at S. Luiz do Maranhão, where the brothers from Portugal had from 1624 to 1706 already had a "Custody of St. Anthony". In this place also a certain Brother Antônio Vieira (1608-1697), who it must be said was a member of the Order of the Society of Jesus, preached against the avarice of some of the colonizers and the immorality of the slave-traders and so showed himself to be a precursor of an authentic theology of liberation. This great missionary positioned himself on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean and preached to the fishes, because hard-hearted men would not listen to him. This is similar to what we read about the blessed Anthony at Rimini on the Adriatic (Fioretti, ch. 60).

In the year 1952 missionaries had come from the Saxonia Province to continue these Gospel traditions and to implant the Franciscan life here once more. Since that time so many young brothers had been admitted to obedience from the "basic communities," that a new Vice-Province could be erected. On the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord the Minister read out the relative Roman decree. And on the evening of that same day a young man of that country made profession of his final vows into the hands of the Brother from Rome as a sign that a new branch had begun to grow on the trunk of the world-wide Brotherhood. And the name of this young friar was Antônio Pacheco.

6. In the weeks which followed, the Minister again came across his patron saint in the friary of S. Antônio in Belo Horizonte, where before a large gathering of sisters and brothers he spoke about the "Priorities of Evangelization Today;" in São Paulo, where he spoke with a certain Brother Leonardo about the student years they shared together in the Province of St. Anthony in Bavaria and about the obligation they shared in the name of the Church and of the Fraternity to live the spirit of the Saint also in new forms, particularly among the poor; in San Francisco in California, where every day in the name of Brother Anthony the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the sick are healed, the suffering are consoled, in their thousands; in Bologna in Emilia Romagna, where a certain Brother Ernesto, founder of the social centre called "Antoniano", celebrated his Golden Jubilee of priesthood; in Laç in cold Albania, where with the help of this same Brother Ernesto, of the Antoniano of Bologna, as well as with the support and help even of the Moslems of Albania, a sanctuary of St. Anthony is being re-built which the former holders of power had shamelessly destroyed. For all these encounters and moments of illumination he thanked the Lord.

7. Thereafter Brother Hermannus resolved to betake himself once more to Brazil for the first anniversary of his election as Minister General, and this on the occasion of the "United Nations" conference on ecology and cosmic survival. On the Praça Mahatma Gandhi, in front of our friary Santo Antônio in Rio de Janeiro, it was his desire to pray and fast together with innumerable sisters and brothers from the whole Franciscan family.

Moreover he wanted to join with many people of good will in calling on the universal Saint, the Wonder-worker, the Finder of lost objects of value and the Creator of new perspectives, Anthony of Lisbon-Padua-Rio-Rome, so that at his intercession the millions of poor might at last be given human dignity and bread; the powerful of this world might make peace with one another and with the martyred world; the many children forced to live on open streets and squares might find a new home; to all those who are in need might be given a new vision of a just world order; and, finally, the Franciscan family might ever more clearly take up the ministry and diakonia of peace-making as the necessary consequence of its faith in the Risen Lord, preaching it after the example of Francis and Anthony more by deeds than by words.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit Frater Arminius Romanus, a secretis Ministri Generalis, in eremitorio Sancti Antonii

a Montepaolo, die Dominicae in Albis, A.D. 1992

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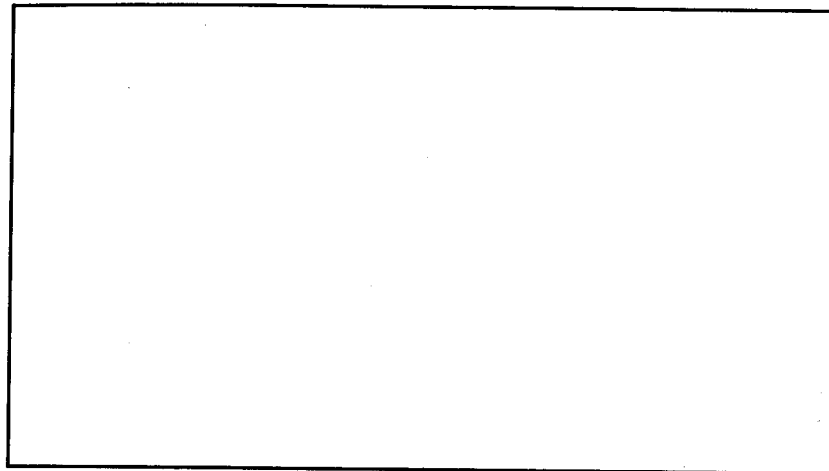
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MARCH, 1993

The CORD



A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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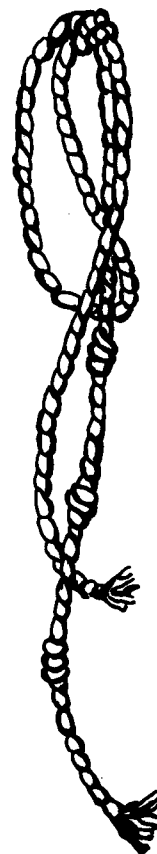
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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

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	VPLact: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
Form Viv: 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 commercium
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).

Conference of Ministers General Of The Four Franciscan Families

Letter of The Ministers General on the Occasion of the Conferring of Liturgical Honours of the Blessed John Duns Scotus

Dear Brothers in the Lord,

We are happy to tell you that on 20th March 1993 our Holy Father Pope John Paul II will proceed, in the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican, to a solemn celebration during which liturgical honours will be granted to the Blessed John Duns Scotus. This event marks a moment of particular grace for the whole Franciscan Order, which venerates the Blessed John Duns Scotus as an outstanding example of holiness and as a profound master of doctrine.

The celebration appears all the more significant at this time, the threshold of the third millenium, when the Franciscan Order, conscious of its apostolic vocation, in virtue of the Rule and by mandate of the Church, finds itself engaged with the world of today in a new evangelization. Duns Scotus was firmly convinced, in fact, that man, created by the infinite Love of God as "the praise and glory of Christ" (Eph. 1:12), yearns constantly for knowledge of the truth in an impassioned search for God, and convinced that "with the passing of the human generations there is a constant growth in the announcing of the truth" (J. Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV, d.1, q.3, n.8; Ed. Vivès XVI 136a).

In giving you this happy news and presenting to you the figure of the new Beatus, we cannot do better than recall the words with which in 1304 the Minister General of the Friars Minor, Fra Gonsalvo of Spain, presented the then candidate John Duns Scotus for the doctorate in the University of Paris: "Of his praiseworthy life, of his excellent knowledge, of his most subtle intelligence and of his other outstanding gifts I am fully informed, partly by a long personal experience and partly by the reputation he enjoys, which has spread everywhere" (Denifle-Chatelain. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*. II. 117-118).

His "knowledge", his "intelligence" and his "praiseworthy life" have continued to work their effect through the years and the centuries, within the Franciscan Order, in the Church and in the cultural world, made evident by many witnesses and writings up to our own day. What we read in the Decree of Confirmation of the Cult dated 6th July 1991 is the recognition that his light was not that of a rainbow but rather that of a star which "will shine for ever": "*The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity* (Dan. 12:3). The Servant of God, John Duns Scotus, excels among the great masters of Scholastic doctrine by the exceptional role he played in philosophy and theology; in fact he stands out in brilliance as the defender of the Immaculate Conception and illustrious defender of the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff. Moreover, with his teaching and his examples of Christian life, spent entirely in pursuing the glory of God., he attracted not a few of the faithful throughout the course of the centuries to follow the divine Master and to walk more quickly in the way of Christian perfection."

He was, then, surrounded in life by a reputation for virtue and wisdom: a reputation which after his death gradually established itself and increased both in Cologne and in other cities. Although his reputation for holiness, given rich expression in a public devotion, spread immediately after his death and has never since given any sign of diminishing, Divine Providence has brought it about that it should be our own times that witness his glorification through the recognition of the cult of which he has been the object from time immemorial and of his heroic virtues which shine out in the midst of the holy Church, as well as through the solemn conferring upon him of the liturgical honours of the Church.

The Blessed John Duns Scotus was born in the town of Duns, Scotland, about the year 1265. His family was devoted to the sons of St. Francis, who like the first preachers of the Gospel had from the Order's beginning reached as far as Scotland. Towards the year 1280 he was received into the Order of Friars Minor by his paternal uncle, Elias Duns, who was Vicar of the recently erected Vicariate of Scotland. In the Franciscan Order he completed his formation, perfected his spiritual life, and widened his learning, endowed as he was with a lively and penetrating intelligence. Ordained priest on 17th March 1291, he was sent to Paris to finish his studies. By reason of his outstanding priestly virtues he was entrusted with the ministry of confessions, a task at that time of great prestige. After graduating at the University of Paris he began his academic teaching which he carried out in the cities of Cambridge, Oxford and Cologne. In conformity with the wish of St. Francis, who in his Rule (Rb 12) had prescribed for his friars that they should be fully obedient to the Vicar of Christ and to the Church, he refused to accept the schismatic invitation of Philip IV, King of France, opposed to Pope Boniface VIII. For this reason he was expelled from Paris. However in the following year he was able to return and take up his

philosophical and theological teaching once more. Thereafter he was sent to Cologne. There, on 8th November 1308, he was struck by a sudden death, in the midst of a life dedicated to regular observance and to the preaching of the Catholic faith. Until the very end of his life he shone out as a faithful servant of that truth which had been his daily spiritual food. He had assimilated it with his mind in meditation, and he had effectively spread it with his words and his writings, showing himself a teacher of surprising and fervent genius.

John Duns Scotus, convinced that the "first free act encountered in the whole of being is an act of love" (E. Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot. Introduction à ses positions fondamentales*. Etudes de Philosophie Médiévale. 42. Paris 1952. 577) manifested a marked inclination and extraordinary predilection for the particular vocation and singular form of simple and transparent life of the Seraphic Father Saint Francis: on this he based his most profound aims and ideals, which led him to focus on Jesus Christ all his thought and all his affections and to develop a deep and sincere love for the Church which mediates his presence and shares his salvation. Using wisely the talents received from birth as a gift of God, he fixed his mental gaze and the yearning of his heart on the depths of divine truth, overflowing with the fullness of joy, the mark of someone who has found his treasure. Indeed he ascended ever higher in his contemplation and his love of God. With the humility proper to the truly wise man, he did not rely on his own powers but trusted in the help of the divine grace which he asked of God in fervent prayer.

His theology nourished his spiritual life, and his spiritual life in its turn consolidated his theology. Thus, illumined by faith, lifted up by hope, inflamed by charity, he lived in intimate union with God, "the Truth of truths". "O Lord, Creator of the world", Duns Scotus prayed at the beginning of the *De Primo Principio*, one of the most analytical works of metaphysics in the whole of Christian thought, "grant me to believe, comprehend and glorify your Majesty and lift up my spirit to the contemplation of you." With his "ardently contemplative genius" he turned to the One who is "Infinite Truth and Infinite Goodness." "The First Efficient Cause," "the First who is the last end of everything," "the First in the absolute sense, by eminence," "the Ocean of every perfection," and "Love by essence" (Cf. *Alma Parens*, AAS, 1966, p. 612). He loved everything and desired to know everything of God, the first and total Being, infinite and free. From this arises his penetrating speculation which served to make him perfectly receptive to the self-revelation of God in the Eternal Word: to know God, man, the cosmos and the primary and ultimate goal of history.

In the history of Christian reflection he has imposed himself as the theologian of the incarnate, crucified and eucharistic Word: "I say, therefore, as

my own opinion," he wrote with regard to the universal presence of the eucharistic body of Christ in every part of cosmic space and time, "that even before the Incarnation and before 'Abraham was', at the origin of the world, Christ could have had a true temporal existence in sacramental form . . . And if this is so, it follows that the Eucharist can have existed before the conception and formation of the Body of Christ in the most pure blood of the Blessed Virgin" (*Reportatio parisiensis*, IV, dist. 10, q.4, n.8.9; Ed. Vivès XXIV, 69a, 70a; cf. *Ordinatio*, IV, d.10, q.4, n.6.7; ED. Vivès XVII, 232a, 233a).

The Blessed John Duns Scotus, by developing the doctrine of the absolute Predestination and the universal Primacy of Jesus Christ, unfolded his theological vision in which he anticipated to a certain extent the theology of the Church of our own time: "The Word of God, through whom all things were made, was made flesh so that as a perfect man he could save all men and sum up all things in himself. The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, and centre of mankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations . . . Animated and drawn together in his Spirit we press onwards on our journey towards that consummation of history which fully corresponds to the plan of his love: 'to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:10)" (Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World, n.45). The self-revelation of God in the Word involves the revelation of the mystery of man: "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear . . . Christ the Lord, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling . . . Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.22).

The philosophical truth, then, which he pursued in a closely reasoned and rigorous examination of the opinions of the ancients and of his own contemporaries, provides by universal consent even today an abundant harvest of insights, of solutions, and of proposed lines of thought whose richness and fruitfulness have still not been entirely realized. However, the lesson of his method is clear to us: his speculative excursions were placed at the service of an understanding of the faith, of that theological truth which is man's nourishment while he is *in via*. "There is no metaphysical synthesis in Duns Scotus," noted E. Gilson (*Jean Duns Scot.* 339), "or, if there is one, it does not constitute the global vision of the world which was his. The only synthesis which Duns Scotus conceived was a theological synthesis, at the heart of which is to be found the affirmation of St. John, 'Deus caritas est' (I Jn. 4:16)."

And Pope Paul VI, in the Apostolic Letter *Alma Parens* addressed to the Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland on 14th July 1966 on the Seventh Centenary of the birth of John Duns Scotus, drew a clear profile of the Franciscan thinker and proposed him as a Master of Christian thought: "Beside the majestic cathedral of Saint Thomas Aquinas, among the others there is an admirable one, though quite unlike the first in dimension and in structure, which the ardent speculation of John Duns Scotus raised up to heaven on a sure foundation and with soaring pinnacles . . . The spirit and ideal of St. Francis of Assisi are latent and ardent in the work of John Duns Scotus, who lets the seraphic spirit of the Patriarch of Assisi breathe in them, subordinating knowledge (*scire*) to right living (*bene vivere*). In asserting the pre-eminence of charity over all knowledge, the universal primacy of Christ as God's master-piece, as the glorifier of the Most Holy Trinity and the Redeemer of the human race, as King in both natural and supernatural orders, at whose side shines in original beauty the Immaculate Virgin, Queen of the Universe, he brings into sharp relief the supreme ideas of the Gospel revelation, particularly those that Saints John the Evangelist and Paul the Apostle saw as eminent in the divine plan of salvation".

Pope Paul VI invited us to "honour the memory of the Subtle and Marian Doctor for his speculative as for his moral and practical life," expressing the hope for "a renewed interest in the history of theology, especially that of the Scholastics, engendering a fervent desire for a serene and systematic research carried out according to the highest standards." "It is our conviction," he added, "that it is especially from the intellectual treasure of John Duns Scotus that it will be possible to draw effective weapons to combat and dispel the black cloud of atheism which is darkening our age."

But another aspect of the thought of Scotus was highlighted by Paul VI, which we would like to single out and place before you again. The Blessed John Duns Scotus remains for us the master of "a serious dialogue which has for its basis the Gospel and the ancient common traditions and which may lead to that unity in the truth for which Christ prayed. He may well give to this dialogue . . . that seraphic spirit which assigns to charity the overriding function. He goes into and examines the developments of knowledge with an accurate and critical method, with his eyes fixed on the overriding principles, and with calm judgment proposes his conclusions deduced from them, moved, as John of Gerson said of him, not by a contentious single-minded desire to win the argument, but by the humility required to search for an agreement."

So the richness and the fecundity of the thought of Scotus depend on the fact that he demonstrated respect for the freedom of his interlocutors. For him, to think meant to carry on a dialogue which aimed not so much at affirming one's own point of view as at discovering and welcoming the truth wherever it may be

found. "To weave together these eirenic talks between the Christian communities," declared Paul VI, "the doctrine of Scotus could offer a golden thread with his agile and fruitful intellect no less than with his practical wisdom." And with good reason: "He was in fact a theologian who is constructive because of his love, and he loves with a concrete love which is truly a praxis, as he himself defines it: 'It has been proved that love is truly praxis' (*Ordinatio. prol. n.303: Ed. Vat. I.200*).

For us Franciscans, the Blessed John Duns Scotus remains a witness and a prophet. May his spirit and his work as a son of the Poverello of Assisi live again in our own time: in dialogue between believers and non-believers, in dialogue between Catholics and non-Catholics, in dialogue between evangelization and cultures. Within the centrality of Christ the centrality of man, within the centrality of man the centrality of liberty as 'will', '*ut praxis*': so that from the contemplation of God's charity one arrives at an evangelization witnessing to charity. May we derive from the witness of the Blessed John Duns Scotus a vivid model for our evangelical life, and from his thought may we obtain inspiration for our prophetic mission in the midst of our troubled times crying out for witnesses and prophets.

At this period of the Christmas festivities our minds are carried back to that iconographic representation which shows the Blessed John Duns Scotus as he is about to write down his speculation on the Incarnate Word, preferring to exceed in his praise rather than say too little: he is contemplating and receiving inspiration from the Word Incarnate which appears in the likeness of a Child gently caressing him, while the Virgin invokes for him, the troubadour of her Immaculate Conception, the floods of divine wisdom (cf. B. Gutwein, in M. Pranger, *Theologia iuxta Duns Scoti*, Augusta 1732). The most heart-felt hope that we can express is that such an attitude may also be ours: to welcome the Incarnate Word in thought, in sentiments, in praise and in life.

Rome, 6 January 1993, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

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Fr. Lanfranco Serrini
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FOUNDATIONS FOR A THEOLOGY OF PRESENCE:

A Consideration of the Scotist Understanding of the Primary Purpose of the Incarnation and Its Relevance for Ministry in the Underworld of the World Church

MARGARET ELETТА GUIDER, O.S.F.

Introduction

In the following presentation I will discuss the theological significance of the Scotist understanding of the primary purpose of the Incarnation.¹ I will begin with a pastoral interpretation of the Scotist opinion and proceed to explore the implications of this interpretation for Christian missionary activity in the twenty-first century. In brief, I will argue that contemporary approaches to mission and ministry often are informed by a theological understanding of the Incarnation that is conceived primarily in terms of God's response to humanity's need for redemption after the Fall. I will discuss various ways in which this construct constrains the theological imagination of the Church and its ministers. I will suggest that within this framework, the representational images of Jesus Christ that serve to inspire and guide missionaries in their *imitatio Christi*

Margaret Eletta Guider, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Joliet IL, who will complete her doctoral studies at Harvard Divinity School in the Spring 1993, teaches at the Weston School of Theology. This article is based upon material in Chapter 5 of her dissertation, The Church of Liberation and the Problem of Prostitution: A Brazilian Case Study.

[imitation of Christ] are necessarily those of sacrificial victim and/or savior. In a similar fashion, I will suggest also that the *missio ecclesiae* [mission of the Church] is grounded in a problem-solving stance toward the needs of the world and its peoples. Based on this observation, I will call into question the ability of the Church to realize the mission it has defined for itself in accord with its preferred opinion on the Incarnation. I will demonstrate how the insights of Scotus make it possible for us to reconceive our understanding of what it means to imitate Christ and in so doing reconceive our understanding of mission as well. I will conclude by offering a few reflections on the practical implications of this proposal for Franciscans involved in ministries of presence in the underworld of the world church.

The Scotist Argument: An Interpretation

In accord with the thought of Scotus, the primary purpose of the Incarnation finds its expression in the divine will as it is moved by love for the highest good. In freedom, the Divine Architect makes the human nature of Christ the motif for the rest of Creation.² Christ is affirmed as the origin and end, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. In an act of gratuitous love, Christ becomes the center of the created universe and affirms that each human person, in virtue of his/her creation in the image and likeness of the Divine, is created for grace and glory and found worthy of God's loving presence. In short, God's primary purpose for becoming human is not predicated on our need for salvation, but on the divine desire to love, to be our beginning and our end, to be "God with us" in order that we might dwell in the presence of the Divine.

The Scotist proposal does not advance an alternative understanding of the primary purpose of the Incarnation in order to diminish or deny the significance of the redemption. Rather, the argument, in its affirmation of the primacy of Christ, provides a more adequate understanding of God's action in the world. The *missio Dei* [mission of God] flows out of the desire to love. The divine response to humanity's need for redemption from sin is but one manifestation of that love. Scotus does not negate the significance of God's saving action in the world as expressed in the mystery of Redemption. He does emphasize, however, that the primary purpose of the Incarnation is to be understood in terms of the Primacy of Christ, God's loving action in the world.

The Desire to Save: *Inspiratio* or *Tentatio*

Several years ago, I came across a thought-provoking passage in a short story entitled, *Imitação da Rosa* (*Imitation of the Rose*).³ Throughout the novella, the Brazilian writer, Clarice Lispector, alludes to various classical Christian metaphors, one of which is the "Imitation of Christ." In reflecting on the Catholic formation of the story's main character as a young adolescent,

Lispector writes:

"When they had given her *The Imitation of Christ* to read, with the zeal of a donkey she had read the book without understanding it, but may God forgive her, she had felt that anyone who imitated Christ would be lost - lost in the light, but dangerously lost. Christ was the worst temptation."⁴

From the time of my first reading, the quotation haunted me. "How" I asked myself "could Christ be the worst temptation?"

In the course of my own theological studies and research, the question remained with me. As I began to reflect more critically upon the ways in which the imitation of Christ had informed Christian life and practice throughout the centuries,⁵ I started to identify and examine the theological and biblical foundations upon which related images, attitudes and actions were based.

Informed as I was by feminist and liberationist hermeneutics, I was acutely aware of the potential limits and dangers inherent in an *imitatio Christi* that was grounded in the desire to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others. Admittedly, my focus at that time was on the treatment of women and slaves within the Christian tradition, and the ways in which the imitation of Christ was appealed to by religious and civil authorities responsible for upholding and preserving the social order. If women and slaves could be compelled to identify their sufferings with those of Christ, it followed that their own self-understanding as sacrificial victims, afflicted, abused, silent and submissive, would remain unquestioned and unexamined.

At that point, the interactive relationship between theological imagination and human agency became clear to me. In part, it could be argued that the social control of Christian women and slaves was dependent to some degree upon a particular Christology and soteriology for its justification. To the extent that this was true, there could be no social change without theological change. For an ecclesiastical structure invested in maintaining the social order, it would not be surprising to find the exercise of theological imagination severely curtailed. An historical review of selected rebellions, revolutions and heresies seemed to support my suspicions.

Insights such as these led me to pursue my own research interests in the area of religion and society, and more specifically, on the Roman Catholic Church and the problem of prostitution.⁶ In reviewing sources that addressed various aspects of the Church's teachings and pastoral practice regarding individuals engaged in prostitution, I found that the biases and assumptions inherent in certain theological foundations often impeded or undermined ministerial

activity. Efforts to rescue women from lives of prostitution often failed. The reasons were numerous, but many had their moorings in ministerial attitudes and practices predicated on a particular *imitatio Christi*, understood as the desire to save and liberate. In addition to the passage from *Imitação da Rosa*, it was this realization, along with my personal contacts with non-traditional ministers and prostitutes in the city of Chicago and in various regions of Brazil and the Philippines, that led me to reflect on the need for alternative theological foundations for ministry in the underworld of the world church. For all of his subtlety, John Duns Scotus proved to be an invaluable resource for such an endeavor.

Though pastoral activity in the midst of individuals engaged in prostitution is but one illustration of so-called underworld ministries, it serves as an example that unquestionably places Christian communities in the unsettling position of having to come to terms with the stark realities of the world in which they live. As for those who recognize within themselves the desire to minister in the midst of those who constitute the underworld of the world church, namely, the poor, the powerless, the oppressed and the marginalized, a review of the history of missionary activity may be sufficient to alert such individuals to the fact that ministry which is grounded in the desire to save others may render would-be imitators of Christ incapable of discerning between divine inspiration and the worst temptation.

Incarnation and Salvation: Differing Perspectives on Liberation

Working within the framework of liberation theology, the understanding of Jesus Christ as liberator and savior logically proceeds from the theological coupling of liberation and salvation. There is a potential danger, however, inherent in such a theological construct, and that is the *imitatio Christi* which such a theology inspires. The images of the liberator and savior are powerful ones. They are at once messianic and utopian. They point to the Reign of God and to the transformation of the world order. Inasmuch as they lend themselves to imitation, particularly in extreme situations, the desire to serve is easily conflated or confused with the desire to save - and with God's help, the power to do so. Personal identification with such images hold considerable potential for fostering the conviction that to imitate Christ in such a fashion places the follower of Jesus in a privileged position to know the form that the liberation and salvation of others should take and thus, to bring it about in accord with his/her own particular plan of action. In its most extreme form, the worst temptation is manifested in a radically exclusive distortion of what it means to be *in persona Christi* [in the person of Christ]. It is a distortion that not only loses sight of the divine agency of Christ, but the human agency of the one who is to be saved.

Needless to say, the desire to imitate Christ, as liberator and savior, is not only a potential temptation for those influenced by liberation theology. Rather, it demonstrates the inherent relationship between the Christology of liberation theology and the Christology that has guided the moral and ecclesial imagination of Western Christianity. Despite the credal formula of Nicea, "for us and for our salvation Christ came down from heaven," Roman Christianity has managed through the centuries to eclipse the first belief statement with the second. Repeatedly, the preferred theological opinion that views the world as sin-centered takes precedence over the alternative opinion that views the world as Christ-centered.

In the former view, humanity's need for redemption is posited as the reason for Christ's coming.⁷ At its worst, this view implies that the Incarnation was predicated on human sinfulness. At its best, it lends itself to a one-sided view of the mystery of God's love and action in the world. In addition to other limitations and dangers, it contributes to an understanding of ministry that finds expression in human efforts to control not only evil, but other persons - and even God.

Scotus, however, in his understanding of the primary purpose of the Incarnation, provides a much needed alternative. In accord with Scotus' line of reasoning, it becomes possible to couple incarnation and liberation in a way that is complementary, not supplementary, to the traditional coupling of salvation and liberation. Through the coupling of incarnation and liberation, it is possible to reconceive our understanding of human freedom as freedom *for*, not only freedom *from*. In effect, it engages the theological imagination in a consideration of what it means for the human person to be free for God and free for good.

... the argument, in its affirmation of the primacy of Christ, provides a more adequate understanding of God's action in the world.

Toward a Theology of Presence for the World Church

As the Roman Catholic church attempts to discern the competing claims of the oppressors and the oppressed, it also finds itself discerning the competing claims of the poor and marginalized who are no longer one, but many. Despite its broadbased commitment to affirm the "preferential option for the poor" as

a constitutive part of its identity and mission, it is unsettled to discover itself in the position of having to choose among the poor, not only with regard for their respective and particular needs, but also in accord with the ecclesial resources available at any given time. Like it or not, the Church runs the risk of exercising a preferential option for some poor more than others. An option that, in the minds of many, is inextricably linked to the desire to save and to liberate.

Throughout the world pastoral agents as well as the people of God find themselves at an impasse with regard to the limits of liberation that are reflected in the boundaries set by churches in the interest of safeguarding the *missio ecclesiae* and its proper relationship to those whom it seeks to serve and save. It would appear that before ecclesiastical criteria for evaluating the pastoral effectiveness of individuals or groups, particularly those engaged in underworld ministries, could be established, it was necessary to cast people into categories such as, non-believers, sinners or victims. Given these categories, the Church's mission could be assessed in terms of its overall success in bringing about conversions, guaranteeing rehabilitation or ensuring safety and protection, in short, what we understand today to be ministries of faith and justice.

In some cases, the Church assumed that individuals were able, willing and amenable to changing their lives in accord with the ecclesial expectations. In other cases, it assumed that individuals were not able, and therefore, not free to choose on their own behalf, and therefore subject to the better judgement of the Church. In most cases, however, the Church defined the problem in accord with a particular set of anthropological and soteriological assumptions. In most cases, the Church proposed a solution in accord with its understanding of the role and function of a given person within a given society. In most cases, the Church supplied or guaranteed the material resources for ensuring the end which best conformed with its view of the world and eternity. Regardless of how individuals were cast, whether as non-believers, sinners or victims, the Church and her ministers were the sole agents of their salvation in the spiritual order - and oftentimes, of their liberation in the temporal order.

Another reading of history, however, reminds of a fourth category, namely that of survivors, which the Church is hard-pressed to admit, and even less likely to advance. In effect, survivors remind the Church of the inadequacies of its *modus operandi* and the limitations of certain theological foundations upon which it is based. Survivors keep the Church honest by reminding it, that like a confessor, it knows first hand of the Church's hidden secrets and of its complicity of silence. It reminds the church that it cannot save that which it does not assume. With regard to representatives of the Church known for their practices of abandonment and abuse, of non-believers, sinners and victims

alike, survivors dare to require the church to listen to the truth which they speak. And with the question, "Do you love me?", survivors take the Church and her ministers where they would not go, by reminding them of an *imitatio Christi* that is realized in loving action and incarnate presence. Rarely is it the case, that the Church, as institution, acknowledges the value of this approach to ministry. I believe this may be due, at least in part, to the fact that the Church has failed to cultivate and promote the very theological foundations that could enhance its understanding of the *missio Dei* [mission of God].

Though some might contend that a ministry of presence is a final resort for ministers who find themselves overwhelmed by the scarcity of material resources available for the work of human liberation and unable for any number of reasons to draw upon the spiritual resources of sacramental life of the Church, I would argue to the contrary. In the theological construct of Scotus, presence is the starting point. It is not a means, it is an end in itself. It is not a given, but a chosen, albeit one which is equally disconcerting to problem solvers and quietists alike.

Ministers who are moved by an *imitatio Christi* that expresses itself in the desire to be a sign of God's loving action and incarnate presence are aware that their participation in the *missio Dei* - understood as God's universal *loving* will for all humanity - is not without its risks and consequences. Grounded in this knowledge and experience, a theology of presence necessarily addresses itself not only to the mystery of God's love, but to the problem of God's love as well, a problem that is particularly acute for a Church that remains marked by the longstanding conviction that "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" [no salvation outside the Church], despite the best efforts of Vatican II.

As the Church reaffirms its commitment to the tasks of evangelization and human liberation, it must do so mindful of the fact that the percentage of Christians in the world continues to remain, as it has since the turn of the century, at roughly one-third of the total population.⁸ Likewise, it must remain alert to worldwide reports on the devastation of the earth and the dehumanization of ever-increasing numbers of people. Given its understanding of the Church's participation in the saving mission of Christ, these statistics are clearly cause for concern.⁹

Yet it seems that the apparent inability or failure of the *missio ecclesiae* to bring about the salvation and liberation of non-believers, sinners, victims and survivors, in accord with its own understanding of mission, gives us pause to ask ourselves anew, "what is the Spirit of God saying to the churches?" Could it be that there is something we have yet to fully comprehend about the *missio Dei* and the *imitatio Christi*?

Conclusion

As a practical theologian and missiologist, it goes without saying that I am concerned with the self-actualization of the church in an increasingly complex global context. As a Franciscan, however, I find it necessary to be even more explicit about my commitment to engage in speculative theological reflection that serves not only the world church as it is broadly conceived, but more specifically, the underworld of that world church. To this end, I assume as my particular responsibility the retrieval of foundational insights from within the Franciscan theological tradition that can inform and sustain those who by charism and conviction embrace a preferential option for the poor and oppressed.

In this presentation, I have focused my attention on one particular argument in order to provide a concrete example of how the theological imagination of the Church can be enhanced through the rediscovery and appropriation of Scotus' thought. I have done this not only for the purpose of recovering valuable insights from the Franciscan theological tradition, but also, with the intention of calling into question the ways in which predominant theological perspectives on themes such as those of incarnation and redemption can limit, constrain and even undermine the Church's ability to realize its expressed desire to be one with the poor.

Given the fact that a number of Franciscans minister in the midst of the marginalized, the powerless and those "who are considered to be of little worth,"¹⁰ it comes as no surprise to find our pastoral activities scrutinized by those entrusted with safeguarding the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic church. As growing numbers of individuals and communities throughout the world find themselves subject to such inquiry and investigation, we all are brought to a heightened awareness of the diversity of influences and contexts that inform the ecclesial understanding of "right opinion" and "right action."

In this process, we do well to remember that theological foundations are not incidental, but rather, consequential, to the ecclesial movements which they inspire or sustain. As we move farther in time and history from the Second Vatican Council, it is not surprising that we should find ourselves questioning the extent to which the Church's approach to orthodoxy and orthopraxis is dynamic in orientation. Historically speaking, there is limited evidence in the modern period to suggest that the Church, as institution, endeavors to acknowledge the horizon of truth that exists within the tradition with regard to equally correct, yet distinctly diverse theological opinions and pastoral actions. Rather, it seems that the Church in recent centuries has tended to advance and defend one preferred opinion or mode of action, often to the exclusion of all other

possibilities. In effect, the process of ecclesiastical gerrymandering appears to refocus the magisterial task in such a way that the emphasis shifts from the differentiation of correct opinions from incorrect opinions, to the distinction of correct opinions from preferred opinions.

Ultimately, this presents a problem for the Church inasmuch as *preferred* opinions in theory become *only* opinions in practice. Potentially, the end result is a Church that is increasingly less capable of creatively engaging a diversity of opinions and activities in the realization of its identity and mission. To the extent that the ideas and contributions of John Duns Scotus were eclipsed, supplanted and gradually deleted over the course of six centuries, his thought, for the most part, was rendered largely inaccessible to those outside of erudite Medieval circles and Franciscan theologates. Convinced as I am of the contemporary significance of Scotus' thought and the applicability of his theological insights to the mission and ministry of the Church, it is my sincere hope that the preceding remarks can contribute in some small way to a much larger project.

End notes

¹ See: *Ordinatio III* (suppl.) d. 19 (Assisi com. 137, fol. 161 vb). For commentary and English translation, see Allan B. Wolter, OFM, "John Duns Scotus on the Primacy and Personality of Christ," in *Franciscan Christology*, ed. Damian McElrath (Assisi: Tipographia Porziuncula, 1980), 139-145; 152-155.

² Wolter, "John Duns Scotus on the Primary and Personality of Christ," 141.

³ See: Clarice Lispector, *Imitação da Rosa* (Brasil: Editora Artenova, 1973).

⁴ Lispector, *Imitação da Rosa*, 33.

⁵ For further discussion of this metaphor and its significance in Christian life and practice, see Margaret R. Miles, "An Image of the Image," in *Practicing Christianity: Critical Perspectives for an Embodied Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 17-42.

⁶ See: Margaret Eletta Guider, *The Church of Liberation and the Problem of Prostitution: A Brazilian Case Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School, 1992. Unpublished dissertation.

⁷ A classic example of this is found in Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?*

⁸ See: David B. Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table in Global Mission: 1990," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 14 (1990), 26 ff. See also, David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 5.

⁹ See: John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (*Mission of the Redeemer: On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate*), reprinted in *Origins* 20:34 (January 31, 1991).

¹⁰ RegNB, 1X:2.

San Damiano Revisited

Above the western hills
cast rays of a
Sun's farewell
light the skies afire.

A little poor man shakes
his beggar robes
of dust and dirt
after a long day's toil.
Stone on stone to repair
the abandoned Church's wall

Gently his feet's naked soles
caress the dust carpeted tiles
as an open door
welcomes its visitor.

Bends his knees in adoration profound
sighs and sobs
penetrate the dark
and silently dissolve into oblivion.
Ah, very unlike yesterday's
deafening command:
"Go, Francis,
repair my house."

No singing of angels heard
in this eve twilight
nor silent flutter of wings
but dry whisper of wind that
woos the lacey web curtains
hung loose on shattered windows.

At last raises his eyes
the nailed feet and hands
the lance-pierced side
glistening in crimson red
and glowed the head contrast
setting ablaze the sanctuary
where unburned the flickering light.

With all vigor and might
that shook his tattered vests
the little poor man cried out:
"My God, Who are You
and what am I?"

Sr. Mary Francis, O.S.C.

The Extraordinary General Chapter of The Conventual Franciscan Friars, 1992

Words of wisdom for all Franciscans

ITEM 1: TAKEN FROM THE EXHORTATION OF THE MINISTER GENERAL, FRIAR LANFRANCO SERRINI, GIVEN AT THE OPENING OF THE CHAPTER (8/16/92)

"The knowledge that the Order expects much from this Chapter should guide us. It is difficult to foresee how much will be derived from us. It will be, however, in proportion to our commitment and our interior disposition. We must listen to God, and the signs of the times which are offered to us. In order to do this, however, we must change both in mentality and in attitude; we must assume consciousness of our responsibilities to the brothers of our provinces and custodies. Ministers and Custodes Provincial (as major superiors in the Franciscan Order are called) must allow themselves to emerge in the role of animator, which, in turn, ought not to be impeded by human fragility, poverty, and lack of will. Our activity is precisely a responsibility which comes from the service which we have accepted. It is a service of stimulation, of witness, of healthy enthusiasm, and of tenacious will in fulfilling our duties and it will be supported by the commitments and decisions taken by this Chapter and by that which wells forth from our resolutions.

These important quotations were selected by our summer colleague, Fr. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv., of the Washington Theological Union. We are most grateful to him and to the presenters for sharing with us the proceedings of the Chapter held from August 20th to September 15th, at the Conference Center of the Mexican Episcopal Conference in Tepojaco, Mexico outside Mexico City.

*For further information contact
Fr. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv.
12290 Folly Quarter Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042
(410) 988-9822*

"Speaking of changes in mentality, I want to highlight the need to place oneself in the vanguard of the road which we call brothers to travel, ever developing an enlightened and positive attitude toward labor in order to bring about that which we decide here together.

"It is painful when the friars see in their own superior one who is content with the quiet life, or when they see him further lacking conviction with regard to programs that he must present. It is stimulating, on the other hand, when the friars daily note the generous and perseverant effort of a superior who knows clearly that he believes in a project and is convinced that, of the few or the many possible results, he is working for the Lord and must rely upon God with love and sincerity.

"I am thinking in particular of the young men who watch us and look for the fulfillment of their expectations in our decisions. Open to high ideals, they are looking for help so as to live with integrity and perseverance. They are searching for encouragement, help and stimulus in spite of incoherence and uncertainties. For them, we are called to construct the future of the Order, not taking cover in our human securities, not entering into compromises, but breathing, with open heart and lungs, the fresh and pure air that is God and to go on living and be incarnated in the real world without ruining the substance of the Order, but without getting caught up in those accidental features which are passing away."

ITEM 2: TAKEN FROM THE HOMILY OF THE MINISTER GENERAL, FRIAR LANFRANCO SERRINI, AT THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY FOR THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER (8/16/92)

"On this occasion we recognize the need for conversion according to the model of St. Francis, with the same capacity to live that conversion and to experience it in our own lives, cost what it may. Too many times in life we have heard the words of the Apostle: "By ourselves we cannot even say 'Jesus is Lord!'" How much less will we succeed in walking according to God's paths, which are manifestly not our own, if the same Spirit does not sustain us in the effort.

"Conversion is difficult enough for an individual. Each of us is too secure in himself, (too sure) of his views, (too convinced) of his own truths, (too wrapped up) in his own personal experience. . . How much more difficult for a whole family, numerous and composite in culture, language, orientation and experience. . . All these human aspects must find a minimum common denominator in faith, faith in God precisely; that God may enter, penetrate, enlighten, and open us up to welcome the brother, in each brother, God Himself."

ITEM 3: TAKEN FROM THE HOMILY OF BISHOP LUIS D'ANDREA, OFM CONV, ORDINARY OF THE DIOCESE OF CAXIAS, BRAZIL, ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE "DAY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN MARTYRS" (8/22/1992)

"This fragmented world . . . in a crisis of traditional values is the benefactor of an ethical, cultural, and religious pluralism. . . and we ourselves, as a human group, state or church institution, should have the capacity to impose a model of behavior acceptable to all.

"The actual process of modernization imposes itself today under the domination of a triumphant neo-liberal vision. Neo-Liberalism emphasizes the separation of the economy and ethical norms and political control, in the interest of capital, of which the only interest is profit.

"This truly inhuman world system, in which the person is valued by that which he has and not by that which he is as a human person and child of God, produces different and contradictory results, according to the place and the situation in which it finds itself. In the rich countries and in the dominant classes of the third world, there is evidenced the concentration of riches and exaggerated consumerism. In the world of the poor, an ever greater mass of people, unnecessarily poor (in that they do not have access to the machines and technological developments), is growing.

"The greatest part of the impoverished is left to fate, constructing a future on the unknown through the most lavish form of menial labor with humiliating facets. This situation gives ever greater rise to aggression and violence. We can see this in the institutional violence of this unequal and perverse system which is abandoning, in darkest misery, thousands and millions of children in the streets of the large Latin American cities. They become the objects on ongoing commercial trade in prostitution and drugs."

ITEM 4: TAKEN FROM A PRESENTATION GIVEN BY FRIAR PIETRO BELTRAME, OFM CONV, CONCERNING THE RESULTS OF AN ORDER WIDE STUDY CONCERNING THE STATUS OF THE ORDER (8/24/92)

"It will be a sign of maturity, then, to assume, as a fraternity, that which comes to us from tradition and, with historical patience, adapt ourselves to the principle of reality, seeking that which is possible, even if it is not the desirable optimum.

"However, the necessity to adapt to the principle of reality does not invalidate the need that fraternity continually repropose its charismatic decision. Then faced with the realities that affect our lives, we must seek those expressions and structures that are appropriate for communicating the message of which we are called to bear.

"We should not be very concerned with looking at the past, to repeat what our predecessors have done. We should look at the present and let ourselves be guided by the Spirit that manifests itself through the signs of the times. In this way we can make those decisions that are more appropriate for the service of the Church and humanity. It should be the case that Franciscans always seek 'the holy operation' of the Spirit."

ITEM 5: TAKEN FROM A PRESENTATION ENTITLED "THE CONTEMPORARY CRISIS AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER", GIVEN BY DR. AUGUSTIN BASAVE FERNANDEZ DEL VALLE, PhD., PRESIDENT OF LA SOCIEDAD CATOLICA MEXICANA DE FILOSOFIA (8/31/92)

"The tremendous emptiness from which the current generation suffers — emptiness of God — can only be filled with God. All other remedies that are offered will be palliative, but none are radical cures. Only a revitalization of faith and an authentic religious life based on eternal truth can free us and our contemporaries from the crisis which we suffer."

"The uneasiness and anguish from which humanity suffers is owed basically to this very simple cause: the abandonment of the religious life. Having turned their back on the Gospels, it is natural that the people feel thrown to the lions and condemned to wander about in an absurd existence. The shipwrecked atheist wants to enthrone new gods: money, ambition, power, fame; pleasures, which, in the end, have not saved the ship from wrecking.

"We should not have too many illusions concerning technological progress. We should give a decided YES to technology, and a resounding NO to technocracy, empty of spiritual ferment. Traditional values are in an inarguable crisis. The noblest and most qualified persons are held in disfavor. In this way we can say that we are witnessing the depreciation of humanity in that which is most dignified and valuable. The drive for efficiency has disintegrated the human conscience and has driven our culture to chaos. The result is half truths, mutually irreconcilable, that leave us unsatisfied."

"Crucified on Calvary, Christ, in the trance of His agony, suffers love with greater tenderness for those who caused Him to suffer, even those who spit on Him, whipped Him, slapped Him and brought Him to the cross. In this tragic martyrdom, His spirit could still implore pardon for those who sinned even though they didn't know that they had. In these Cretin days in which hate is made lord, the eternal echo of Jesus' petition still drills into our half closed ears."

"We have broken the vital natural bonds and we have materialized our existence, tearing it from its roots. We have forgotten that human life is a

marvelous mystery and we have turned it over to be sacrificed on the altar of material progress. If the earth could cry, it would weep for the banishment of the human being. Seated on the debris of our civilization, the school is an effective tool which could straighten the direction of society if it would decide to put wisdom's light and mutual human love in our hearts."

"The best internationalism is a Christian internationalism based on the idea and practice of fraternity. Love of neighbor and living the moral unity of the human race has as its origin and destiny "Christian" internationalism: expressly, unknowingly or ignoring it. In Greco-Roman paganism, as in the excessive paganism of our own day, no one knows, nor cares to know, the moralizing energy of Christianity which tries to conquer all egocentrism — individual and natural — so that universal divine fraternity might flourish in peace and love."

"International order cannot be seen only as an idea that prohibits the use of force between persons. It requires communitarian organs which recognize and guarantee basic human rights. It isn't enough that 'arms are silent'. It requires a positive cooperation between States assuring the welfare of all peoples — big and small — concerning quality of rights."

"We must not only try to preserve human geography from nuclear destruction. We also want a world with active peace which eliminates the harmful and unjust economic and social differences while fomenting and bringing to perfection systems of international cooperation. Only in this way can we overcome the crisis of political power which threatens us with world destruction in which no one will be neutral and in which there will be no survivors. Only in this way can we arrive at a situation of active peace, justice and international friendship which promotes the best for all people."

ITEM 6: TAKEN FROM A PRESENTATION BY FRIAR PETER DAMIAN MASSENGILL, OFM CONV, WHO IS THE GENERAL DELEGATE FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE SAFEGUARDING OF CREATION (8/31/92)

"My brothers, in the 'fullness of time' God has brought us here to experience this land and these people. If God has chosen this to be the right time, then we have no choice but to listen in obedience to 'the signs of this time'. There is no doubt that the Spirit of God is calling the church to a New Evangelization. We see in the Central European Church a long tradition of support for the Church of Rome from as far back as Charlemagne. But, it often appears old, tired, and cold in terms of living faith in a way that makes a real difference in our lives and our society. The American Church has compromised itself along with the other Christian Churches into what we often call an "American Civil Religion" in which separation of church and state is the excuse for society to ignore the primacy of the person who is held sacred in Christian belief. The Eastern European Church is at a very important threshold. For a number of years the

strong conviction of faith has defined itself primarily in terms of a defense against Communism. Today, it is facing the challenge of taking that great witness of faith into a more global society, no longer facing that threat.

"It seems to me that it is most appropriate to look at the Latin American Church as the number that is most useful to the Body of Christ in these times. It is the church that is 'hot with the blood of martyrs'. It is the church that has called the whole Catholic Community back to walk WITH the People of God."

ITEM 7: THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ARE TAKEN FROM A PAPER ENTITLED "A 500 YEAR PERSPECTIVE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE: REFLECTIONS FOR A TRADITIONAL AND COMMITTED FRANCISCAN TESTIMONY" BY MARIO CAYOTA, A SECULAR FRANCISCAN, A HISTORY PROFESSOR AT LA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA DE MONTEVIDEO, A MEMBER OF THE FACULTAD DE TEOLOGIA AND THE FACULTAD ESTATAL DE HUMANIDADES, AS WELL AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT AT CIPFE IN MONTIVIDEO. DR. CAYOTA IS PRESIDENT OF THE PARTIDO DE LA DEMOCARCIA CRISTIANA AND A DEPUTY IN THE URUGUAY PARLIAMENT. THIS PRESENTATION SPEAKS ESPECIALLY OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRIARS TOWARD INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

"In order that these evangelical values be lived out in Latin America, it is necessary that they be generated within the specific culture peculiar to each people. Justice and Peace (which in their substance are universal evangelical values) cannot be incarnated in a generic and atemporal manner. They require a social body, a history in which to be embodied. Therefore, lived Justice and Peace in America has to have its own profile, which, in the case of the Franciscans, needs to be designed as well, in agreement with their charism. In the case of the Latin American Franciscan family, this commitment in favor of Justice and Peace assumes a past history embodied with a rich tradition."

"Poverty will always be associated with the Franciscans of the first evangelization in the Indias (Americas) with a new style of church. Their desire for renewal had, as its impetus, the prophetic stance of identifying with those among whom they immersed themselves. The contact the Franciscans had with the native people in the New World itself nourished this hope even more. The friars discovered in the native peoples a lifestyle and a culture besides the ideals of frugality and solidarity."

"The Franciscans who were pro-Indian found themselves captivated by their 'infantile innocence'. For the friars, if this condition, for the sake of worldly business, was seen as a disadvantage before the Europeans, then, in relation to

the 'Reign of Christ', it put them on top. Numerous passages result in which (fray Jerónimo) Mendieta (a 16th century friar who lived in the Americas) makes reference to this condition and advantage of the Indians.

"Those who believe the Franciscans were putting the Indians down for considering them children or 'minors', totally misunderstand the spirituality of the Franciscan reformers. In reality, there was no higher praise they could have given than this. '**La minoridad**' was an ideal as taught by the Gospel of Mark, '... whoever does not receive the reign of God like a child will not enter into it' (10:15). This was one of his favorite biblical verses. Fray Jerónimo Mendieta, referring to the call God made to the Indians, states: 'The Gospel is full of the attention which God pays to the little ones and children, and theirs is the Reign of Heaven, and unless we make of ourselves small, humble and self-effacing as they do, we will not enter there.'"

"This is how the first Franciscan missionaries (to the Americas) presented themselves to the Indians. The principle reason to baptize them is that the 'Reign of God' is theirs. The Reign belongs to them because they are poor! ... because they are not greedy! They do not negate the need to teach doctrine to the neophyte, but, rather, put their poverty before everything else. Poverty for them is a kind of sacrament. Life, from the Franciscan perspective, is what is most important.

"Naturally, when Franciscans are talking about 'poverty', they are not only talking about the lack of goods. They are talking about a 'culture' to which it is linked. But nor are they sanctifying misery. The great dedication the sons of St. Francis demonstrated, fundamentally through catechesis and the towns they founded, their desire to elevate the quality of life lived by the Indians. This activity was far from that attitude of repression. Nor did praise for poverty signify conformity with injustice. Concerning this there is a great abundance of documents which prove to the contrary."

"Of course the friars knew how to distinguish clearly between the organization and structure of the great indigenous empires, with their oppression and greed, and the poor and simple people who suffered under the system. We need to state clearly: it is to these people, and not to the indigenous royalty, by our judgment who subdued the people practically in the same manner as the Europeans did later, that the Reign of God will belong."

"When we study the pastoral activity of the Franciscans who came to America, we are able to see that the friars were not interested in imposing the **European modus vivendi**, its axiology nor, even, what is more surprising, to **organize** the Indian church according to the model with which they were familiar in Europe.

"A text from Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, can help to understand what style of church the friars hoped to inspire during the first century of the evangelization of the Indias (Americas). Motolinía writes: 'Because this was their land and among this humble generation it would have been good if the bishops were as in the primitive church, poor and humble, who didn't look for rent but for souls, without need to carry along the trappings of office, and that the Indians did not see the bishops dressed in finery, with delicate shirts; sleeping on mattresses with sheets of fine linen, because those who are committed to their calling should imitate Jesus Christ in humility and poverty, carrying their cross at personal cost and ready to die on it.'"

"The friars who came to the Americas in the 16th century were not only inspired by the primitive Christian model, that is, purporting to establish a church in the 'style' of the primitive one. But they also separated themselves from the institutional model which the conquistadors hoped to establish in the Indias (Americas). After successive and varied experiences, the friars arrived at the conclusion that, confronted by the threat of Conquest, the sole possible solution to save and protect the Indians was to create two republics.

"For (fray Jerónimo) Mendieta, as well as for the Franciscans of the *pro-indio* party, the 'Indian Republic' was the only way in which the native people could be saved from the Spaniards, who, on the contrary, were devouring them. For this reason Mendieta expounds in his *Historia Eclesiástica* referring to the projected republic: '... where is one free from the Spanish moths? In their company it is not something rare, but common and forceful, that they quickly consume innumerable individuals among the Indians. What would be rare would be to be able to sustain them, as though they were a great flock of sheep in a pen with some wolves and lions, though few, running among them. They would eliminate all the sheep in short order, this is clear, and they would be eliminated without recourse.'

"In accord with these observations, Mendieta found it appropriate and defended the creation of an Indian community entirely segregated from the 'civilized' Europeans. In it they could share in prayer, as well as their goods, as was done in the primitive Jerusalem community. They would try to establish a true Indian Republic with its own laws and magistrates. The republic itself was never realized. But from this idea, they were able to develop the plan for the 'Reductions'. The 'instructions' which Mendieta elaborated for this purpose, were terminated. In spite of the urging of Mendieta, the Franciscans never realized the project completely. Various decades hence, and hundreds of miles away, the Jesuits were able to employ this model with appropriate benefits for the Indians."

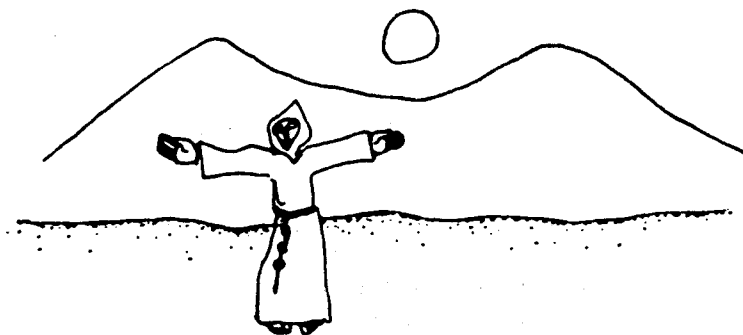
"The Franciscan friars who came to the (American) Continent, in the 16th century, proclaimed peace and sought reconciliation. Faithful to the Gospel in order to generate true peace, they worked for justice. In this sense, they took on,

with resolution, the defense of the subjugated Indians and their basic human rights. They struggled with tenacity, and could edit a thick volume with their interventions in favor of the Indian's cause."

YOU WERE RIGHT

What can I say except "You were right"?
How could I differ or fill in the spaces?
A gentle breeze comes from above. Agreed.
Bud does a violent thrust only come from within?
I don't know.
Somehow it all fits together;
Somehow it all makes sense. Somehow...
There are no Yesbuts this time,
No fancy poetry to cover up my mistake,
You were right
And I might as well let you know it.
(As if you've been waiting with baited breath for me
to tell you so).
So how's this?
A little easier on the violent thrusts
(For God only knows where they're coming from)
And another slogan (to replace "remnant")
"Seek peace and follow after it"
Because peace is that gentle breeze
That comes from above.
Besides, it's the perfect profession gift
For the person who for too long
Has tried to make a profession
Out of making perfect gifts.

Timothy J. Fleming, O.F.M. Conv.



"For what else are the servants of
God but his minstrels whose work
it is to lift up
people's hearts and
move them to spiritual
gladness." St Francis

WRITTEN AT MOUNT IRENAEUS

I.

This is the way that it always should be. . .
walking high on the mountain
through the warm summer pines,
listening hard for signs of civilization,
and hearing, with relief, just the
soft, warm hum of the wind
through the trees. . .
becoming a tiny speck in the
immenseness of the forest and the
vastness of the world,
yet having a special place there as well. . .
walking higher
and higher
up the narrow dirt path,
but reaching the clearing you
knew you would find. . .
sitting in the shade of
a tall, roughly-hewn cross
made of wood. . .
your oasis. . .
finally knowing
this is where you belong:
alone,
with God,
at the top of the world.

II.

All crosses should be
made of wood I think,
and not of gold or silver
or other priceless ores,
or bedecked with jewels
and decorated. . .
but simple,
like this gray and
weather-worn cross
which stands in the woods
and is made from the woods,
and reminds us of the
reality, and the
pain,
and the price of our salvation,
more than all the gilded crosses
could ever hope to do.

A. Barone

Franciscan Leadership Pilgrimage

September 23 - October 2, 1993

Information and Description

What/For Whom: This is a Franciscan Pilgrimage, not a tour, designed for CEOs, Administrators/Staff, Board Members and Major Superiors who are in leadership positions in Franciscan Institutions.

Purpose: The goal of the program is to bring into sharp focus the vision and legacy of St. Francis of Assisi, thereby inculcating Franciscan values into the administration and management of one's institutions. Our objective is spiritual and organizational transformation.

Why the Need: The leadership in our institutions is no longer under the dominant care and responsibility of vowed Franciscan religious. More and more members of the laity have been called forth to shoulder the task of guiding institutions in their respective mission and commitment to the Franciscan vision on which an institution was founded. What is the vision? What are our values? How clear and rooted are these in the personnel that now lead the institutions we call "Franciscan?" The FRANCISCAN LEADERSHIP PILGRIMAGE answers these questions with an experience unmatched by any other.

Where: Assisi and Rome, Italy

When: September 23 - October 2, 1993: 10 days (6 nights in Assisi, 2 nights in Rome)

Content: One conference a day connected with a specific PLACE in Assisi that highlights a particular value/ideal of St. Francis. The content of the

conference relates to the institute's mission and the participants' ministry as CEOs, Administrators or Board Members. Group interaction and discussion will assist the learning process.

A visit to the PLACE, with historical input.

Celebration of Eucharist/Prayer, however possible.

Celebrating in ritual the meaning and particular value of Francis linked with the PLACE.

Time for effective leisure to absorb what is offered.

Cost: New York or Boston: \$1607.00
Philadelphia or Washington \$1641.00
Chicago: \$1700.00

Price includes: Round Trip Air to Rome / Ground Transportation by Private Motor Coach / Lodging / All Meals except 5 / Staff Stipends / Tips -Offerings.

Our air carrier is SWISSAIR which has one of the finest reputations in the world for service, efficiency and respectability. We use all of SWISSAIR'S gateway cities including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Toronto and Montreal, and can connect you from any major U.S. city. Contact the Pilgrimage Office for added cost.

Staff: Ramona Miller OSF and Tod Lavery OFM

Information: Fr. Roch Niemier OFM
FRANCISCAN PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMS
1648 S. 37th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53215-1724
(414) 383-9870 FAX: (414) 383-0335



For information write or call 215/459-4125

APRIL, 1993

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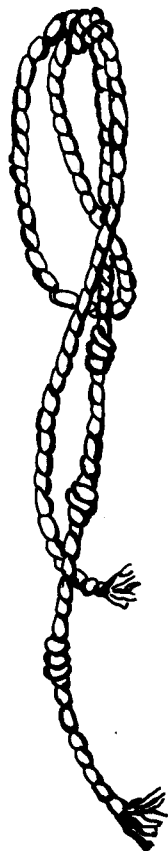
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Assistant Editor: Robert Stewart, O.F.M.

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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 Clerics'

EpCust: Letter to Superiors'

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful'

EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo

EpMin: Letter to a Minister

EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order

EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of the People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: 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

'I, 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

LC: Legend of Saint Clare

LP: Process of Saint Clare

LF: 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 Commmercium

SP: Mirror of Perfection

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

RA: 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).

How A Friar From Europe Spent The Time Of Lenten Penance In Distant Indochina

"A People without prophetic visions will perish" (Prov. 29:18)

Shortly after Ash Wednesday of the year of our Lord 1990, a few weeks after the beginning of the Chinese New Year placed under the sign of the horse, as in one part of the world many so-called realities were dissolving because many a dream had more strength and vitality than they; as frontiers began to be turned into bridges; as in Prague a former Catholic "dissident" ruled as President of the new Republic and was greeted as a friend by the Lord Pope; as in Berlin (East) a Protestant pacifist, who up to a short time before had to undergo much persecution at the hands of those in power, was named "Minister for Disarmament;" as the world-wide meeting of the Christian Churches on "Justice, Peace, and Respect for Creation" in far-away Seoul cast a hopeful glance at "Noah's Ark 2000" and the Franciscan Family was at long last a member of the UN; as the cause of the "Doctor Subtilis" from Duns in Scotia was being examined with favour in the Roman Curia and the Order of Friars Minor began with a view to the coming Pentecost Chapter to occupy itself with "Franciscan Evangelization in all Cultures" as its central theme — behold, it was then that a Germanic brother in the Roman Curia read in Hermann Hesse, a poet from his land, this sentence, "For the possible to happen, the impossible must be incessantly attempted." For he had been struck, aside from all the important affairs, files and decrees, by the words of the biblical Book of Wisdom which had been read out in his Curia at the beginning of the time of penance and which declares, "A

The Fioretti-like accounts of the General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor are published in various languages. We are grateful to him for allowing us to publish them in English.

people without prophetic visions will perish" (Prov. 29:18). Others meditated on the words of the famous Leonardo da Vinci, who said, "The end of one thing is the beginning of another." All the brothers wanted in those days to understand better what the Spirit is saying to the Provinces and Fraternities in the whole world, and to the Roman Curia, and so prepare themselves in obedience to the Lord Pope for a new evangelization in all the cultures of the globe.

And so this brother, who was otherwise often to be seen in Rome, applied himself once more after many unsuccessful attempts to obtain from the authorities of yon mysterious country in Indochina which today bears the name of "Socialist Republic of Vietnam" the necessary travel papers for a visit to the brethren there. For up to then the necessary papers had always been refused him. He wanted at long last to see with his own eyes what the Lord of History had revealed to the brothers of that Province in the 15 years since their liberation. As those in power saw that he did not cease to ask and after they had assured themselves of the purity of his motives, they allowed him into their country and gave him everywhere a sure guide.

And so, under not a few difficulties, he spent almost the whole time of Lenten penance in Vietnam. He hurried through the land from the Mekong Delta up to the frontiers of the Middle Kingdom. He visited all the fraternities, listened to everything that each one had to say to him, greeted some of the bishops, ate with them, and could not refuse all the many invitations of the men and women who concern themselves with the temporal good of that land.

And this it is which he experienced during those weeks of pre-Easter pilgrimage had has recounted in a few words for his own benefit, but also for the benefit of his "Curia" and the whole fraternity.

"The Brothers shall not make anything their own and shall not dispute with others over anything" (RnB 7:13).

The brothers in that tropical strip of land lived after their "Liberation" in the indestructible spirit of "perfect joy" which is the sure sign of a true evangelical vocation and of the divine "preferential option for the poor." Those in power had taken away from them as from the whole Church many privileges and many big houses and other properties, so that, only by way of example, in the former "Seraphic College" in Thu Duc a farming co-operative is today growing mushrooms, and in the former big "Clericate" in Nha Trang the Party is today spreading its atheistic teaching and training in cadres. So it was that brothers, driven out of the "Centre", learned to know the richness of the poor "Periphery." And that which appeared to them bitter in this, namely to have to live without property and without letters of protection, was revealed to them ever more

clearly with God's help as the way of conversion to the Gospel for the Church and for the Fraternity; indeed, they accepted it more and more as "sweetness for body and soul" (Testament). For they realized more clearly than it had ever been possible before, that the Lord of History wanted to purify and evangelize them more radically through manifold suffering (Rev. 7:14), that they might become better heralds of the liberating message of Jesus Christ and render an important service to the whole brotherhood, wherever it might be. Preaching more by their lives than by their words, the brothers were courteous and helpful towards everyone, the powerful and the atheists, but also the Buddhists, Animists and those of other faiths, as is befitting for "the lesser ones," seeking in all the image of the living God, collaborating with all for the good of the people and for the good of the poor, in so far as this was not against their conscience or their Rule. And to everyone everywhere they said the word of greeting of their little brother Francis of Assisi, "The Lord give you peace." So in those years the brothers possessed nothing apart from their miserable locula and a few hens, pigs and dogs but the bond of their brotherhood, which held them together and strengthened them, and in all things their indestructible confidence in the Lord, who spreads in all cultures the seed-corns of his indestructible love and thereby lives and rises again in all forms of society, also in the so-called "new" ones, especially in those where it is most unexpected.

"And the Brothers should work" (RnB 5; Rb 7).

Another important aspect of the Franciscan calling, namely work with one's own hands, so our pilgrim reported, was also re-discovered by the brothers of that country in the "socio-political conditions of the new society" with God's help as a "grace:" for the Mighty Ones after the "Liberation" of their country laid upon all citizens in strict obedience the duty of carrying on some honourable work, and on those who did not know how to or did not want to, they imposed the duty of learning one, and this, as they expressed it, in order to avoid idleness and "to contribute to the building up of the nation." And the brothers discovered thereby, even though not without much anguish and much pain, that they are members of an organism which suffers and to whose healing they have to contribute, that they have above all to be in solidarity with the poor. So they learned in many a new manner to be "Minors" and thereby to be "subject to all who are in the same house" (RnB 7, 1), living from the work of their own hands, just as Brother Francis had wished it such a long time ago (Testament). And so some had begun to plant rice, pepper, bananas and many other sorts of fruit and vegetable, and to work every day in the fields; others kept water-buffalo, goats, sheep and useful fowl; a whole fraternity — it lies in the place called Suoi Thong not far from Dalat — had developed to a high degree of perfection the art of breeding silk-worms; others again worked in the sweat of their brow in factories

and co-operatives; still others visited and healed lepers, both by means of human contact and of modern medicines; yet others cured with local herbs and tinctures many of the other debilities of men, yes and even of the sick cattle.

As those in power now saw that the brothers served the people in everything, they came to trust them more and more and permitted them increasingly to break for the poor the bread of God's Word and of the Eucharist. And the bread and the wine which the brothers chose to use for this had the bitter taste of the earth and the sweet scent of those who, precisely in contradiction and conflict, are the sacramental signs of a radical immersion in the mystery of that God who heals the world through his own wounds (1 Peter 2:24). And so in the sweat of their brows, in the praise of God and the celebration of the *memoria activate creativa* of their liberation, did the brothers give witness to the presence of such a God. In everything they lived out his commission, which consists in giving men bread instead of stones, fish instead of serpents, eggs instead of scorpions, peace instead of discord, and love instead of hate, and always to overcome evil with good. They still witness today to the fact — and this for all "forms of society," wherever they may be — that human life is more than work, production and consumption. They give witness to the deeper values of life, to which God has called all men: love, friendship, respect, capacity to share, solidarity. And in everything they are signs of the Kenosis of Jesus and of his true Church, which has been sent to all cultures in all times, to serve and not to rule (Mt 20:28).

"... and persevere in what is good: (RnB 21:6).

Through the brothers in Vietnam and through the example of their evangelical life in the midst of a "conflictive society" — and this is the happy end-result of this troublesome pilgrimage — many brothers elsewhere, wherever they are, even in Germania, can acquire new insights into the mission of the evangelization of cultures which the Lord has in truth given to them. For these brothers were esteemed to be worthy of bearing many a pain and persecution, in order that the whole brotherhood, interiorly cleansed and purified, might in every age and in all cultures and continents bear a more credible witness to the hope which lives in it. And it is this which the brothers in that land would like to say to all the other brothers and sisters today: —

— that there is a time for sowing and a time for reaping; a time for speaking and a time for remaining silent; a time for dying and a time for new life, which, however, always comes from the hand of God and can be a fruitful seed-bed of the Gospel;

— that this is the fasting which is most pleasing to the Lord (cf Is 58: 6-7):

not to bear arms, either in reality or in thought, to seek the seeds of good in everyone, to live an active non-violence, to bring about reconciliation, to bring together in unity what is divided, to share with others hope and bread, to heal wounds and to cultivate a sense for the long-term perspectives of the Kingdom of God;

— that the Lord, whenever he take away, also gives, for example new, unexpected impulses for a life in accordance with his liberating Gospel, and not least also numerous new brothers;

— that the Kingdom of God is already begun wherever men seek and celebrate freedom; where dreams of a new life open horizons and overcome systems of human making; where peoples, tribes and religions declare peace with one another and begin to build together a common tent.

And our pilgrim returned shortly before the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord to Rome and to his Curia, tired out and covered with the yellow dust of yon earth, yet interiorly cleansed and more deeply converted to the Gospel than was possible for him before.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vixit, vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit

Frater Hermannus Transalpinus,

in fraternitate Gorheim,

die commemorationis S. Fidelis a Sigmaringen A.D. 1990,

et Frater Bonifatius Scotus in linguam Anglorum rite vertit

* * *

laying his betrayal plan
Judas clutches his money box

Holy Thursday:
Mary's alabaster box
Judas' money box

Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg OSF

Conversion

SISTER MARGARET CARNEY, O.S.F.

In order to understand the fundamental value of CONVERSION as we have placed it within our synthesis of Franciscan life, let us reflect for a moment on the experience of conversion in the life of St. Francis.

When we read the description that Francis himself recorded in his testament, we find three elements:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| First, | THE INITIATIVE OF GOD
"The Lord led me. . ." |
| Second, | A CHANGE OF OUTWARD BEHAVIOR
"It seemed exceedingly bitter to me to see lepers. . ." |
| Third, | AN INTERIOR TRANSFORMATION
"That which had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness" |

Testament 1-2

In yet another text (RegNB 23,8), Francis describes the life of penance or conversion using three ideas. He speaks of those who know, adore and serve the Lord "in penance". These terms will be a helpful means to explore the qualities of a life of continuous conversion as we must try to understand it today. They will enable us to see how Francis understood the meaning of penance.

As the Assembly of over 200 Third Order Regular Franciscan Superiors General, worldwide, gathered to collaborate and vote on the new TOR Rule, each member of the seven-person Work Group presented a special chapter or focus of the Document. This masterful consideration of the Order's fundamental charism of CONVERSION was Sister Margaret Carney's presentation to the Rome Assembly ten years ago. It is printed for the first time in this issue of The CORD.

Before beginning such a reflection it would be honest to acknowledge the difficulty of using language that is clear on this point. The word used by Francis in his writings is **poenitentia**. Translated today, the word is penance. However, the word "penance" now creates harsh images of ascetical practices and it suggests an attitude of denial of the world and of legitimate human aspirations and experiences. If we use the term conversion we also have the danger of a narrow definition which refers principally to acceptance of faith by an unbeliever, or a single dramatic moment of religious awakening granted to a few charismatic souls. The third term, **metanoia**, is rooted in Greek and provides a possible way of connecting past understandings with new vocabulary, but it is not a word that is easily incorporated into contemporary vocabulary.

So we chose as our term the word "CONVERSION." It is our hope that by investing ourselves in a deep reflection on this word we will eventually reappropriate those qualities of biblical and Franciscan spirituality which may have suffered some deformation over the centuries. It is our hope that by reflection and by responding to the grace of our charism we will rediscover the deep riches that are part of the heritage of this Order which in times past was called an order of penitents.

We will try now to grasp the meanings and movements behind the word.

I. COGNOVERUNT: knowing the Lord

We cannot know the Lord without knowing as well our sinfulness

This
is
the first step
in the

JOURNEY OF CONVERSION

In 2 EpFid 63-71, Francis speaks of the darkness and blindness of sin. "All those who refuse to taste and see how good the Lord is and who love the darkness rather than the light are under a curse." Again in 37-41 he warns of the mistrust we must have of our own sinful tendencies and that we must place ourselves under "the yoke of obedience" in order to break with sin in our lives. So, too, the prophets called to Israel to renounce her sinfulness and return to the Lord (Ex. 18,23; Jer. 1,16; Os. 3,5).

But it is also true that this break with sin is not the work of the human person. It is God's work in us. Francis insists that it was the Lord alone who led and inspired him, just as Paul would remind his hearers in the Letter to the Romans "it is not a question of man's willing or doing but of God's mercy" (Rom. 9,16).

Francis echoes this thought when he reminds us that we must give thanks to God because "the Lord God . . . through his mercy alone saved us; who did and does every good thing for us, miserable . . . though we are" (RegNB 23,8)

And since it is through the passion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus that this grace is made possible for us, we must grant Him dominion over our lives if we are to be fully turned towards God. Francis in the First Admonition, uses the words of Jesus to remind us that he alone is the way to the Father (Adm. 1,1: Jn. 13, 6-9). And in her Testament, Clare, the most faithful follower of Francis, reminded her sisters that the "Son of God made Himself our way" and that Francis taught that way by his word and example. This way, however, is not simply a way of commandments, but a way of union, of relationship. Fully realized, it is a way that leads to the most profound surrender of the person to the Lord. Francis uses the terms of the most intimate human relationships to describe this reality (2 EpFid. 40-54). We are to be the brides of the Lord when our soul is united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

FRANCIS thus dares to suggest — to insist even — that our conversion from sin to obedience and to love will lead us to that union which even the prophets described in nuptial terms when they described the espousal of Yahweh with his people, Israel.

II: ADORAVERUNT: adoring the Lord

Both Celano and Bonaventure relate that Francis saw that perfect poverty consisted in renunciation of worldly wisdom and he urged his brothers to put aside even the "possession of learning so as to be able to offer themselves naked to the arms of the Crucified (LM VII, 2; II Cel. 194)." Francis saw how radical the demands of the Gospel were. Jesus calls for a total gift of self to the Kingdom, for an engagement to God and his interests which calls for an undivided response and for radical separation from all that would keep us from the Kingdom (Lk. 14, 26-27). It is this radical self-donation and separation from the values of the world that Francis puts so clearly before us in the first chapter of the Rule of 1221. The adoration of the one who knows the grace of conversion is rooted in a purity of heart and mind that keeps our whole attention centered on the Lord "day and night" (2 EpFid. 19-21).

We must not think of this adoration simply as the strength of personal or communal prayer and its fruits — however central such intense prayer is to the process of turning continuously towards God. This adoration which reverses the values of our lives by putting the justice of God before earthly considerations also has the power to regenerate the whole of our lives and of our persons. The gifting of the Spirit in us leads to a powerful reorientation. Paul speaks of this

eloquently over and over again.

"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage to beings that by nature are not really divine; but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more?" (Gal. 4, 8-10), (cf. Rom. 6-33; Col. 2-12; Cor. 6,11).

The result of the powerful re-direction of the energies of our lives is seen in our life of service to others.

III. SERVIERUNT: serving the Lord

The result of the powerful re-direction of the energies of our lives is seen in our life service to others. In both of the Letters to the Faithful, Francis links the love of God and neighbor by placing the Great Commandment before us (1 EpFid. 25-27). The law of love is the yardstick by which we measure the height and depth of our conversion to God. Francis had read and understood well the description of the final judgment in which the Lord rewards the loving acts of those who performed the works of mercy (Mt. 25, 31-46). This point has a special importance for us as we seek to articulate the tradition and spirituality of our branch of the Franciscan family. Beginning with the exhortations in the Letters to the penitents, and down through the centuries, it is clear that the flowering of conversion is found in works done for the good of our neighbors. In our times when it becomes difficult to discern just how to continue — or in what forms to continue — our service to others, it is important to realize that the dichotomy sometimes posed between "being" and "doing" can be false and create an attitude that our works are not essentially related to our lives and prayer. For the members of the Franciscan Third Order this would be a false conclusion.

When writing to the penitents, Francis offers concrete ideas about the forms of good works that they should adopt. They must bring forth the fruits of repentance (Lk. 3,8). Those who have the power to judge are to be merciful; charitable almsgiving is encouraged; authorities are to serve sympathetically (2 EpFid. 25-31).

What Francis proposed to these lay followers of his during his lifetime evolved as we know, into a history of works undertaken in the name of the Church in many cultures, in many ages for the needy of every description.

The ultimate work of mercy, of love, is to lay down one's life for the sake of the Gospel. Francis proposed this ideal to his friars in his description of their mission as he envisioned it in the Rule of 1221. Moving from the works that require a generous heart and a discerning eye towards the poor, he calls for a courageous encounter with evil in any form and for a willingness to suffer persecution (RegNB. 16, 10-12).

Following the call of the Church in our times, we recognize in this text the seed that can grow in our service into a deep commitment to the poor that is also expressed in work for justice and for the elimination of society's oppression of the poor, the "minors" in our day. Thus the service that flows from a life of continuous conversion is a service seen primarily in terms of love of neighbor expressed in loving actions and work for justice in the world.

While practices aimed at self-discipline have a proper and necessary place in Christian life, they are not the central meaning of the penitential life if it is truly understood. In fact, we find indications in the Scriptures that the Lord Himself rejected such a notion of penance (Mt. 11, 18-19). And Francis warned his followers not to make the mistake of believing that external works alone would constitute true religious service (Adm. 14).

CONCLUSION

We know from early biographies that the preaching of Francis was a kind of revolution for the people of his time (1C. 23, 3S, 25; 3S, 33; 1C. 36). He provided an orthodox and realizable programme of Christian spirituality that captured the imagination of his hearers and overcame problems encountered by lay movements that were destroyed by heresy and false directions.

Today a similar need is evident in the Church. The Council opened the Scriptures for us again and restored the liturgy to the people. New forms of Christian community are growing and there is evidence of a hunger for God. In view of this work of the Spirit, there is a call to us to once again "preach penance" — not in the form of sermons but by sharing our experience of the work of the Spirit within the human person that is at the heart of conversion.

Our "sermon" can be the hope that is shared when we allow ourselves to be the **CLAY IN THE HAND OF THE POTTER** ((Jer. 18, 1-6). By opening ourselves

TO BE SHAPED,

TO BE BROKEN and TO BE RE-FASHIONED,

we can be a sign of encouragement to our brothers and sisters who need to see in human persons the manifestations of God's goodness and greatness. The question that many agonize over is the same question that Francis used to ask:

"WHO ARE YOU, MY GOD, AND WHO AM I?"

To keep asking the question . . .

To keep accepting the answers

That come at every moment of our existence,

Is to know the meaning of a life of penance,

OF CONTINUAL CONVERSION.

* * *

That Something

There was that something about him that made one wonder:
Nothing, mind you, that might appear heroic.
He looking every inch the local carpenter,
Smelling of choicest timbers chosen for his work,
With traces of oil and shavings on his hands;
And the nail of one thumb being as berry black
As the wine at the wedding that seems
To have appeared from nowhere (O what luck)

And caused the blood to race, the women to surmise
You could hanker after whatever it was he told you.
And then that time at table, out of the blue,
He held a loaf between those long lean fingers of his
And when he broke and shared the trembling bread
The evening seemed to sing for us, the very air was glad.

IAIN DUGGAN O.F.M.

“The Testament And The Rule Are One In Substance”: The Defense of the Testament in the Fourth Tribulation of the *Historia Septem Tribulationum Ordinis Minorum of Angelo of Clareno*

SEAN KINSELLA

The testament and the rule are one in substance. Hence, we ought to hold the testament in the deepest reverence as the command and blessing of St. Francis. Besides the spirit of Christ speaks in it, the same Christ who dwelt in Francis always, but more fully still after the wonderful imprinting of his wounds.¹

In the *Historia Septem Tribulationum Ordinis Minorum* Angelo of Clareno sets forth an impassioned and often moving description of the struggles and persecutions of the Spiritual wing of the Franciscan movement and provides a most valuable and captivating insight into the perspectives and experiences of the Spirituals as they attempted to define and live the Franciscan charism.

The importance of the Testament of St. Francis for the Spirituals in this regard is of central significance because for the Spirituals the Testament is the inspired and essential guide for the Franciscan Order in their living a life most fully in accord with the Rule.

The author is a 1992 graduate of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. Besides a Master's Degree in Franciscan Studies, he holds a B.A. from Cornell University (1990). He currently resides in California.

The testament expresses, exposes and clarifies more clearly and plainly the pure and faithful intention of the rule. It explains and defines the rule's explicit commands. By following it, the more nearly we will reach the highest perfection of the spiritual observance of the rule.²

For the Order as a whole, Francis' opening words of the Rule — “The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”³ — was a manifest sign of the inspired nature of the Rule and the expressed ideal of the concord between the Rule and the way of life of the Friars Minor and the Gospel and the way of life of Christ and the disciples. For the Spirituals, however, the rule was not just a model for the Gospel life but was in fact “the first revelation of the full perfection of the Gospel”⁴ which was only now being made clearly by Christ through Francis. For the Spirituals the Rule did not just follow the Gospel: it contained and completed it.

... a voice in the air, in the person of Christ was heard ... It said, “This is my servant Francis, my chosen one. I place in him my spirit. I commanded him to do whatever he did and to write the rule as he wrote it. The life and rule which he wrote down is mine and comes from me ... Whoever hears him hears me. Whoever spurns him spurns me ... I want this rule to be observed to the letter.”⁵

This passage illustrates in a signal way the Spirituals' understanding of the nature and importance of the Rule. The Rule is not only central to the unique charism of the Order but it also heralds the fulfillment of the promises of both the Old Testament and the New in the transmission and reception of the Rule which is of consequence not only to the Order but, in and through them, for the entirety of the Church; which is to say, the world: “Thus we see the consummation of the whole of history bound up with the Rule of St. Francis.”⁶

Angelo draws together into close identification the three receptions of the Law by a chosen people by connecting Francis with Moses and Christ and the Order with the Israelites and the disciples. As Moses had received the Old Law from God (Exodus 24:12; 31:18), so Francis, “Like another Moses,” sets down the Rule “which was indeed written by the finger of the living God.”⁷ And like Christ, whose divinity was confirmed by the Father in heaven (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22), Francis' true nature is affirmed by the voice of Christ: “This is my servant Francis, my chosen one. I placed in him my spirit.” Francis speaks then as Christ speaks and enjoins upon the Franciscan Order obedience to the Rule as obedience to Christ himself: “Whoever hears him hears me. Whoever spurns him spurns me.” It may well be that Angelo is suggesting a parallel between the Order and the disciples in that Christ endowed the disciples with power and authority in his name and that it is in his name that salvation is either accepted or denied through the medium of discipleship: “He who hears

you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." (Luke 10:16). In the same way, those Friars Minor who do not accept the authority of Francis and the following of the Rule are rejecting Christ because it is Christ's spirit which is in Francis and who speaks through Francis. For Angelo, Francis is "Christ's symbol, his visible revelation . . . exemplified in Francis's Rule and Testament, as well as in his body and mind."⁸

The observance of the Rule is intimately identified and closely related to the following of the Testament because the Testament "expresses, exposes and clarifies" the true intention of the Rule and it protects and defends the Rule from "mitigating interpretations and . . . merely human wisdom."⁹

For the Holy Spirit who dictated the rule in the first place and who spoke in the testament, did not say anything new in the testament that was different from the rule . . . The testament he set like the firmest of walls to defend the rule and make it impregnable.¹⁰

In his commentary on the Rule, the *Expositio Regulae Fratrum Minorum*, Angelo closely links the Rule with the Testament; comparing the one without the other as a bride without a bridegroom or the crown of stars in the Apocalypse without a head to encircle.¹¹ For Angelo both the Rule and the Testament are equally inspired — "For the Holy Spirit who dictated the rule . . . spoke in the testament" — and they cannot be separated. Nor can they be denied or subverted through legislation or decree because they have an authority which comes directly from God: ". . . and no pope could alter one word of it, any more than it was lawful for him to change the gospel itself."¹² Neither the Chapters nor the papacy had the ability or the right to dispense friars from following both the Rule and the Testament because both the Rule and the Testament were received from Christ himself and that authority could not be qualified or abrogated by "mitigating interpretations" and "merely human wisdom."

. . . should we scorn or hold in contempt the words of the Holy Spirit?

In the testament he spoke in Francis already crucified on the cross of Christ. To disregard the testament is an insult to the Holy Spirit. It is to dishonor the Father, to incur the curse of the law, and through contemptuous disobedience to lose the legacy of the kingdom . . .¹³

It is important, on this point in particular, to remember the Joachimist framework with which Angelo is familiar and within which he is writing.¹⁴ For Joachim of Fiore and his followers salvation history was progressing in two patterns simultaneously: one, rather complicated, of double sevens in which the Old Testament paralleled the New and the Apocalypse paralleled the present time; and the other, less complicated, in which the three Persons of the Trinity followed, as it were, one another in the course of human history. In this second pattern one may situate the Age of the Father as extending from Adam through

the ministry of John the Baptist; the Age of the Son as beginning with Jesus' baptism and lasting through to the inception of a coming Age of the Holy Spirit; and the Age of the Holy Spirit which began at an uncertain date but of which Joachim had written extensively and about which he had predicted that it would be marked by the witness of two men clothed in sackcloth (Revelation 11:3) and heralded by one marked with the sign of the living God (Revelation 7:2). These prophecies were confirmed by his contemporaries in the persons of Dominic and Francis and, following the announcement of the stigmata, celebrated by the Franciscan Spirituals in particular as signaling the beginning of the Age of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, then, occupies a central and key role to the coming fulfillment of human history. It is also significant to recall that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the one sin which will not be forgiven by God — "But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come"¹⁵ — and by repeatedly invoking the name of the Spirit in reference to the Testament as well as the Rule Angelo is making a very strong point about the seriousness of the fault of those who would abandon the keeping of the Testament.

Is the life of Christ and the humility you have promised, the example of the saints or even the testimony of scriptures of no importance in your eyes? . . . are you comfortable now in your own tepidity and depravity? Perhaps you would rather not think of death, of eternal punishments and the abyss . . .¹⁶

Angelo makes a very interesting point when he compares the circumstances of Francis' presentation of the Testament with that of Moses and the giving of the "second law": the Book of Deuteronomy. In this way Angelo repeats his continued emphasis on the sacrosanct quality of the Rule and Testament and equates it directly to Scripture. Furthermore, Angelo again moves from the Old Testament to the New and then from the New Testament to the present in a very Joachimistic schema wherein the Old and New Testaments reveal a profound relationship and concordance in which the Old reveals the New and the New confirms the Old in a series of direct parallels. For Angelo, writing in this context, "the last shall harmonize with the first"¹⁷ and that harmony includes those events which are contemporary to him; particularly since Angelo strongly feels that he is close to the coming completion of God's plan for human history.

Moses, near death, gives a redaction of the Law which had been given to him and the Israelites by God. In a similar way, Christ's final words — "his last words . . . his special command of love . . . the words he spoke while hanging on the cross"¹⁸ — embody that teaching in which "the whole law and the prophets and the gospels are fulfilled in his command . . ."¹⁹ For Angelo, the final words of Francis as communicated in the Testament reveal a similar authority.

Remember that St. Francis was passing from this life to Christ when he produced the testament. Certainly in death he did not speak rashly and without authority. When did he have a greater fullness of the Holy Spirit than in death? At the end of his life he asserted that he had received the rule and testament through revelation from Christ. Did he, a saint, lie?²⁰

In Angelo's understanding, the circumstances of the event add a special weight and significance to the relationship between the Rule and the Testament. As Francis is the final completion of the reception and transmission of the Law, like Moses and Christ before him, he is also the final example of the law-giver and the spiritual father passing from this life to the next. For it is near death, filled with the Holy Spirit, when Francis offers the Testament — "the command and blessing of St. Francis" — in order to elucidate and concentrate the meaning of the Rule. Angelo's insight into this event is one which, because of both his personal experience and understanding of the importance of the Rule and the Testament as well as his Joachimistic perspective on salvation history, sees the fulfillment of the movement of God in history in the final words of St. Francis which are contained in the Testament.

The significance of the Testament for Angelo of Clareno and the Spiritual Franciscans is, first and foremost, that it is the fullest expression of the intention of Francis in living the Rule and is therefore to be kept faithfully by all the Friars Minor.

We, his sons, are bound to show and to have a greater devotion, greater faith and reverence, and a more exact obedience to his final precepts and words than to any of his others.²¹

The second, and more far-reaching, dimension of the import of the Testament is that it has universal significance for the entire Church because it is through and in Francis that the Holy Spirit has spoken with all truth and authority to the full meaning of the Gospel life. The final words of Francis in the Testament are meant then not just for the Franciscan Order, but are addressed by God to the Church, catholic and apostolic, because it is through the Rule and the Testament that the Church is to be renewed and reformed in the fullest accord with Christ in the imminent completion of human history.

... complete perfection, regular and faithful purpose and spiritual understanding are found in the testament of blessed Francis ... Christ commanded that the evangelical life be renewed through Francis. Now to reform that life once and for all, the Holy Spirit issued the testament through Francis as his death approached ... In the testament we find, for the reforming of our lives, a formula clear and Catholic, outlined unmistakably and unchangeably.²²

Endnotes

¹ **The History of the Seven Tribulations.** An unpublished translation by Father George Marcil, O.F.M. of the *Historia Septem Tribulationum Ordinis Minorum* of Angelo of Clareno. (Hereafter, HST). Section 5, Fourth Tribulation, Number II, p. 4.

² Ibid.

³ **Francis and Clare: The Complete Works.** Trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady. The Classics of Western Spirituality. (New York: Paulist Press, 1982): **The Later Rule**, I:1, p. 137.

⁴ **The Franciscan Spirituals and the Capuchin Reform.** Thaddeus MacVicar. Franciscan Institute Publications: History Series No. 5. (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1986), p. 26.

⁵ HST. Section 2, First Tribulation, Number XII, p. 16.

⁶ **The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism.** Marjorie Reeves. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 199.

⁷ HST. Section 2, First Tribulation, Number XII, p. 15.

⁸ **The Letters of Angelo of Clareno (c. 1250 - 1337).** Ronald G. Musto. Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1977. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1977), p. 25.

⁹ HST. Section 5, Fourth Tribulation, Number II, p. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ quoted in **The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli.** Decima L. Douie. (Manchester: At the University Press; reprinted, New York: AMS Press, 1978), p. 76. Cf.: Apocalypse 12:1.

¹² Ibid., p. 77. Cf.: **Expositio Regulae**, 23; see MacVicar, n. 41, pgs. 113-114.

¹³ HST. Section 1, Fourth Tribulation, Number II, p. 4.

¹⁴ Douie, p. 73.

¹⁵ Matthew 12:31-32.

¹⁶ HST. Section 5, Fourth Tribulation, Number I, pgs. 2-3.

¹⁷ quoted in Musto, p. 21, n. 103.

¹⁸ HST. Section 5, Fourth Tribulation, Number II, p. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid. ²⁰ Ibid. ²¹ Ibid. ²² Ibid., pgs. 4-5.

Obedience in our Franciscan Life: Inner Authority and the Obedience of Service

SISTER LYNN PATRICE LAVIN O.S.F.

Greetings of peace be with you!

I'd like to begin our reflection on inner authority and the obedience of service with a reading from the Gospel of St. Mark. (Mark 1:21-28)

They went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the Sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority. In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, and it shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: you are the Holy One of God.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

In this passage we focus on the person of Jesus and the authority with which he teaches. His person speaks to the crowd. The people present experienced POWER coming forth from Jesus, a power that was creating new thoughts, that challenged them to see life with new eyes, to listen to the message with new ears. Jesus spoke with authority. He was "authoring" life in those persons who saw and heard him speak.

Jesus spoke with INNER AUTHORITY. He had an inner confidence in the Spirit of God living within him, a belief in himself, in his own giftedness, in his own power to do good. Jesus lived out of this inner authority, an

Sr. Lynn Patrice Lavin, O.S.F. is provincial of the St. Joseph Province of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. She delivered this talk as a part of her congregation's Ongoing Formation Program series.

inner confidence, an inner belief in the Father's boundless love that was energizing, life-giving for himself and for others.

I'd like now to reflect more deeply on the meaning of inner authority for us as 20th century religious women, as Franciscan women in the Church and its implications for us.

INNER AUTHORITY

Christianity has been largely filtered to the world through the mind and experience of Western civilization. Western thought shows a preference for the words of Scripture that are active, rational, decisive, conclusive, measurable, provable. Eastern culture invites us to reflect on the mystery, to take a deepening gaze, to live with ambiguity, to have patience, to learn how to be at peace in waiting. As 20th century Americans we are not at home with this Eastern approach because we have been formed in a different mindset. But the Eastern approach is, in reality, the mindset needed for us truly to grasp the true meaning of inner authority.

As Western Christians we lack an understanding of the inner authority to which each person is invited, a deepening sense of one's own self, of one's value and worth, of one's giftedness, a deepening appreciation, an inner confidence in the goodness, the beauty, the strength of the soul that lives within, with no need to prove self to others.

Inner authority is not about doing. It is about being. Deep inner authority is based on my faith in God's covenant with me, in creating me as me. In an article on inner authority in community, Fr. Richard Rohr reflects on this, using a passage from Mahatma Gandhi:

If you want to feel the aroma of Christianity, you must copy the rose. The rose irresistably draws people to itself, and the scent remains with them. Even so, the aroma of Christianity is subtler even than that of the rose and should, therefore, be imparted in an even quieter and more imperceptible manner, if possible.

Rohr explains his understanding of Gandhi's image:

Gandhi's rose gives us an appropriate image. The quiet and imperceptible authority of the rose comes from the fact that it is in fact beautiful, that it gives off a lovely fragrance. It does not need to prove itself or convert you to its side. It knows it is a rose. If you are a human being with a nose and eye for beauty, you will recognize the inherent authority of the rose. In fact, its inner authority might well be so pressing and demanding that you might say to the rose, as Francis deSales did, "Stop shouting!"

If Christianity relied on its inner authority, the weight of its truth and the sheer power of genuine goodness, the world would also say to Christians, "I hear

you; stop shouting." And we would not have preached a sermon or spoken a single word.

When the world meets people whose center of gravity is within themselves and not just in religion or in answers, the world will draw close like moths to a flame. When we meet people who know that they know, and know that they know so much more than they can understand, and finally have the trust and the patience to remain in that knowledge, then we will have people who can truly represent the authority of God. In their presence we will grow strong.

Rohr continues to say that there is a direct correlation between one's need and reliance upon mere external authority and one's lack of true inner authority. TRUE INNER AUTHORITY LEADS ME TO PERSONAL FREEDOM. It is of the Spirit. It moves me to reflect on the meaning of law, of authority.

Real law is developed for the sake of the common good. Real authority is given for the sake of the common good. S. Melanie DiPietro, a Church canonist and civil lawyer, reflects on our Western mentality in interpreting law. We try to use a civil law approach to interpret matters of the heart. Civil law says RIGHT vs. RIGHT and determines winners and losers, balancing the power. Rather, we should ask, not who is right and who is wrong, but what is RIGHT, what serves COMMUNIO, the community of believers, what serves ECCLESIA, the Church, the body of Christ? What promotes the value behind the directive?

What am I saying? I'm saying that good law in our life serves the *communio*, the body of Christ, that external authority, authority outside ourselves, serves the Eucharistic community and strives to uphold the value inherent in the directive. It is the value that encompasses the original SPIRIT OF THE LAW, whatever it might be. S. Sandra Schneiders, in Chapter 8, Religious Obedience: Journey from Law to Love, in her book *New Wine Skins* reflects:

The only solid ground of obedience is FREEDOM, and genuine freedom cannot be bestowed upon us by law, structures or superiors. FREEDOM is the gift of God to the person who has given up on the law as justification and given herself or himself up to the infinitely merciful God who is the Father of Jesus Christ.

Our understanding of law, authority — what is it? Does it feel heavy? Is there fear within when I think of it?

To have a balanced attitude I need to strengthen the inner authority within me, the belief in my own life within. Rohr reflects:

People with inner authority recognize their center as within themselves. They draw life from this deep well ... Those with inner authority draw life from within because there is a life within — not just laws, principles, duties, or fears but life ... Inner authority lets truth speak for itself, allows other ideas to live or die on their own merits and like love itself, takes no pleasure in other peoples' sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. (1 Cor. 12:6-7)

A genuine sense of my own inner authority frees me to affirm the value of external authority, to view external authority as service, as supportive of the "communio," the body of Christ. We, as religious women in the Church, are invited to reflect on the SPIRIT that gives life among us, rather than on that which binds us. TRUE LAW FREES, NOT BINDS. TRUE OBEDIENCE FREES, NOT BINDS.

The Latin root for the word obedience is *ob-audire*, to give ear, to listen. Obedience — to give ear to the Spirit of God moving, working in our lives; to listen so that I might know what God's will is for my life, in my life.

True obedience comes from cultivating a loving union with God which becomes the ground for my choices.

True obedience comes from cultivating a loving union with God which becomes the ground for my choices. S. Sandra Schneider comments:

Consciously united with God, we see with God's eyes, judge according to the truth, and choose out of love. To seek God's will is to make the most loving choices and decisions of which we are capable with God's help at any given moment. It consists formally in how and why we make a certain choice rather than in what we actually choose.

What this means for us is clear — obedience is the constant actualizing of love in one's judgments and choices. THIS IS AT THE HEART OF GENUINE, TRUE OBEDIENCE and should be the mindset out of which we move. We choose out of love. This is the obedience of love.

Carl Jung has a powerful quote that captures this for me:

WHERE LOVE RULES, THERE IS NO WILL TO POWER. AND WHERE POWER PREDOMINATES, THERE LOVE IS LACKING. THE ONE IS THE SHADOW OF THE OTHER.

In any relationship when I am motivated out of love I do not need to wield power because I trust the relationship enough to believe that we will come to the

truth together. When I need to rely on my power alone, there is a lack of trust, a breakdown of relationship. Rohr reflects:

We only come into inner authority insofar as we admit a positive and mature dependency on others and freely enter into a mature exchange of life and power.

In order "to freely enter into a mature exchange of life and power" I must examine my attitudes toward those in leadership. I am invited to reflect on the mutuality of our call to be "sister" to one another and to believe in the Spirit's action within the "communio" that called that individual to be minister, servant.

I am invited to affirm that some among us are called, in our Franciscan tradition, to the "ministry of authority" as a "service to the congregation and to the Church" (Constitutions VI:124). In Francis' writings the word "servant" always qualifies the noun "minister." Therefore, those in authority do not make obedience happen. Rather, they serve in assisting others in their fidelity to the Word. They are asked, for a time, to companion us in our desire to keep the Gospel, our Rule and Life, faithfully. They are not to be wielders of power but to be enablers, "having the ability to love deeply and to believe in other people" (Rohr). This kind of leadership is the truest kind of servanthood and Rohr states that its job is "to listen rather than to speak, to hope rather than to enforce." WHERE LOVE RULES THERE IS NO WILL TO POWER.

In our reflection then, we see that obedience has a vertical and horizontal dimension. Obedience to God is facilitated through a human instrument. We promise an obedience of love, of charity to one another, thus strengthening the bonds of sisterhood among us. Both dimensions speak to us of loving service.

In article 123 of our Constitutions we speak of mutual obedience — an open-hearted listening to the Spirit in prayer, responding to one another in dialogue, the active and responsible participation of each of us in the life and mission of the congregation, a willingness to support decisions once they have been made.

This is what Rohr means when he speaks of "a mature exchange of life and power," a positive and mature dependency on others. Regis Armstrong, in his article "The Service of Loving Obedience," speaks of the degree of maturity needed to live an active obedience of love that is exercised with a degree of freedom and of responsibility. He continues to reflect that "Obedience is exercised not only when a directive is given ... It is an **all pervasive** attitude which reflects a bond of unity between (sisters)."

Our Franciscan way of life implies interdependence and a willingness to believe that we can trust one another with our own giftedness and brokenness

This maturity of which I speak is integrally connected with my perception of my own sense of inner authority. My inner authority enables me to freely embrace the true meaning of loving obedience in our Franciscan tradition. At religious profession we are received into obedience as our Third Order Regular Rule tells us. We are received, as Sr. Dorothy McCormack writes,

... into communion and solidarity with one another. Within this relationship of obedience one of us serves as minister and servant. All are bound to serve and obey the Gospel and the Spirit of the Lord dwelling within themselves, in the minister, in one another. Whenever the brothers and sisters meet each other, they are to give witness that they are members of one family and are confidently making known their needs to one another (TOR 7:23). All are equal and no one is to exercise power over another (Rule of 1221, Chap. 5:9-12). Authority is based on Jesus' example of washing his disciples' feet." ("The Essential Elements of the Evangelical Life of Franciscans," Sr. Dorothy McCormack, OSF, CORD, September 1988).

Our Franciscan way of life implies interdependence and a willingness to believe that we can trust one another with our own giftedness and brokenness, that we will be revered, embraced as the persons who we are.

Here inner authority and the ministry of leadership walk as sisters together. Having a healthy sense of my own inner authority does not negate the instrumentality of the minister as a mediator of God's will for me. What is KEY in this relationship is the mature development of my own faith life, a life that nourishes an openness to dialogue — dialogue with God's WORD, with the events that are my own life, with my sisters as well as with those who are ministers for me. This is the heart of true discernment, having the openness to enter into the dialogue, to trust enough my own inner authority, the Spirit-life within me, to enter into the dialogue, into the relationship to which the obedience of love is inviting me.

INNER AUTHORITY: a deepening sense of one's own self, of one's value and worth, of one's giftedness, a deepening appreciation, an inner confidence in the goodness, the beauty, the strength of the soul that lives within.

THE OBEDIENCE OF LOVE: consciously united with God, seeing with God's eyes, judging according to the truth and choosing out of love.

AUTHORITY AS SERVICE: serving in assisting others in their fidelity to the WORD, companioning others in their desire to live the Gospel, having the ability to love deeply and to believe in other people.

Nurturing a deepening sense of inner authority will lead me to greater freedom. This freedom will encourage me to affirm, to embrace the mutuality of my living in relationship with my sisters as well as opening myself to the ongoing dialogue that is the life of the Spirit among us. This interior freedom, this openness to dialogue with my ministers and my sisters will nourish an interdependence that is not diminished by authority but an interdependence that strengthens the bonds of relationship, of sisterhood, that enables the obedience of love which we profess to be enfleshed among us.

* * *

you are the poem I mean
you are the word I coin
you are the love I live

through the past I wait for you
the future is hope of you
the present is faith in your gaze

against the shape of the horizon suspended in your gaze
time wavers and remains divested for me
in the abyss of my love silence says your name
sound that becomes flesh name that becomes inspiration

— Lisa Boscane, OSC

Translated from *dialogue de nuit* (Paris: éditions saint-germain-des-prés, 1976, pp. 16, 17) by Mary McCarthy, RSM, Professor of French, Georgian Court College, Lakewood, New Jersey.

Vulnerable God

Darling
precious
vulnerable God
who sets before your creatures
the invitation to enter into relationship
with you

Powerful
tender
defenseless God
who gives us the freedom
to say no

Silent
hopeful
capable-of-being-wounded God
who waits with
soulful breath
for the answer

You
move me
to tears

Christen Shukwit, OSF

CREATIONAL FRATERNITY: St. Francis, Pooh Bear and Environ- mentalism

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND, O.F.M.

When Rabbit, the fussy busybody of the Pooh Bear stories by A.A. Milne, tortuously concocts a plan to kidnap Baby Roo from Kanga, his mother, with the idea of taking him hostage to ensure that they leave the forest, Piglet is anxious. Piglet, according to Eyeore is "the little fellow with the excited ears." Nervous and fearful, he spends his time following Pooh on some of his hair-brained schemes such as hunting woodzels, or trapping Heffalumps in cunning traps. But this time he is afraid since Kangas are generally regarded to be one of the fiercer animals especially when they lose their young. Rabbit tells Piglet, "Piglet, you haven't any pluck." Piglet replies sadly, "It's hard to be brave when you're only a very small animal."

The worm who keeps one eye on the road in front of him and the other watching over his shoulder for the early bird, or the frog or hedgehog who stands at the roadside carefully weighing their chances of making it across without being flattened would nod in small animal agreement. I believe that St. Francis of Assisi would nod in agreement also and take the side of Piglet just this once, and as he did in the past, he would lift the worm up and place it with great care

Fr. Séamus Mulholland, a Franciscan who ministers in a parish in London's East End, teaches English Literature. He is also a school chaplain and a member of the Executive Committee of the London Borough of Newham's Association of Faiths.

and gentleness on the side of the road where it could continue its journey without fear of being squashed or eaten.

The hedgehog, foxes, frogs and other small anxious animals who are not very brave are still wailing for acts of mercy such as this. However, we may yet see Teenage Mutant Hero Hedgehogs: The Revenge On Car Wheels. Whether it was the unsocial, maniacally depressive, sharp tongued (though utterly lovable) Eyeore; whether it walked, crawled, swam, flew or like Heffalumps came when you whistled, Francis had and would have had understanding, sympathy, time and love for them all regardless of size or fierceness.

Sympathy with nature

The great attractive quality about Francis was that he was not "anti" anything. He would not have been against abuse of the environment, rather he would have been "for" the environment, he would have been a "pro-lifer," because he was positively motivated and not negatively motivated and he was against confrontation - as demonstrated by approaching the Sultan with openness and gentleness during one of the Crusades and conversing with him in peace when both Muslim and Christian slaughtered each other in the name of God and Allah.

An environmental example is the Wolf of Gubbio story. Now, if a Kanga was generally regarded to be one of the fiercer animals (especially, I am told by Pooh, in the winter months) then what anxiousness might a wolf cause a very small animal? But in Francis there is no fear of the wolf, just understanding and sympathy for it. The wolf had been terrorizing the people of Gubbio and they told Francis. He admonished the wolf yet tenderly called it Brother, but he also admonished the people: the wolf was hungry and so it ate anything - including people. Francis struck a pact with both wolf and people - the people fed the wolf and the wolf stopped eating the people. Francis understood nature enough to know that a hungry wolf would eat but he did not blame the wolf for being a wolf; he accepted it as it was.

Indeed in many respects Francis and Christopher Robin have much in common. Christopher Robin and Francis both approach nature and the environment with openness, love, kindness; as Christopher Robin is often heard to say, "Silly old bear, but I do love you." And nature responded to both of them by trusting them with its very existence - as when Pooh got stuck in Rabbit's door through eating too much, they sent for Christopher Robin and as the story says, "When Christopher Robin arrived everyone felt quite hopeful again." I believe

the Little Poor Man of Assisi, Christopher Robin, Pooh and friends would have got on well together.

Brother and Sister

Just as Piglet did not blame Kanga for being Kanga, or a woozel for being a woozel, or a heffalump for being a heffalump, Francis never blamed anything for being itself. When the crickets interrupted his prayers he asked them to be quiet; they were and when he had finished he told them to sing their own praises to God which they did. The birds, bees, fish, wolves all listened to Francis because they trusted him. He knew that we, animals and nature, shared one thing in common - that we were created and given life by God, loved by him just the way we are and redeemed by his Son who became part of this created nature because he loved us.

No doubt Pooh would have made up a hum about this, just as Francis in a sense did. But whereas Pooh's hum may have been a sort of thank you hum by a bear of very little brain but lots of love thanking God, Francis's hum is the great Canticle of All the Creatures where God is endlessly praised for Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire, Sister Water, Brother Air, Mother Earth, all flowers, fruits and trees and even Sister Death. Everything for him was brother or sister because Francis saw, just like the world of Pooh and friends, that each part of nature, even the tiniest, was intimately related to us in fraternity because God is our Father and Creator of everything that is, and Christ his Son through his Incarnation is our Brother and Lord of all Creation.

One might argue of course with the mentality of Pooh who once sat on a gorse bush (which is the same as an ambush - a sort of surprise) and had to spend a week getting out the thorns, and who was stung by bees once while trying to get their honey, that "It's not easy calling the gorse bush or bee that has just stung you, Brother - bother would be more like it." I would reply in a Christopher Robin or St. Francis sort of way, "Well, it's not easy being a bee when just for being a bee you end up being a bee who used to be a bee" (but this might confuse poor old Pooh).

But even Pooh understood that each part of creation is vital to the other, even the bee, "If I know anything those are bees and bees mean hunny and hunny means me eating it and then humming." Francis too understood the interrelatedness and mutual dependency we share with nature and was anxious when he saw it hurt or in distress, as in the case of the worms. He even on one occasion thought of asking the Emperor to throw grain on the roadside so that the birds might feast at Christmas.

Eyeore's Tail

However, taking all this into account it may not be too wild to suggest that the Greenhouse effect, global warming, the ozone apertures and indeed even the imaginary idea of discarded pets changing through radiation into avenging dogooders and super-heroes is nature's way of "swatting us with a rolled up newspaper;" the imaginary is relative to the cataclysm that faces us if attitudes to the care of creation do not change radically.

Concern for creation is not just for the Franciscans, Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature or Save the Rain Forests, Whales etc., it is the concern of us all. If we profess Christianity and fraternity with Brother Christ, we must also, surely, profess solidarity and concern for Brother/Sister Nature and Mother Earth if the balance and mutual dependency which was envisaged in the beginning is to be maintained and restored.

Pooh Bear gives us an example of fraternal concern. On seeing Eyeore he asks how he is. Eyeore replies that he does not seem to have felt very "how" for a long time. The reason, as Pooh discovers, is that Eyeore has lost his tail. Seeing Eyeore's distress (which it must be noted is his permanent condition) Pooh proclaims "Eyeore, I Winnie-the-Pooh will find your tail." Eyeore replies, "Thank you, Pooh you're a real friend, not like some." Pooh does find Eyeore's tail and restores it to him after telling Owl who had it and was using it for a bell-rope that Eyeore was "attached" to it, fond of it. In other words, if we may use Eyeore's tail as a metaphor, nature is attached to us, and we to it and I do not mean nature in the abstract metaphysical sense. I mean the concrete existential place in which we live, move and have our being: our world, our country, our county, our street, our little place of ground and all the life it contains. We have an inter/intra-dependent fraternity, and responsibility for the brethren of the rocks, stones, trees, rain forest, whales, seals. If we, who are only part of that creation and not the whole of it, destroy our environment for our own purpose we fail lamentably in our fraternal responsibility and ultimately, as Francis noticed, we fail in our responsibility to God.

Don't sit on it

I firmly believe that St. Francis would have looked admiringly at the World of Pooh, the One Hundred Acre Wood, the Six Pine Trees, the North Pole (discovered by Pooh) and nodded in smiling agreement. For there humanity

Environmental fraternity. . . is not simply a human thing, or a Franciscan thing, or even a Christian thing; it is a dynamic, intercreational relationship which began when God created from his own love and united us to every living thing.

(Christopher Robin) and nature (Pooh, Piglet, Rabbit, WOL, Kanga, Baby Roo and Eyeore) attempted with great success to live in mutual, fraternal, co-operative harmony.

When Piglet is entirely surrounded by water he is rescued by Christopher Robin and Pooh; when Pooh is stuck in Rabbit's door he is comforted by Christopher Robin; when Roo falls into the river he is rescued by Rabbit and Pooh; when Eyeore's birthday is forgotten Pooh and Piglet give him presents and WOL writes a happy birthday message on it; when Eyeore loses his house Pooh and Piglet find him one; when WOL's house is blown down it is Piglet who bravely goes for help. I could go on. But fraternal concern and care for our world is vital and it is easy to become anaesthetized to so much talk about it. Francis did not so much talk as do; he was essentially a man of action but he also understood that unreflective action was worse than no action at all.

Francis may have said, along with Eyeore who got a squashed thistle for lunch because Pooh sat on it, "It does them no good you know, sitting on them, takes the life out of them. Be more considerate. Take care, I just mention it." It does nature no good if we "sit" on it, it takes the life out of it, whereas the example of Francis and the brethren of the One Hundred Acre Wood is to pick nature gently up and place it safely and lovingly away from all harm.

Environmental fraternity then, I believe, is not simply a human thing, or a Franciscan thing, or even a Christian thing; it is a dynamic, intercreational relationship which began when God created from his own love and united us to every living thing. He brought it all to perfection and fulfillment in the Incarnation of his Son as one of us in our created nature, for whom, through whom, and in whom the entirety of the universe, over which he is Lord and King, was made. Even a bear of very little brain could grasp that - St. Francis did.

Yellow Time

Yellow is the color of the day.
Sunlight and goldfinch and buttercup.
Yellow and black butterflies
Tumble across the field,
Lemon and licorice, chasing each other.
Even the willow sends creamy golden leaves
Spiraling slowly to the ground,
While I lie on the grass
And dream of lemonade,
Because Yellow is the color of the day.

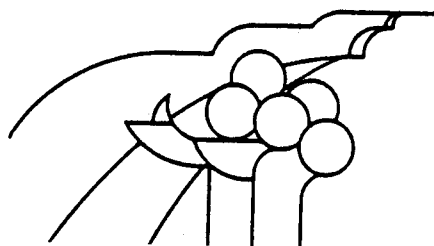
Kathleen Collins

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MAY, 1993

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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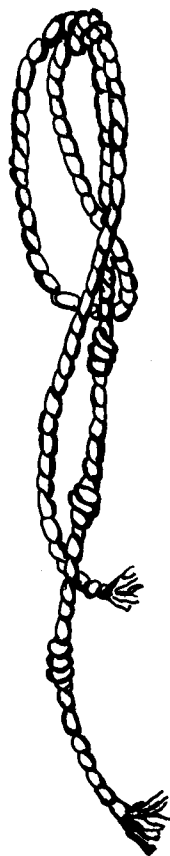
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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

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 the People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: 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

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).

AR: 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).

Modern Fioretti

Why The Brothers' Curia In Rome Is Built Upon A Hill Fragrant With The Scent Of Jasmine

BROTHER HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. On a Mediterranean spring evening in the mild month of May, after a tiring pilgrimage which took him to the "periphery", to the brothers in Lima and in Ayacucho in the Cordilleras of distant Peru, as well as to the "Virgin Morena de Guadalupe" in Mexico, the Minister Universalis returned to his hill named after jasmine, ("Gelsomino") in the centre of the city called Eternal and Holy. As he turned into the narrow cul-de-sac called after the "Mediatrice of All Graces" which leads up to the Curia in Rome of his world-wide brotherhood, he recalled a saying of the Indians in their far-away Andean land. They had said to him as he bade farewell, "The poor people love your brothers, whose brown robes remind us every day of the colour of our Mother Earth, our ancestral 'Pachamama' who has always been good to us." Why should it not be possible, he wondered, for the whole Fraternity to look with new, clear eyes at the Earth and upon everything growing upon it, in order to have a fresher and clearer understanding of their mission? As this thought crossed his mind, his nostrils were greeted by the friendly and seductive scent of the plants which had been growing here peacefully since time immemorial: off-spring of the "Jasminum odoratissimum" of the Canary Islands and the hill-chains of Provence, of the "Jasminum grandiflorum" from the region of the distant Himalayas and inaccessible Kashmir, of the "Jasminum officinale" from mysterious Iran, the Bismarck

Hermann Schalück is General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor and a regular contributor to this periodical.

Archipelago and the Pacific Islands of the Sondas, of the "Jasminum nudiflorum" from the Middle Kingdom in the Far East. In the end he recognized also the unmistakable "Gelsomino della Madonna" or "philadelphus coronarius" which apparently originated in Umbria, Morocco and the Near East, but from the start did not want to be absent from the Fraternity's centre. And the Minister asked himself and others what indication the jasmine might give for the path to be followed by his Order and for its evangelizing mission. Not least, there was a mysterious statement made by the poet Gabriel Garcia Marquez which he had once heard from a young brother in Colombia which now also made him curious, "You are really grown up when you have discovered that jasmine is a flower that opens up only in the night."

2. When in those spring days there arrived in the Curia the members of a commission with the task of elaborating a new "Ratio Evangelizationis", there were represented from Occident and Orient, from the Northern and from the Southern Hemispheres, from the periphery and from the centre, as many lands, experiences, fragrances and colours as there were among the jasmine plants growing round the house outside. And the Minister opened the first session with the saying of the great Wise One of China, "If you carry in your heart a branch of blossom, very soon it will become the perch for a singing bird". The lesser brothers wherever they are, he explained, should in evangelizing by word and example make use of such fragrant words, such colourful metaphors, such new songs, that they succeed like Brother Anthony at the Chapter of Arles in making Francis himself visibly present (I Cel XVIII). He reminded them that the new evangelization presupposes a new culture of silence and of contemplation, "that we may not be found among those who possess the fine art of using many words to say nothing." He said that the scent of both the "exotic" and the "ordinary" jasmine reminds us of what Albert Einstein wrote, "The deepest and finest experience possible for a human being is that of mystery. This is the basis for all the others, including those of art and science." It also reminds us of the deep conviction of our Father and Brother Francis that we ourselves must be converted before we can preach to others. Finally, it reminds us of the maxims of innumerable mystics ancient and new, known by name or anonymous, which tell us that music and fragrance are the true distinctive signs of the new man and the new world. He reminded them that the visions of today will be the realities of tomorrow, and concluded his encouragement for a creative reflection with these words: —

"Show your love for the rain-bow and the butterfly,
the precious flower, the wild jasmine
the heavens filled with stars, and the dreams
which are not afraid of becoming realities.

Because a love which is not expressed
is like a candle not allowed to show its light,
or a melody not allowed to be sounded."

3. In those years the "Curia" on the Jasmine-Hill was making an effort to become more and more an international "fraternity." Therefore everyone thought it important to learn, besides the Latin language, also new languages like Swahili, Thai and Russian; besides Gregorian chants, also the new rhythms and melodies expressive of every culture and nation; and besides the art of using words, also the art of silence, of painting, of music and of dance, so that multiplicity may shine through our unity and unity through our multiplicity. That is why in the jasmine is esteemed by the brothers not only its common root, but also its innumerable blossoms and scents coming from a variety of climes and seasons. Moreover in the course of the years, apart from the jasmine as a symbol of friendly hospitality, they had managed to make other herbs and plants grow and flourish on what had before been a barren hill: the mulberry tree (Lk 17:6), whose top incidentally makes a perfect observation point (Lk 19:4); the evergreen myrtle, with its dark gloss and fine aroma, which in the messianic age, according to the prophet Isaiah (41:19; 55:13), will grow even in the desert and in places where before only nasty stinging nettles could flourish; the thorny but very useful furze, whose shadow is sought by men in the desert (I Kg 19:4-5) and whose roots are edible (Job 30:4); palms from every continent; cypress, oak and terebinth, thyme, hibiscus and fiery rhododendron, the almond-tree which in the spring is the first to flower and whose name in Hebrew means "watchful" (cf. Jer 1:11-12), as well as the rose and the common lily in the field (Mt 6:28); even various cacti from the deserts of Arizona and Nevada; but above all the olive-tree, sign of eschatological bliss (Hos 2:24), of happiness in sorrow, of fruitfulness in sterility, of perseverance in affliction. In the garden of "Curia" on the Gelsomino Hill there grew thus many a gnarled olive-tree as a symbol of respect (Ps 23:5), of friendship and the bond of brothers (Ps 133:2). It reminded the friars every day of their evangelical service of salvation, liberation, consolation and support for the poor.

When in this same month of May there was kept in the Curia its "maternal" feast, the Mediatrix of all Graces, the Minister Universalis was joined in a solemn celebration, in which all prayed for the maternal protection of the "rosa mystica", by many bishops from Southern Africa who had found for a few weeks humble quarters in the shade of the jasmine, because owing to great celebrations in St. Peter's there was no place for them in other Roman hostels. An archbishop from distant Lesotho later wrote about Jasmine-Hill, applying the words of Celano: "The earth resounded with mighty voices, the air was filled with rejoicings, and the ground was moistened with tears of joy. New songs were sung, and the servants of God gave expression to their joy in melody of spirit.

Sweet sounding organs were heard there and spiritual hymns were sung with well modulated voices. There a very sweet odour was breathed, and a more joyous melody that stirred the emotions resounded there. The day was bright and coloured with more splendid rays than usual. There were green olive branches and fresh branches of other trees there . . . and the blessing of peace filled the minds of those who had come there with joy . . ." (cf I Cel 126).

4. Shortly before the Feast of Saint Anthony, before the Minister finally traveled to Rio for the "Global Forum" about the protection of the environment and universal justice, he called together several brothers and sisters in order to listen to their counsel and so prepare himself better for an address he was to give in that place. They all concurred in saying that the message of Brother Francis to today's threatened world is not to be found only in books or on learned Roman parchments and decrees, but also in hearing the sighs of afflicted creation and the cry of the poor, but more particularly in the mysterious music of the universe, in the scent of bread and roses, of oleander and the common jasmine. Together they wondered what duty the Lord of History would want to lay today upon his Church and upon the Franciscan Family through the example of Saint Francis, who in his own time had healed a leper in body and soul with precious aromatic spices (Fioretti Ch. XXV). Did Francis not bring to mind the teaching method of Jesus, which consisted in allowing wheat and tares to grow together, impartially, without fuss, lovingly, benignly, and in sending his rain to fall on the righteous and the sinner alike? Was he not, as it were, a constant and friendly reminder for the brothers and sisters everywhere to acquire not only a love for computers and telecopiers but also the capacity for lending an attentive ear, for dialogue and for "correctio fraterna," and not to take pleasure so much in the sound of mighty horns, trumpets and big drums, but rather in the gentle, peace-inducing sound of harps and zithers; to admire not only the flight of the eagle, but also that of the butterfly and the gray sparrow; not to want to contemplate only exotic orchids, but also the hidden beauty of furze and common thistle? They saw more clearly than ever that what is really important in everything, and therefore also in the service of peace, is to understand and pass on "the fragrant words of our Lord" (Letter to all the Faithful, 2) and in everything to recognize and adore the Creator "for his own sake." Did Francis not give a strict command that in every vegetable garden a piece of earth should be reserved for sweet-smelling plants and flowers, so that all those who saw them should praise the Creator and be brought to "the memory of the Eternal Sweetness" (II Cel. Ch. CXXIV)? So, they thought, in Rio the Minister should say that we can heal the earth only if we first heal and purify ourselves. We should learn to acknowledge our guilt and not lose heart, knowing that the tears of pain and penitence often

water the tenderest and prettiest of flowers. Speaking as a little brother the Minister wanted to call to the mighty ones of the world, "I do not want to count as my friend anyone who needlessly tramples underfoot a single worm." He would tell his hearers everywhere about the Roman and the universal jasmine which prefers to flower by night, and as for himself, he wanted to be reminded often of a saying which he had heard from the Iroquois, "Perform your service quietly and in silence: words only rob it of all effect."

5. By way of conclusion, Brother Giles, the Vicar of the world-wide brotherhood, addressed to the Minister and all the others present the following words of exhortation:

"If I were to speak in the tongue of Curias and diplomats,
and were rich in knowledge but poor in wisdom;
if I were to prefer the logic of power to the logic of a
vulnerable blossom,
I would become but withered wood and shriveled flower.
But the fruits of the spirit are sensitivity, self-criticism,
humour, recognition of one's own limitations,
unconditional solidarity with the powerless,
but also the ability to distinguish
when a person's survival depends on a piece of bread,
and when for the poor it is rather
a rose or a gentle melody that is important."

Thereupon the Minister set out on his travels on the dewy morning of a day in spring, once more leaving behind for a time the Gelsomino Hill, but continuing to carry in his heart its unforgettable message.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit Frater Arminius Romanus, a secretis Ministri Generalis, in commemoratione Beatae Rosae a Lima, A. D. 1992.

* * *

After A Canticle

There is nothing that will be
Given me that is not already
Part of who I really am.

My life right up to this very moment,
My past that isn't passed at all but
Alive and well in a brand-new song.

Praising Him through the sun, moon
And stars, for I too am creature
Of the great string God

Francesco, yes, is brother, genial brother,
To the breezes, the winds, the air;
All weathers, whether cloudy or clear.

And don't you dare chide
Humble, nimble water, who keeps you clean.
Gently soothes the skin. She's a gem.

Or blame playful fire that will light up
The night, revealing what is hidden.
Healing your hurting eyes to see that this
Too is part of me, Mind-Reader, Ass-Brother.

IAIN DUGGAN O.F.M.

"Inflamed by the Fire of the Holy Spirit"¹

CHARLES FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

One of the truly great benefits that Vatican II brought to the Church, particularly in the west, is a much greater appreciation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the Church. Historically, the Eastern Churches have been much more aware of the role of the Spirit than we have been in the west. Thus, for many centuries the only Eucharistic Prayer used in the west, the Roman Canon, mentioned the Holy Spirit only at the end in the final doxology (and in the Preface of the Holy Spirit on the rare occasions when that was used). In the eastern liturgies great importance is attached to the oft-repeated *epiclesis* (imploping the coming of the Spirit) for they understand the Eucharist to be confectioned by the Spirit's power, while the west attributed the change of the Eucharistic species to the power of the Lord's words. When the first schema on the liturgy (written by western theologians and liturgists) was presented to the bishops at Vatican II, there was no mention of the Spirit. Eastern bishops considered this a serious defect; they found it impossible to speak of liturgy without speaking of the Spirit. Thanks to their suggestions the finally approved conciliar text, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, calls attention five times to the role of the Spirit in the Church's life of prayer. The 16 documents of Vatican II speak of the Spirit some 320 times; 85 times in *Lumen Gentium* alone. (In contrast, Vatican I mentions the Spirit 40 times). In addition to the many citations scattered throughout its documents, Vatican II devoted two lengthy paragraphs to the Holy Spirit that deserve to be reread and meditated on: *Lumen Gentium* 4 and *Ad Gentes* 4. Justifiably the claim can be made that one of the greatest

Readers will find great spiritual value in this article which gives us a profound sense of Franciscan mission. This concludes the excellent series on the "New Evangelization" which Father Charles so generously wrote for The CORD.

contributions of Vatican II was to bring to our consciousness a much greater awareness of the crucially important role of the Holy Spirit. During the months of preparation for the Council, Pope John XXIII prayed to God, and asked the whole church to pray: "Renew your wonders in this our day. Give us a new Pentecost." The evidence abounds that the council was indeed that and Pope Paul VI's insight that "we live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit" is surely on target.

The Scriptures ²

The Hebrew Scriptures are unaware of the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person. "The Spirit's distinct personhood can, and according to the New Testament should, be read into the OT, but cannot be read out of it." The spirit (ruah) of God is God's power in action. In some 100 OT texts, RUAH has "vivid and awesome associations when used of God's energy let loose." God's spirit is said to: "1) shape creation, animate animals and humankind, and direct nature and history; 2) reveal God's messages to His spokesmen; 3) teach by these revelations the way to be faithful and fruitful; 4) elicit faith, repentance, obedience, righteousness, docility, praise, and prayer; 5) equip for strong, wise and effective leadership; and 6) give skill and application for creative work. Revealing and enabling are the activities mainly stressed." One of Israel's most lovely psalms is 104, in which the psalmist pleads with God: "Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth." We often make those words our own knowing that it is precisely in the same way that God renews our church and world.

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Church by the Risen and Glorified Christ at Pentecost. The Spirit is "another (that is, a second) Paraclete, who now takes over Jesus' role as counselor, helper, strengthener, supporter, adviser, advocate, ally for the Gk. *parakletos* means all of these." In the NT the Spirit: "1) reveals Jesus' reality and the truth about him, first by reminding and further instructing the apostles, and then by enlightening others so that they receive the apostolic witness with understanding and confess the divine Lordship of Jesus, and experience His life-changing power through faith; 2) unites believers to Christ in regenerative, life-giving co-resurrection so that they become sharers in his kingdom and members (living limbs) in the body of which he is head; 3) assures believers that they are children and heirs of God; 4) mediates fellowship with the Father and the Son of a kind that is already heaven's life begun; 5) transforms believers progressively through prayer and sanctification with sin into Christ's moral and spiritual likeness; 6) gives gifts (to build up the body of Christ and proclaim the gospel); 7) prays effectively in and for believers in Christ; 8) prompts missionary action to make Christ known, and pastoral decision for consolidating Christ's church."

So crucially important is the role of the Spirit in Jesus' mind that He insists the Church is better off without His visible presence so that we may have the Holy Spirit.³ It is "the Spirit who gives life,"⁴ says Jesus, so we profess in the Creed that the Holy Spirit is indeed "the Lord and giver of life."⁵

If the Holy Spirit is active in all dimensions of the Church's life, He is especially so in the missionary work of the Church.

Tradition

Reflecting on the biblical texts, early Christian teachers, especially in the East, developed a very rich theology of the Holy Spirit. St. Irenaeus taught that the Father has two hands by which He reaches out and saves humankind: the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶ Vatican II maintained that teaching: "(The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit) are both, always and everywhere, united in carrying out the work of redemption."⁷ Of special importance is the teaching of the Greek Fathers on the power of the Spirit to transform us at a very deep level:

It can easily be shown from examples both in the Old and the New Testaments that the Spirit changes those in whom he comes to dwell; he so transforms them that they begin to live a completely new kind of life. Saul was told by the prophet Samuel: "The Spirit of the Lord will take possession of you and you shall be changed into another person." St. Paul writes: "As we behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, that glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us all into his own likeness, from one degree of glory to another." Does this not show that the Spirit changes those in whom he comes to dwell and alters the whole pattern of their lives?⁸

In this context the Greek Fathers spoke of the "deification" of human beings by the Spirit. Early Christian teachers were fond of pointing out the trinitarian nature of the Christian life: it begins with the Father who takes the initiative to save us by sending His Son, and the Son, after completing His work sends us the Spirit. In our journey to the Father we begin with the Spirit, who joins us to the Risen Lord Jesus, who leads us to His Father. The Spirit is the bond of love between Father and Son, a love so perfect that it is another Person equal to them. In the Decree on Ecumenism (n.2), Vatican II taught that the unity of the Church has "its supreme model and principle in the unity of one God in a Trinity of Persons: Father and Son in the Holy Spirit." Some bishops objected to the phrase "in the Holy Spirit" claiming that the principle of unity in the Trinity is the divine

nature and not one of the Persons. The commission decided to maintain the phrase pointing out that according to many Church Fathers the Spirit is called "the bond of love between Father and Son." Following St. Robert Bellarmine, recent theology had seen the unity of the Church expressed in three factors: professing the same faith, receiving the same sacraments, and living under the governance of the same pastors. Following St. Cyprian, Vatican II sees the unity of the Church coming fundamentally from the church's participation in the unity of the Trinity: the Church is "the people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

In the Liturgy we often pray to the Father through Christ "in the unity of the Holy Spirit." Just as in the Trinity the Spirit is the principle of unity, in the Church the Spirit's role is the same: He joins the members of the body with its head, the glorified and risen Lord. Thus in his "Proof of the Apostolic Preaching," St. Irenaeus writes:

For those who are bearers of the Spirit of God are led to the Word, that is to the Son; but the Son takes them and presents them to the Father. So without the Spirit there is no seeing the Word of God, and without the Son there is no approaching the Father, for the Son is knowledge of the Father, and knowledge of the Son is through the Holy Spirit.

The Example of St. Francis

If anything at all is clear in the life of St. Francis it is that he was, in a spectacular way, led by the Spirit, and with utmost fidelity followed the Spirit's lead. How else would one explain his life of so much creativity and spontaneity? Of such deep and continual conversion, of such total self-giving, of such radical gospel living? If Francis was such an "alive" person, and if even today his words and example are found by so many to be life-giving, it is because he was so receptive and open to the "Spirit who gives life."

The words "Holy Spirit" occur 38 times in St. Francis' writings, almost always in a Trinitarian context. The word "Paraclete" occurs 7 times. Francis loved to pray the *Gloria Patri* and encouraged his followers to do the same. He sent a letter to the friars in France⁹ so that "having seen these letters they might rejoice and speak the praises of the Triune God saying: 'Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit.'"

St. Francis is so convinced of the absolutely indispensable role of the Holy Spirit, that his followers must want "**above everything else** to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy manner of working,"¹⁰ and St. Clare gives the same advice to his Sisters in her Rule. St. Francis consistently sees the Spirit's presence as a very **dynamic** presence — thus, "his holy manner of working," an expression

which occurs four times in his writings. According to the Rule, only those were to be received into the brotherhood who came "by divine inspiration" (that is, "led by the Spirit"), a requirement that St. Clare repeats in her Rule also. According to the First Admonition, it is the Spirit who enables us to believe in the Eucharist, and "it is the Spirit of the Lord, Who lives in His faithful, Who receives the most holy Body and Blood of the Lord." Thus for St. Francis the Spirit is very close to us: He "lives in (the Lord's) faithful." Perhaps he was thinking of Jesus' promise to send the Spirit who "will be with you and within you." In the Pauline teaching we are the living temples of the Spirit who lives in us, a text to which Francis explicitly refers in RNB 12:6. Similarly, a life of deep prayer and worship is of the very essence of Francis' way of life, yet "we do not know how to pray as we ought."¹¹ Prayer is above all the Spirit's gift to us: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit," another Pauline text to which Francis refers in the eighth Admonition.

Precisely because Francis is so convinced of the importance of sincere worship of God that he so frequently reminds us of the need to worship the Father "in Spirit and in truth, for it is just such worshippers that the Father seeks." For Francis this means worshipping God with a "clean heart and a pure mind."¹² Only when we worship God "in the Spirit" do we worship God "in truth." This too is gift, for such worship is far beyond our weak human powers.

To describe his concept of radical gospel living, Francis never uses the customary term of "imitating Christ." He prefers to speak of **following** Christ. He speaks specifically of following: the Lord's precepts, His poverty, His will, His humility, His teaching, His life. Francis especially likes the phrase "following the Lord's footprints," an expression which denotes very close personal relationship and intimate discipleship. Francis pictures us as following right behind Christ, walking in His very footsteps. (Perhaps that is why he prefers "following" to "imitating." we might imitate someone from a distance, but we cannot follow someone's very footprints from a distance). Francis knows that this kind of radical discipleship is possible only when we have been "inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and INFLAMED BY THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," and prays for those gifts in the prayer found in his **Letter to the Entire Order**.

Of crucial importance in Franciscan life is the process of continual conversion. This too is gift. Francis speaks of men and women who "produce worthy fruits of penance and persevere in doing them." He calls them "blessed" precisely because "the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them, and He will make His home and dwelling among them."¹³ "Everything the Holy Spirit touches He changes and consecrates," said early Christians, explaining how bread and wine

become the body and blood of Christ. In a similar way, the Spirit changes and consecrates us, and is thus the principal agent of our conversion. The radical demands of the gospel become doable only when one has been transformed by radical grace. As Vatican II said: "The Holy Spirit moves the heart and converts it to God."¹⁴ Conversion is closely connected with the grace of reconciliation, and like early Christian teachers, Francis too understands that it is the Spirit who reconciles, that is joins us to the Risen Lord. Meditating on the words of Jesus in Mt 12:50, Francis writes: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit."¹⁵ The bond of love between husband and wife is a human, visible expression of a much greater bond: that between "the faithful soul joined to our Lord Jesus Christ." That sublime bonding is the work of the Spirit.

Two Options: Life According to the Spirit or According to the Flesh

Another Pauline concept (found especially in Romans and Galatians) that Francis uses often is the tension between spirit and flesh. Sins of the flesh are not exclusively or even principally sins against the sixth and ninth commandments of the decalogue. In chapter 5 of Galatians, for example, the sins of the flesh, in addition to impurity, are idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like." The vast majority of these vices directly offend love; they are all expressions of a self-centered life. In marked contrast to these are the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness and chastity." These are expressions of a God-centered life. For Francis, it is by submitting the flesh "to the obedience of the Spirit" that the works of the flesh are put to death in us;¹⁶ so that by the Spirit we might put off the old person and put on the new.

That this was of great importance to Francis can be seen in chapter V of the RNB where he describes how the friars are to act with regard to ministers and other friars who are "living according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit."¹⁷ While Francis gave no importance to the distinctions among people often made in the world of his time (e.g. "learned or unlearned, rich or poor, noble or serf, cleric or lay") he does attach great importance to other differences between: those who live in penance and those who do not; those who live *sine proprio* (without anything of their own) and those who appropriate something; those who walk according to the Spirit and those who walk according to the flesh. These are all synonyms for the basic distinction between those sincerely committed to living the gospel, and those not so committed.

True Franciscans: "Led Only by the Spirit"

St. Francis knew well that the way of life he had received from the Lord and

passed on to his companion became doable only when people were changed at a very deep level and empowered by God to live this life. Francis knew that people cannot purify and change their own hearts, nor can they empower themselves to live the gospel, becoming in Christ a "new creation." All this is gift, freely given and freely received. People may refuse the gift, but no one can "deserve" it or obtain it by one's own mighty efforts. "The Lord God created us and redeemed us, and will save us by His mercy alone," writes Francis in the RegNB. Similarly, in his **Letter To The Whole Order**, Francis prays: "by your grace alone may we make our way to you, Most High." Francis learned this from his own experience. He knows he did not and could not convert himself; rather, "the Lord gave me (the grace) to begin to do penance," he insists in his Testament.

The early Franciscan brotherhood grew very rapidly: from 12 in the year 1209 to some 5,000 about ten years later. Perhaps not all those who came did so "by divine inspiration" (that is, "led by the Spirit") as Francis wanted, and one can sense Francis' keen disappointment with perhaps many of his followers in his **Letter to the Entire Order**. Nonetheless, in that time of discouragement, when Francis withdrew for a period from the friars, he continued to trust that his family would always be gifted with true and faithful followers, the "blessed ones of God." Who would these be? People who were "led by the action of the Holy Spirit alone."¹⁸ In a word, those are the people that Francis longed to see join his family: those "who walked according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh." Perhaps it was also at a time of discouragement, when some of the Ministers were setting a direction quite different from that intended by Francis, that he consoled himself with the conviction that the true Minister General of his brotherhood was the Holy Spirit. So convinced was he of this that he wanted to have this insight inserted in the Rule, but was unable to do so because the Rule had already received papal approval.¹⁹ Since the Rule was approved on 29 November and Francis died less than three years later, he arrived at this conviction towards the end of his life.

The Holy Spirit and Mission

If the Holy Spirit is active in all dimensions of the Church's life, He is especially so in the missionary work of the Church. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Pope Paul VI reminded us that it was no accident that the great work of evangelization began on Pentecost, and added: "Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit." Jesus began His own ministry when he returned to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit," and His first sermon begins with the ringing words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me."²⁰ In His last recorded words in the Gospel of Luke, the risen Lord says to his apostles: "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon

you: but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." In the beginning of Acts Jesus continues this discourse, identifying both the promised gift of the Father and the source of the power He spoke of. The promised gift: "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The source of the only power Jesus wanted His disciples to have: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." The apostles do not empower themselves to evangelize; it is only on receiving the Spirit that they are able to bear witness to the crucified and risen Lord "in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth." The Holy Spirit is the first witness to the Risen Christ: "When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will bear witness to me." Only then, when the disciples have received the witness of the Spirit in their hearts are they also empowered to become witnesses: "You too are my witnesses."²¹

This theme is developed throughout Acts on almost every page. The growth of the Church and the stupendous success of the early community's missionary efforts are constantly attributed to the Holy Spirit. The starting point is of course Pentecost. Lavished with the gift of the Spirit the apostles preach the message "as the Spirit gave them power to proclaim it."²² When the crowds are astonished that the apostles' words about "the marvelous works of God" are understood by all nationalities of the diaspora present (the reversal of Babel), Peter explains that "what they see and hear is the promise of the Holy Spirit." Whereas Babel represents misunderstanding and division among people, the Spirit brings about understanding and harmony. Where did the Spirit come from? Peter explains: the risen Lord was gifted with the Spirit when he returned in glory to His Father. This is Jesus' consecration as eternal High Priest for all humanity. The risen Lord did not keep that gift only for Himself but "exalted at God's right hand he first received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, then poured this Spirit out on us."²³ Gifted with the Spirit, the apostles are characterized by courage and eloquence far beyond what they were capable of before the Pentecost event and "filled with the Holy Spirit," the Jerusalem community is empowered to speak the word of God "boldly." Today the Spirit invites us to become His coworkers by promoting unity and harmony and when we are filled with the Spirit we too are empowered to proclaim "the marvelous works of God," each in his own language.

Of special interest in considering the Spirit's role in the mission of the church is the constant teaching of Acts that it was the Holy Spirit who led the apostolic church to embrace the whole world. It is the Spirit who leads the apostles to understand the universality of their mission — a difficult concept for them to grasp as shown repeatedly in Acts. Peter explained that Pentecost was the fulfillment of what God had promised through the prophet Joel: "I will pour out a portion of my spirit on all mankind," and Peter receives Cornelius into the

community when he perceives that the Spirit was poured out "even" on this gentile and his family.

More than any other apostle it is Paul who will bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. His calling is attributed directly to the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit said: 'Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me, to do the work to which I called them.'"²⁴

The Spirit however is sovereignly free and "blows where He wills." The Spirit is not restricted to working within the confines of the church, but is also active in other religions and in the world. Thus, in his address to the Cardinals and the Roman Curia on 22 Dec. 1986, Pope John Paul II justified his invitation to representatives of nonchristian religions (as well as representatives from other Christian churches) to the Day of Prayer For Peace in Assisi, by referring to his "conviction that every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart."

The Spirit Active in the World

Wherever people strive to build up a social order that is more just and loving, the Spirit is surely at work even though often it has not been the church that began or encouraged these initiatives. At times the institutional church has even opposed them. In his keynote address given a few years ago at the "Future of the American Church Conference," Dr. Anthony Padovano pointed out, for example, that our American Catholic bishops unanimously opposed the introduction of child labor laws and the women's suffrage movement when these issues were first raised. Similarly, during the shameful decades of slavery in this country not a single Catholic bishop spoke out against it; the abolitionist movement, begun largely by Puritans, Quakers and secular humanists was often seen as another example of "Protestant fanaticism." Archbishop Hughes of New York wrote President Lincoln to say that Catholics would turn away "in disgust" if Lincoln were to free the slaves, and Pope Pius IX stated candidly that all his sympathies were with the slave-holding Confederacy. Yet surely all recognize today the working of the Spirit in all the above movements that brought about a more just society. The Spirit is sovereignly free indeed.

The Spirit in St. Francis' View of Mission

The Anonymous of Perugia (n.40) informs us that after a general chapter Francis gave all the friars, cleric or lay, permission to preach, provided that the friar had "the Spirit of God and the ability to speak." Preaching for Francis required more than theological knowledge and training in public speaking. The very first requirement is that the preacher "have the Spirit of God." Just as the apostles did not empower themselves to preach, but undertook their ministry

only as the Spirit empowered them to do so, so too all Christian preachers can perform their ministry only in the measure the Spirit gives them this grace.

Similarly, regarding those who want to go among "the Saracens and other nonbelievers" Francis makes one requirement: only those are to be sent who "led by divine inspiration" ask for this. Again, the initiative to go on mission comes not from us but from the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Yves Congar O.P. wrote a masterful three volume work entitled "I Believe in the Holy Spirit." I conclude this essay with his reflection²⁵ on the meaning of the words "in the unity of the Holy Spirit," found in the Eucharistic doxology:

The Holy Spirit, who fills the universe and holds all things in unity, knows everything that is said and gathers together everything that, in this world, is for God and tends towards God. He ties the shief together in a hymn of cosmic praise through, with, and in Christ, in whom everything is firmly established (Col 1:15-20).

Or, as St. Athanasius said: Through his incarnation the Son "ennobles the whole creation in the Spirit by making it divine, by making it son, and he takes it to the Father."²⁶

Endnotes

¹ Prayer of St. Francis in his Letter to the Whole Order.

² All quotes in the following two paragraphs are taken from "New Dictionary of Theology" by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pp. 316f. The biblical citations in both Old and New Testaments for the roles attributed to the Holy Spirit, omitted in this essay, are cited in the Dictionary.

³ Cf. Jn 16:7 ⁴ Jn 6:63

⁵ This is also the title of Pope John Paul II's fifth encyclical, devoted entirely to the Holy Spirit.

⁶ Cf. for example Adv. Haer. V. For a study on this cf. J. Mambrino's "Les deux mains du Pere dans l'oeuvre de S. Irenée" in NRT, 79, 355-370.

⁷ Ad Gentes, 4

⁸ Commentary on the gospel of John by St. Cyril of Alexandria, found in Office of Readings, Thursday, 7th Wk. of Easter. In his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Pope John Paul II has many citations from the Patristic era, especially in notes 96 and 254. In no. 42 he cites St. Bonaventure's "De Septem donis Spiritus Sancti." So convinced was Bonaventure of the importance of the Spirit's role that he held that the work of the Father and Son would remain ineffective without the Spirit. For the most complete treatment of the Tradition, cf. Yves Congar's "I Believe in the Holy Spirit" (3 volumes).

⁹ Cf. Esser "Opuscula" p. 323

¹⁰ Rule X,8

¹¹ Rom 8:26

¹² Cf. EpFid II, 20; Fragm 1:18 and RegNB 22:26, 29-31

¹³ EpFid I, 1, 6

¹⁴ Dei Verbum, 5

¹⁵ EpFid I, 1, 8. The same thought is repeated in EpFid II, 45-47.

¹⁶ Cf. SalVirt 14.

¹⁷ Other writings of Francis in which he cites opposition between spirit and flesh: Adm 4, 10, 12, 14; EpFid I, 1, 2, II, 1-12; EpFid II 37, 45, 63-69; SalVirt 10:14-15; RegNB 17:11-17; 10:7.

¹⁸ 2 Cel 157

¹⁹ 2 Cel 193

²⁰ Lk 4:14, 18

²¹ Jn 15:26f

²² Acts 2:4

²³ Acts 2:33

²⁴ Acts 13:2

²⁵ Cf. vol. II, p. 224

²⁶ Cited by Congar, *op. cit.* p. 225.

* * *

TO YEATS

I, too, climb a winding stair
Committed to mortality
Assenting to time and place,
One's temporal history.

Ready, like Francis, in extremity
To go on without them all.

But meantime, while mounting
Counting the dark abyss below,
Aspiring, ascending, transcending-never
Yet loving ever
Irrefutable Unity, ineffable Beauty.

Sr. Clare McDonnell O.S.F.

Being Grateful, Being Franciscan

JOSEPH DOINO, O.F.M.

PART ONE: St. Francis and Gratitude

1. The Experience of Gratitude.

The experience of gratitude possesses its own unique power and beauty. Should someone in a private moment of encounter express thanks and appreciation to us in some genuine word or gesture, there occurs an inner experience of a profound nature. We all know how we can be easily hurt if we feel that we have been deliberately slighted or taken for granted. Conversely, should someone with whom we live unexpectedly and with great sincerity reveal to us that he or she values our life together, in such moments life can really open up to a new dimension. If we are receptive and unafraid to express our real feelings of appreciation, such encounters can lead to a marvelous transformation of our lives together. In reality, such an expression of gratitude is a profound moment of grace that has the power to reveal an untouched dimension of our lives. In a sense, it can lead us to an experience of the freedom for which Christ has set us free (Gal. 5, 1).

But what happens if I am the thanksgiver? What if in some graced moment I myself break through and move beyond the everyday ritualistic "thank yous," when I am able to gather up repressed fragments of words and thoughts and utter sincere words of appreciation to someone for being who they are. If I let the thanks I truly feel within break out into the clearing, what happens then? Doesn't this letting go of the self possess its own far-reaching power for recreating life anew, not only with this particular person but with all? In such instances a creative surge is released; something happens to our entire experience of time, especially with this person. Our memory of one another sweeping over past, present and future becomes reconstructed. In this breakthrough to authenticity

The author is Editor of The CORD and professor at the Franciscan Institute.

there is a sense of the Transcendent. All of it is, to apply a favorite phrase of St. Bonaventure, "a most secret action, which no one knows unless he experiences it."¹

Whether we are the receiver or the actor, therefore, such unusual moments of gratitude insert themselves into our memory in a lasting way. Because they are so precious they have the power to dwell within us and provide a constant source of hope and love. Such moments of rich human exchange are necessarily restricted; we cannot expect them to occur often. Of their nature, however, they do reveal to some degree the beauty and the power and the place of thanksgiving in human experience.

2. Francis and Gratitude

Francis almost shocks us with how thanksgiving pervades his everyday consciousness. Gratitude is not a virtue he cultivates alongside others; it is more like a climate which enfolds and penetrates all of his waking moments. It is really impossible to understand or to genuinely enter into the radically Christian experience of Francis or of Clare except that our daily conscious hours be rooted in gratitude.

Gratitude is at the very heart of the Franciscan charism. One does not really know Francis without participating in the remarkable canticle of thanksgiving that possessed his inner heart and desire. In the very unusual twenty-third chapter of the Rule of 1221 Francis with unbridled enthusiasm reveals before the Church and the world the profound gratitude which rooted him and his brothers in their Gospel commitment.² Francis, together with the brothers, issues a burning invitation to all to join them in a life wherein thanksgiving and praise prevail. "We thank you" is a recurring phrase in the first part of the chapter; it sweeps across creation, redemption, final judgment.

The opening words should not be overlooked: "We thank you for yourself." These words immediately reveal to us the richly personal nature of the lived relationship of faith to which Francis had led the brothers. For them God is inconceivable except one's faith be set afire with the recognition of His immeasurable and totally undeserved generosity. "He has given and gives to each one of us (our) whole body, (our) whole life. . . . He did and does every good thing for us. . . ." Gratitude, is not only for the past; it springs from a consciousness of God's activity in the entirety of every person's history. Francis is passionately ablaze with thanksgiving to the God who has revealed His nature in the cruciform love of His Son.

Saint Bonaventure in a poignant scene shows how remarkably thanksgiving pervaded the consciousness of Francis (LM XIV, 2). Rather than give in to the suggestion of a brother that he pray for relief during intense suffering which the

brother thought God had unduly laid upon him, Francis gently yet passionately chided the brother, kissed the ground, and thanked God for even his sufferings. Gratitude to God would never cease to burn in Francis' heart, either in suffering or in death.

The freedom that Francis experienced was a contagious flame that was fired by a gratitude that knew no limits. He was grateful for lepers, for his brothers, for creation, for his charism, for sickness, for his brother and Lord, for knowing the God that he knew and loved. This was his basic stance toward all of reality and experience. He lived it, he preached it, he demanded it of his followers. He even insisted that those in positions of authority in the brotherhood should be able to discover reasons for being grateful in the pain and suffering brought to them by a sinning brother (EpMin).

Chapter XXIII of the *Regula non Bullata* indicates so strongly that gratitude was to be the stance of all the brothers toward reality and experience. In his interpretation of this Rule of 1221, David Flood characterizes the chapter thusly:

The literary genre of this prayer is that of a *laude*, a style of preaching widespread in the religious movements of the age. A *laude* gives the brothers' message a rhythm which turns doctrine into chant. Thus, they sing rather than argue. Less intent on convincing than in gathering men into their movement, they display a religious enthusiasm which makes listeners either dance or flee. . . . The brothers were singing; they had wonders to sing about; and they sang a song that was catching. . .³

Francis and the brothers dramatically reveal to us the liberating power of gratitude. How he must have looked back to his early years when he took so much for granted! How enslaved he had been to satisfying his ego with unrealistic dreams of glory!

He could truly speak of a flight from the song of gratitude. We ourselves know it from our own experience and at times we cannot help but feel the self-betrayal involved in repressing sincere thanks or expressing ourselves in a few ritualistic words when so much more is burning within. Sometimes the flight from gratitude resolves itself into a terrible everyday 'taking for granted' that sadly has reduced life to satisfaction without appreciation. Failure to give thanks when it develops into a life-stance can enslave one to self in a crippling way. Francis knew this so well, and the appeal to all people in Chapter XXIII is truly an invitation to enter the dance of freedom which gratitude offers so uniquely.

The Christian consciousness of Francis and the brothers expands our own as we move with them in gratitude from the heights to the depths, from the length to the breadth, from the present to the future of God's unspeakable goodness. They are grateful for the mystery of God himself; the gifts of creation,

incarnation, redemption and the rewards of the Son when he "will come again in the glory of His majesty. . ." The generosity of God itself spans past, present and future: "He has given and gives to each one of us. . . will save us. He did and does every good thing for us. . ." Because of this immeasurable goodness of God, to be ungrateful is to be "miserable and wretched, rotten and foul-smelling. . . and evil." Neither time, nor place, nor circumstance, nor any created reality is to divert the rich energies of our hearts from that Franciscan gratitude that is so preoccupied with the "Fullness of Good, all good, every good, the true and supreme good." Franciscan sensitivity to the unconditional and always active goodness of God evokes an uninterrupted desire "to love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and exalt, magnify and give thanks. . ." to this unspeakable mystery of Love.

Francis is a remarkable realist because he is so grateful.

3. Franciscan Gratitude and Reality

Thomas of Celano in his First Life of Francis (37) writes that the effect of Francis on his age was that "thanksgiving and voice of praise resounded everywhere so that many put aside worldly cares and gained knowledge of themselves from the life and teaching of the most blessed Father." The thanksgiving that Francis and the brothers put at the center of their gospel lives has an unusual power: it leads to profound discovery of ourselves, of the world about us, of God; we are led to eradicate from our hearts and minds all that obstructs a Christian appreciation of reality. Their sung message raises penetrating questions regarding our penchant for self-satisfaction and taking for granted; it holds out a promise for a new kind of freedom; it demands an honest look at our relationship with God, with creation and with others. It questions our perceptions of reality.

The more we read and read of Francis the more we recognize the power of his intuitions. Isn't it so that one does not really recognize reality as it is unless one lives in gratitude? If, for example, we do not appreciate those with whom we live, or the people in our lives, or the life we are given, or the people with whom we work, or the incredible gifts of our Christian and Franciscan lives — if we are not living our lives out of a conscious awareness of these and so many more gifts, we are not really in touch with reality. Most of our difficulties and struggles

begin when we fail to be grateful, when we take for granted, when we see people and reality primarily in terms of meeting or not meeting our self-centered expectations. To live in this way is to live with a partial view of reality, if not with illusion.

Francis is a remarkable realist because he is so grateful. Gratitude enables him to look upon and experience all reality as proceeding from the absolute reality of God's loving generosity. Only when one enters this vision is one truly in touch with the real. Not to see the world, self, others and God himself in this light is not to see or walk in the truth. It can and does lead to a life of disappointment and illusion, if not complete breakdown.

4. Gratitude and Human Healing.

One Tuesday morning in the summer of 1986 a headline in the special science section of the New York Times caught my attention: "In Japan, Gratitude to Others is stressed in Psychotherapy."⁴ Written by Daniel Goleman, the article spoke of a new therapy sweeping over Japan. It is called Naikan which means "inner observation," "looking within," and basically it provides the patient with an intensive experience of gratitude and appreciation as an effective way of healing "the psychic wounds of modern life." Naikan is a form of self reflection or meditation that emphasizes the goodness of others towards us. Together with this recognition we acknowledge how little we have returned to them. Our memory is made to recall as far back as possible how much our loved ones have given us. Its basic tenet is that "we take without thought, without gratitude, and we offer little of ourselves to our world."

Naikan is rich in imagery, symbols and history. But it is not a "negative, guilt producing, self-punishing oriental moralism, a sort of mental flagellation." No, it is built from a healthy, realistic, penetrating guilt which leads to a desire toward self-sacrifice. There also comes the soothing awareness that despite one's own limitation, others have continued to provide love and support. There is a kind of demolishing of the ego, and a recollection of how little of what we were or are deserves to be called a "self in the first place." Typically, a Naikan patient is made to empty a drawer of its contents and "thank each object in it for what it has done: a spoon, for example, for having ladeled out soup." Though related to Japanese culture, it has been found by Doctor David Reynolds, an American therapist, to transcend culture in many of its aspects.

I was fascinated by this therapy and also by one that is often used in tandem with it, a therapy called Morita. Where Naikan attempts to cultivate a sense of appreciation and gratitude to others, Morita's emphasis includes the "Zen focus on here and now awareness." This is designed to help people see their world

more clearly. It tries to get people to do what they need to, regardless of their feelings at the moment. A typical Morita exercise is to ask the patient to close his eyes and describe the room. In the Zen tradition of the focusing on the here and now the patient is made aware of a choice: to focus on that bleak inner dialogue of complaints, or on the richness of what is actually going on around them.

Naikan and Morita therapy enables the client the crucial lesson of how to live in reality or to live properly and gently. In both cases one comes to a deep experience of surrendering the self. Though there is occasional guidance from an experienced traveler, in both cases the patient is called upon to journey alone. When successful, the wonderful outcome is a desire to serve others.

There are ten common experiences associated with those who have undergone the Naikan therapy and they certainly bear Franciscan resonances:

1. A light is seen;
2. The client's body feels buoyant, tears pour out;
3. People and nature appear to be beautiful
4. The client becomes more levelheaded, sensible;
5. There is a feeling of joy, happiness, celebration of life;
6. The client feels more settled, develops the ability to take another's point of view;
7. There is a feeling of gratitude, closeness, and a desire to serve others;
8. The Naikanshe has a sense of being changed in a fundamental way;
9. There is an increased desire to take proper care on oneself;
10. There is a decreased anxiety and an increased sense of peacefulness.⁵

Francis, of course, did not need such therapy. Rather, religious genius that he was, he simply lived continuously out of a sense of gratitude to the "one true God, who is the Fullness of Good, all good, every good, the true and supreme who alone is Good, merciful and gentle" (RNB XXIII, 9). He likewise calls all who would follow him not merely to express gratitude when the occasion demands it; it is to consume our everyday consciousness.

His is not the God of the philosophers or of the poets, but the God revealed in the Lord Jesus, the God who is ever present with his inexhaustible and

unconditioned love, the God who now at this very moment is recognized as present, past and future Giver. "The Lord granted me. . . . The Lord Himself led me. . . . The Lord gave me. . . . The Lord gave and still gives. . . . And after the Lord gave me brothers. . . . the Most High Himself revealed to me. . . . The Lord revealed to me a greeting. . . ." (Testament).

Though Francis and the brothers were "out of their minds for God", though they were considered by many as fools, and though Francis himself insisted that he was a "new kind of fool" — none of this indicates in any way that they were out of touch with reality. They were, indeed, possessed of a sanity, a freedom, an enthusiasm which the world has always revered. Franciscan gratitude provides a basis for an incredibly balanced life.

5. New Testament Life and Gratitude.

It should not surprise us that Francis, a man one would think "had always dwelt among the Scriptures" (II Cel. 104), should accept thanksgiving as so essential to the Gospel Life. Thanksgiving is for the New Testament people the essential Christian posture before experience. This theme becomes predominant in the Epistles of Saint Paul: "Dedicate yourselves to thanksgiving" (Col. 3:16). The believer is to be "overflowing with gratitude" (Col. 2:9). Interestingly, the Greek word Paul uses for thanksgiving in these and many other passages is *eucharistia*, eucharist. This is the original meaning of a word we now fittingly apply to the Lord's Supper.

Why does thanksgiving become so important to the early Christian communities? The outpouring of the Holy Spirit has brought them to the realization that in thanksgiving we enter the "Yes" of Jesus. To be thankful is to enter into the inner dynamism of His life, which was always to give thanks. He lived out our humanity and reached into the history of every human heart to empower us to be grateful and to give praise.

How beautifully this is presented in the Matthew's Gospel (11, 25-27). Here, as the clouds of death begin to gather over Jesus, we hear him uttering the deepest prayer of His heart, and it is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving:

I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. . . .

This prayer, as Joachim Jeremias, reminds us is "the only prayer of Jesus of some length from the time before his passion" and it is a "thanksgiving in spite of failure."⁶ Jesus praises and thanks the Father for His special revelation "to the childlike."

Jeremias explains that Jesus is not merely following the Jewish practice of

the *berakah*, the spontaneous prayer of thanks by the believer for God's intervention in his or her personal history. Rather, Jesus is indicating the characteristic stance of those who believe in and live in the Kingdom: it is one of gratitude. Thanksgiving is one of the foremost characteristics of the new age: "So when Jesus gives thanks he is not just following custom." The new thanksgiving is the living response to the actuality of God. The novel element is that the "childlike" recognize the actual presence of the living God in the person of Jesus. God is no longer known indirectly in the many blessings of life; He is now known directly, in the Son. Jesus tells us that the new thanksgiving is our living response to the actuality of God.⁷ In thanksgiving we actualize the Kingdom. This enables us to recognize how remarkably a gospel person Francis was!

Where life is full of complaints and resentment, where there is a grabbing at the heart of life, we are not living in the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus came in the power of the Spirit. He catches up in his "Yes" our ingratitude, our apathy, our biases and prejudices. He consecrates life once-and-for-all: past, present and future. His gratitude is nailed with Him to the cross, eternalized in the Resurrection so that He lives forever in his grateful humanity, sealed forever in the Father's gracious acceptance.

The early Christians came to acknowledge this in a most unusual way. Early in the second century, in the 100's, they began to gather for thanksgiving, for Eucharist. *Eucharistia*, thanksgiving, becomes a uniquely Christian word: it will from now on stand for the Lord's Supper.⁸ To celebrate and reenact the sacrifice of the Lord is to enter into the dimension of Christ's thanksgiving. Now the words of the eucharistic prayer, "He gave you thanks and praise," take on a new significance. Now we understand why special words of thanks precede the solemn moment of the Holy, Holy. We are being led liturgically to the special moment of glory when the thanksgiving of the great heart of Jesus takes and transforms our unwillingness and inability to render thanks so that we may become truly eucharistic people — people of thanksgiving like Francis.

PART TWO: St. Bonaventure on Gratitude

1. The Liberality of God in Bonaventure.

Early in his theological career while lecturing on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Bonaventure manifests his sensitivity to the liberality of God.⁹ In commenting on the question regarding the application of the words *datum*, the given, and *donum*, the gift, Bonaventure remarks that as regards God both terms are applicable, but *donum* or the actual reality is preferred for two reasons.¹⁰ One is that *datum*, the given, which is either a participle or verbal noun, pertains to the realm of temporality; but the word gift prescinds from that. And because all

divine realities are beyond time, in speaking of divine realities gift itself, *donum*, is to be preferred to *datum*, that which has been given. The other reason is that the word *donum* besides the aspect of gift adds the condition or aspect of liberality, or something for which one cannot reciprocate (*irreddibilitas*). This constitutes its condition of great nobility and therefore it pertains in its greatest aspect to divine gifts. And this is the reason why the word *donum* is appropriated to gratuitous gifts, not only to the Holy Spirit himself who is the principle or source of all gratuitous gifts. "Liberality, then, inspires all His acts for which reason everything which comes from God deserves the name of gift. In this very broad sense, all the goods that man possesses, whatever they may be, are gifts of God."¹¹

It is obvious that Bonaventure cannot conceive of reality except in terms of God's unfailing prodigality. The human person especially is the object of this unceasing goodness of God. The most sublime of these gifts is supernatural grace. It is the supernatural gifts which more than any others bear witness to the liberality of God. For this reason, the appellation of gift, a title which designates the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is particularly suited to them. When scripture speaks of the gifts of God, therefore, it is primarily to grace and the virtues which flow from it that it refers. Bonaventure never wearies of quoting the Letter of St. James (I, 17): Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. In general, however, Bonaventure will broaden the word grace to extend to both the gifts of creation and recreation. His consciousness, too, is pervaded by the loving awareness of God's beneficence. His *Major Life of St. Francis* reveals his sensitivity to the place of gratitude in the every day life of Francis. Furthermore, twice in Chapter Eleven Francis refers to ingratitude as "sin" and as "vice."

2. Prayer and Gratitude

In a Sermon entitled "On the Manner of Living" Saint Bonaventure reminds his audience of Paul's exhortation to the Colossians (4,1): Persevere in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.¹² His comment on this exhortation of Paul is that "thanksgiving, the act of thanks," must claim for itself the greatest portion of prayer; and this not so much in the sense of multiplying words as in terms of love and affectivity. This affectivity both in prayer and in thanksgiving arises from the concentrated and fixed meditation of our destitution in the face of the mercies of God, both general and special, communal and particular:

For no one can seek ardently unless he believes that he has need of that which he seeks and has confidence that he will be heard. Nor can anyone devotedly return thanks to God unless he is attentive to the magnitude of the divine gift and the lack of merit on his part. . . .¹³

3. Gratitude in the Triple Way.

Bonaventure ascribes an important place to thanksgiving not only in prayer but in the entire spiritual journey of the gospel person. We see this especially in his mystical work entitled "On the Triple Way." Throughout this writing gratitude operates as a persistent theme. Bonaventure uses an unusual image to express the dynamics of gratitude; repeatedly he speaks of it as expanding the heart.¹⁴ It liberates spiritual energies that take us into a loving relationship with God.

More explicitly, Bonaventure refers to gratitude in direct relationship to the Illuminative Way which, he says, "consists in the perfect imitation of Christ." Already in Chapter I, 2 he takes his readers on a meditative journey; he desires that we turn the "ray of intelligence" to the past, the present, and the future. Very much like Francis he wishes us to give careful attention to the inexhaustible and totally unmerited goodness of God in the entirety of our human history.

Bonaventure wishes us to recall not only our forgiven sins but even "the sins we could have fallen into if the Lord had allowed it." He then applies the ray of light to the three classes of gifts bestowed on us by God which pertain to nature, grace, and "superabundant gifts of love." It is worthwhile to see how Bonaventure's own consciousness is so Franciscan in its acute appreciation of the reality of our Christian existence in all of its human richness:

Certainly God has complemented our nature.
Consider that He has given us a body —
A body with integrity of members,
Health of constitution,
And the nobility of sex.
Let us look upon the senses:
Has he not given us good eyesight?
Has He not given us keen hearing?
Has He not given us power to speak?
And with regard to the soul:
Has He not given us a clear intelligence?
Has He not given us true judgment?
Has He not given us a desire for good?¹⁵

Bonaventure moves from these gifts to those which directly relate to our lives of faith: the grace of baptism, the Sacrament of Penance, the grace of priesthood whereby we are nourished with word, forgiveness, eucharist. He tells us that God's "perfect benevolence renders us full of awe and amazement." He directs our attention to the gift of creation itself, the gift of "His only-begotten Son, . . . who is both Brother and Friend to us", the Church, the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that the Christian soul is friend, child, and spouse to God. "Can the

soul be anything but grateful to God, meditating on these gifts?" he asks.

But Bonaventure has not completed his journey of thanksgiving. He reminds us of God's promises "to those who believe in Him and love Him." God's promise includes "a place among the Saints, and the very fulfillment of every desire, in Him."

He concludes in words which we could easily imagine coming from the mouth of Francis:

For God is the source and the end,
The Alpha and the Omega,
Of every good.
God considers those who love and desire Him
For Himself alone
As worthy of His goodness,
Which is so perfect that it exceeds every petition;
Far surpasses every desire;
Exhausts every thought!
Must we not desire Him and only Him
With every affection possible?¹⁶

There is no doubt in Bonaventure's mind regarding the essential place of gratitude in our Franciscan journey. He calls us to a crucial decision in our daily lives. To walk in the truth, to awaken to the really real of ourselves, of others, of the world around us, of God himself, we must begin our day in gratitude. Too often our first moments of awakening are occupied with what we have to do rather than who we are. As noble as our ministerial tasks may be, as committed as we are to attending community prayers, they should not occupy our first conscious thoughts. Rather, it is imperative that each day's awakening be dedicated to the kind of reflection Bonaventure gives us in the *Triple Way*.

When we put our activities, our doing before our being, our ego can insert itself and rob us of the reality of our true identity before God. If my first moments of consciousness are directed toward what I have to do this day, I have overlooked the most important and most essential aspects of who I am. Over a period of time this can easily lead to a secularistic way of approaching our lives, even when they are dedicated to work for the Kingdom. My consciousness becomes filled with things I have to do and I immediately launch out into a day where I have taken so much for granted. For example, ask yourself at this moment of the day how much of Bonaventure's list you have already taken for granted. When did you last thank God for the gift of imagination, of communication, of speech, of thought, of listening, of reading, of writing, of so much more? When did you last thank God for your life, your health, your vision, for food and clothing, for shelter, for the people with whom you live and work?

When did you last thank God for the gift of faith and the other virtues, for baptism and the other sacraments, for His Word, for Church, for being able to celebrate eucharist, for life in the Blessed Trinity? When did you last thank God for being Franciscan? Isn't our identity and worth already established before we do one thing? Should we not awaken to this identity each day through a discipline of expressing gratitude before thinking of anything else?

*without an awakening exercise of giving thanks
to God we really fail in our Christian-Franciscan
lives.*

Conclusion.

There is much more that can be said both about Francis and Bonaventure as regards thanksgiving. I do hope that what I have written is sufficient for deepening in us the realization that without an awakening exercise of giving thanks to God we really fail in our Christian-Franciscan lives. We do not cease to be Christian or Franciscan, but we are not recognizably so. As a matter of fact, we could be living in illusion — illusion regarding ourselves, those about us, the world, and God Himself. Through gratitude, Francis and Bonaventure lead us into reality in the only way possible for those who wish to live creatively and enthusiastically for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

In closing, I would like to share with you some extremely pertinent remarks included in an article by Henri J.M. Nouwen which appeared in *America* magazine some time ago.¹⁷ The author wrote the article in Peru during his stay among the poor. He states that for the poor everything is the free gift of God. "This basic sense of gratitude is indeed one of the most visible characteristics of the poor I have come to know." For them, "all of life is a gift, a gift to be celebrated, a gift to be shared." They experience everything as God's gift. "Children and friends, bread and wine, music and pictures, trees and flowers, water and light, a house, a room or just a bed, all are gifts to be grateful for and to celebrate."

Nouwen calls the poor "a Eucharistic people, who know how to say thanks to God, to life, to each other." They provide a great challenge to all of us: "to live and to work out of gratitude." Francis and Bonaventure tell us exactly the same.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Collations on the Six days* trans. Jose de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild, 1970) II, 29.
- ² For an excellent analysis of the entire Chapter XXIII of the *Regula non bullata*, see "Gratias Agimus Tibi": Structure and Content of Chapter XXIII of the *Regula Non Bullata*, Leonard Lehmann, O.F.M. Cap. in *Laurentianum* V (1982) 312-375; reprinted in *Greyfriars Review* V (1991) 1-54.
- ³ David Flood O.F.M. and Thaddee Matura O.F.M. *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis* trans. Paul Schwartz O.F.M. and Paul Lachance O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975) 49-50.
- ⁴ *New York Times*, Tuesday, June 3, 1986 C1. The material in the article is based on the book *Naikan Psychotherapy: Meditation for Self-development*, David Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- ⁵ Reynolds, p. 11.
- ⁶ Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*. (Naperville, Ill.: A.R. Allison, 1967) p. 78.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ See: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* trans. and ed. Geoffrey N. Bromeley. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964-77). V. 9, 414-15.
- ⁹ See: for example, *IV Sent.* d. 33, dub. VI, t. IV, p. 764a where Bonaventure writes that "all good, whatever we possess, are the gifts of God and the favors of God."
- ¹⁰ See: *I Sent.*, d. 18, q. 3, t. I, p. 327b.
- ¹¹ Sr. Emma Therese Healy, *Saint Bonaventure's De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, A commentary with an Introduction and Translation. (Paterson, N.J.: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1940) p. 77.
- ¹² Sermo 1. "De modo vivendi." *Opera Omnia* Vol. IX, 724a.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ See: *St. Bonaventure. The Enkindling of Love also called The Triple Way*. trans. and ed. William I. Joffe (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1956) 29, 31-32.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 14
- ¹⁶ Ibid. 16
- ¹⁷ "Humility," Henri Nouwen. *America* December 11, 1982, p. 372.

* * *

Book Reviews

When Our Love is Charity, by Chiara Lubich, NY: New City Press, 1991. 150pp. \$xxx.

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M. Assistant Professor of Theology St. Bonaventure University.

When one reads certain periodicals or newspapers today, even those publications with a Catholic orientation, one can sometimes get the impression that the traditional teachings of the Church offer empty words to a tortured world. Words of popes and bishops, words of Church Fathers and Scripture, can often seem out of touch with the real needs of justice and the demands of liberation.

Faced with such emptiness one might find some encouragement in the works of Dorothy Day. With masterful skill Dorothy Day brought together the traditions of Catholicism with an active love for today's poor. She forged a union between the traditional and the contemporary, a union of word and deed.

Chiara Lubich offers a similar encouragement. Founder of the *Focolare*, a lay movement whose spirituality focuses on unity, the author draws on some of the best elements of the Catholic tradition to speak a credible word for the world today.

When Our Love Is Charity is the second volume of the author's spiritual writings. The text actually is a compilation of three independent works with the first being the book's title. The other two sections are "Jesus In Our Midst" and "When Did We See You Lord?" Each part of the text offers

a spiritual reflection on the basic theme of the gospels and the *Focolare* — love God and love neighbor.

Some people may find the message "too simple." And, the message is quite simple. It is, however, the simplicity of a Francis of Assisi or a Teresa of Calcutta in its basic message. But, one should not confuse the simplicity of the message with a lack of sophistication. The fountains from which Chiara Lubich draws her insight are plentiful and rich. From the tradition Lubich draws on John Chrysostom, Cyprian, Origen, Augustine, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, along with many others. This is complemented with a critical use of biblical texts. The author shows intelligent familiarity with the texts of Vatican II and a range of thinkers which include Lagrange and Congar.

One might expect that such a traditional focus would be too limited in its scope. The topics, however, do offer a consideration of "Christ and the Non-Christians." The overview of the Great Religions of the world is unquestionably brief, but the author identifies significant themes. More importantly, Lubich suggests an authentic respect and love for all people which arises from the lived experience of *Focolare* which informs her presentation of ideas.

When Our Love Is Charity can provide good reading for a day when one feels down about the credibility of the Catholic tradition for the world today. And, better yet, the text can offer inspiration for anyone making a sincere effort simply to love their fellow human beings and thereby love God — the goal of the *Focolare*.

Glad You Asked: Scriptural Answers For Our Times, by John H. Hampsch, C.M.F., Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. Huntington, Indiana, 1992, 155 pages.

Reviewed by Fr. Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of The St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English, and Campus Minister at the University.

At a time when Americans are looking forward to the publication of the English publication of the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, the Latin edition of which was published by the Vatican last year, one may wonder about the reason for the publication of a new book of questions and answers about the Catholic faith. **The SCRC Vision** is a monthly magazine published in Los Angeles by the Claretian Press. A column written for that publication is entitled **Glad You Asked**, by Father John H. Hampsch, C.M.F. This new book is a compilation of several of those columns.

Father Hampsch has been a Claretian priest for more than forty years. His experience as a writer and a lecturer is the background for the answers he writes to the questions he has received over the years. The author considers his method of answering questions as reason enough for the book. His method, the heuristic method, is

“an attempt to discover truth by questioning each answer to a previous question in logical... sequence” (page 7). The result of such a method is a “tight, well-structured and relatively complete body of knowledge” (page 8). Father Hampsch is a seasoned author and a priest of long experience in lecturing and writing about the Catholic faith.

The subject matter of the book is quite diverse: any question about what the Catholic Church teaches and what Catholics do in the practice of their faith. The author's approach to answering questions is to offer scriptural bases for his answers. In sixteen chapters, Father Hampsch orders his questions and answers under such important headings as: Angels, Saints, and Heaven; The Bible; Catholic Leadership and Authority; Catholic Piety and Practice; Personal Morality; Prayer; and other subjects. Written from a Catholic perspective, the book will prove interesting and informative to all readers, Catholic or not.

This reviewer recommends this little book to all readers interested in understanding the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. Scripture and Tradition are the foundation stones of Catholic teaching and Father Hampsch makes use of both in formulating his answers. A special help to the reader is an index in the back of the book.



Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular, of the Brothers and Sisters of the United States

The Franciscan Federation is offering a Summer Enrichment Experience at St. Bonaventure University from July 3-24, 1993:

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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 the 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
Form Viv: 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 commercium
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).

LM: 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).

“ON LITURGICAL LIFE”:

Introduction

This issue of *The CORD* presents and examines the pastoral letter *On Liturgical Life* issued on Holy Thursday 1992 by the Ministers General of the three branches of the First Order and the Third Order Regular. The editors wanted to make the text of the *Letter* more available to English-speaking Franciscans and to *unpack*, or at least to begin to unpack, its content and value for all Franciscans — to whom the *Letter* is addressed. Thus, we invited four Franciscans to reflect upon or to respond to the *Letter*, a member from each of the branches of the Franciscan family represented by the General Ministers who authored the *Letter*: Edward Foley, O.F.M. Cap.; Daniel P. Grigassy, O.F.M.; Peter Lyons, T.O.R.; and Brad Milunski, O.F.M. Conv.

The authors offer analysis, provide insights, raise questions, and present challenges. Their words invite readers to critical reflection: to examine the preunderstandings operative within the document, and within ourselves; to assess our liturgical theory and praxis; to rediscover the power of symbol; to consider the implications of an incarnational approach to worship; to remember the ecclesial and communal nature of liturgy; to critique our attitudes toward liturgy and the quality of our liturgical lives; to reflect upon the ways in which a liturgical spirituality feeds our ministerial spirituality; to be open to the transforming power of our liturgical symbols.

We hope that you, our readers, will find the text *On Liturgical Life* and these responses to the *Letter* to be helpful; we hope that this issue might act as a catalyst for reflection and discussion. We hope that these pages may encourage further reflections on liturgical life: implications for Franciscan pastoral ministers; challenges for Franciscan educators and formators; invitations to conversion for all Franciscans.

Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M.

LETTER OF THE MINISTERS GENERAL OF THE FRANCISCAN FAMILIES: On Liturgical Life

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

[1]* We are sending you this fraternal letter on the sacred liturgy on the day when the church commemorates that Last Supper during which the Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was to be betrayed, loving unto the very end His own who were in the world, offered God His body and His blood under the form of bread and wine. He gave them to the apostles as food and commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to perpetuate this offering in His memory.

[2] Since then, today and every day we are able to render this act of thanksgiving, the paschal supper of Jesus, through which the church continually strengthens herself and witnesses the mystery of Christ to the world in the celebration of the sacred liturgy.

[3] By happy coincidence today we also remember another grace-filled event that occurred on April 16, 1209, when Pope Innocent III approved the original Franciscan form of life, thus placing the entire Seraphic Family at the service of Christ and His Gospel of salvation.

Introduction

[4] In his Apostolic Letter *Vigésimo quintus annus*, promulgated on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the conciliar constitution (December 4, 1988), the Holy Father stated that today "the most urgent duty is the biblical and liturgical formation of the People of God, pastors and faithful alike," adding that this is a work of long duration (*opus diuturnum*) which must begin in the seminaries and houses of formation and continue for the rest of one's priestly life (no. 15).

[5] If the liturgical reform has not always been received readily, and if it has not also produced in our lifetime those results that it was legitimate to expect, this is often due to the lack of understanding of the spirit and aims of the reform. It certainly wasn't easy to enter into the new liturgical spirit willed by the council, if we recall that for a long time the liturgy was essentially considered as the "perceptible, ceremonial and decorative part of Catholic worship."¹ Pope Pius XII himself admitted this when he stated: "We note with sadness that in some areas the meaning, the cognizance and the study of the liturgy are at times scarce or almost non-existent."² This truth must be recognized by many of us, too, who received a liturgical formation that was mostly rubrical and quite divorced from the liturgical theology delineated by the Second Vatican Council.

[6] As a result, some pastors still understand the liturgy as a set of ceremonies suitable for rendering worthy tribute to God, but without any connection to the spiritual life. Pope Paul VI had already stated that "working well in the area of liturgy means not merely having only its ritual value enter into the heart of priests and faithful, but also the theological, pastoral and ascetical meaning of the liturgical reform as well."³ It's true that the swiftness of the changes that happened unexpectedly with the conciliar liturgical reform sometimes prevented an appropriate

* Editor's Note: In order to facilitate reference to this text, the editors have included a numbering of paragraphs which parallels the division into paragraphs given in the original Italian text. However, neither the Italian text [in *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* 111:2 (June-September 1992) 85-93] nor the English translation of this letter [published in *Greyfriars Review* 6/3 (1992): 267-278] include paragraph numbers.

assimilation of its spirit and provoked unjustified resistance. This is another reason for beginning or promoting effective liturgical formation that permits us "to understand more fully what we are doing when we perform the sacred rites, to live the liturgical life and to share it with the faithful entrusted to our care" (SC 18). From the point of view of this need, and docile to the example offered us by our seraphic father, who hastened to know and put into practice the liturgical directions issued by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the admonitions of Pope Honorius III in the letter *Sane cum olim*,⁴ we perceive the need to make the liturgy the indispensable source of nourishment for our life. Therefore, we want to offer for your consideration some brief reflections on the mystery of Christ, Who is made present and active in liturgical celebration (SC 7), so that it might really become not only the center of our life as Franciscans but also the source of that fraternal unity that we must achieve, of the sanctity toward which we aim, and of the Gospel and missionary commitment that characterizes us.

1. Rediscovering a Treasure

[7] In order to bring about an exemplary liturgical life in our fraternities, we must first of all examine our actual way of celebrating our mystery of worship, studying it closely in the light of the doctrinal principles and pastoral guidelines of the conciliar document and subsequent church pronouncements.

[8] We must affirm that, while it is celebrating, the community of believers is experiencing a privileged encounter with God and with Christ, Who intervenes with His presence in the power of the Holy Spirit and makes us share in the life of the Father.

[9] "It is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church.... The liturgy daily builds up those who are in the church, making of them a holy temple of the Lord, a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ. At the same time it marvelously increases their power to preach Christ" (SC 2).

[10] The liturgy is the sacrament that reveals the mystery of Christ and the church. It is the revelation and communication of what Christ is for man and what the church is called to become: "a holy temple of the Lord, a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ." The qualities attributed to the church and deduced from the New Testament genuinely pertain to worship. This confirms that the liturgy is not incidental to the nature of the church but rather represents its full and central expression. Indeed, the liturgy assumes the very same qualities of Christ and the church of which it is the manifestation and realization; it is at one and the same time human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, linked with activity and inclined toward contemplation, present in the world and yet directed to that future city toward which we are headed (SC 2; LG 8).

[11] In the celebration of worship, Christ is not alone; He joins to Himself the church, the community of believers, and prepares her to be one single being with Himself, one heart, one voice. Jesus and the church renew their marriage through worship. Thus the biblical figure of bride is fulfilled, purified and made resplendent by the Spirit of her Lord and bridegroom, in expectation of the eternal nuptials (Eph 5:26-27).

[12] "To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass... in the sacraments... in His word... [and] when the church prays and sings.... From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His body, which is the church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree" (SC 7).

[13] It follows, therefore, that a high point of our life in fraternity is the celebration of the liturgy realized as the living experience of the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the church. It's the

celebration of the liturgy that makes us grow in unity and fraternal love (*Acts* 2:42; 4:32), developing within us the desire to live for God and for our brothers and sisters. In this way the liturgy is really the source and summit of our entire life (SC 10). Celebrating in charity a fraternity will discover therein not only the center of its very life but also its ability to witness to the mystery of Christ with the gift of its life. The Second Vatican Council states this truth clearly: "However, no Christian community is built up which does not grow from and hinge on the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist. From this all education for community spirit must begin" (PO 6).

[14] These reflections, the result of a bountiful and providential journey by the church for its deeper self-awareness and understanding, would have made the spirit of Francis of Assisi jump for joy; for him the Eucharist was the mirror of his life. In fact, when he came to the end of his days on earth he looked back on his spiritual journey and reflected on his experience in Christ when he had progressively understood the presence and action of the Spirit of the Lord. He found no other way to describe it than to say simply: "I see nothing corporally of the most high Son of God in this world except His most holy Body and Blood.... And these most holy mysteries I wish to have honored above all things and to be revered and to have them reserved in precious places."³

2. An Education into the Ecclesial Meaning of the Liturgy

[15] The theological reflection of Vatican II also reminds us that the liturgical celebration "is never a private function" but that of the entire people of God, that is, the church, which is the sacrament of unity (SC 26). It's a church that is not ethereal or indeterminate, but real and made present by the sign of the liturgical assembly that is gathered here and now to celebrate the mystery of Christ in listening to His word, in the sacramental rite and in praise. But it is also an epiphany, a revelation of the one church spread throughout the world and a sign of that communion which makes of all believers one being in Christ. This idea is marvelously expressed by St. Francis in the last chapter of the *Earlier Rule*, considered by some the most inspired eucharistic anaphora in the western ecclesiastical tradition. "Perhaps no one has identified himself so deeply and simply in his prayer with the life of the entire church."⁴

[16] Education into the ecclesial meaning of liturgy involves, therefore, at least two attitudes: respect for the texts and signs that the universal church has handed down in her liturgical books, and attention to the celebrating community. Knowledge and respect for texts, which imparts to us the praying tradition of the church, will save us from that barbarous creativity that contradicts not only the norms but also the profound nature of the liturgy itself.

[17] "The one who presides is not the proprietor of the Eucharist, but its faithful servant, in communion with the entire universal church. The assembly expects that he will respect the rules of the celebration, especially the eucharistic prayers, handed over to the whole church as authentic expressions of the faith and a visible sign of its unity and universality. Bishops and priests together must raise objections against abuses wherever they are introduced."⁵

[18] It's well to remember in the area of liturgy, more than in other sectors of ecclesial life, that "the church is conscious of the fact that she is not the master and arbiter of Christ's salvific actions. On the contrary, as His bride, she must put them into effect just as the Lord desired."⁶ The liturgy is the celebration of the faith of the community. It is inadmissible that this faith be depreciated or that the community be estranged. Incorrect applications or personal whims "deface the liturgy and deprive the Christian people of the authentic riches of the liturgy of the church."⁷ This happens either when the celebration is reduced to a mere cold and ritualistic performance, or when innovations are introduced that do not issue from an experience of faith and do not represent a service to the community. "In fact, just as one shouldn't confuse real creativity with the search for innovation at all costs, neither is the literal and scrupulous observance of the norms, excluding

the possibility of making choices and adaptations provided by the norms themselves, always a sign of praiseworthy fidelity; it is, rather, the result of laziness. In the difficult balance between faithfulness to the written norm and attention to the real and historical person in our assemblies, there lies a fine boundary for legitimate and even responsible creativity."⁸

[19] For this reason we must intensify our liturgical formation. This will help us nourish the meaning of our responsibilities in this particular sector of pastoral activity and constantly to examine the art of liturgical presiding, by which the priests will help the Christian people to become a real celebrating assembly, actively participating in and conscious of the mystery that is present in the rite.

[20] In addition, a serious and complete liturgical formation will allow us to understand and interpret ecclesiastical discipline better and the related practical norms that regulate the ecclesial celebration of the mystery of Christ. It will help us build up the ecclesial community in joy and communion, and not hinder the progress of fraternal communion, which is a priority requirement of our Franciscan life. Tempted neither by archaic recollections nor flights of fancy, but rather comporting ourselves with respect, devotion and filial obedience to the church, we shall reveal the true nature of our existence - as our seraphic father teaches us - "subject and submissive to holy mother church."

3. A New Commitment to the Church's Liturgy

[21] "It seems the time has come to rediscover the great inspiration that impelled the church at the moment in which the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was prepared, discussed, voted upon, promulgated and was first put into practice."⁹

[22] At a distance of some twenty-five years, the liturgical constitution, and with it the vast movement of reform that followed in its wake and that has rightly been called "the most visible result of all the council's work,"¹⁰ cannot be underrated. It is, rather, a treasure to be safeguarded and developed.

[23] We Franciscans must rediscover the enthusiasm of the beginning of the liturgical reform and become reconverted to the liturgy itself. This means, first of all, re-examining our attitude toward the liturgy, gaining a deeper understanding of the liturgical reform and heading decisively toward a new style of celebration.

[24] Convinced that we are, above all, servants of the liturgy, we will be able through intelligent and patient catechesis to bring about a flowering of that new spiritual season that the conciliar renewal had foretold and promoted.

[25] Among our primary duties, particular care should be taken for the common celebration of the pivotal hours of the Divine Office with the people - Morning Praise and Vespers especially on Sunday and holy days, convinced that when all the People of God are gathered to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, then it is truly the entire church as a bride who speaks to Christ her bridegroom and renders to the Father the song of praise of all humanity with him.

[26] It's a demanding work to carry out. The love of the church and service to it that characterized our origins ought to inspire and sustain this contribution of ours, too.¹¹

4. Goals to be Reached

[27] In the light of what has been said above, and without pretending to deal with all the arguments that would merit our deeper reflection, we should like to propose some goals to you so that our commitment to the liturgy might prove real and effective.

The Liturgical Formation of Our Candidates

[28] For one thing, we are thinking about our dear young men in formation. In the area of liturgy, too, they must follow a more demanding course and be nourished on more solid food.¹²

Insofar as it is a moment of celebration, the liturgy, with its euchological texts and rites, its signs and symbols, must be accepted within the sphere of formation as an indispensable element for a complete Franciscan education.¹⁹

Beauty in Celebrations

[29] Our liturgies should glow for their order, their sensitivity, their depth and their beauty, full of pastoral effectiveness and able to become models for all celebrations.²⁰

So That the Voice May Blend with the Mind

[30] If you really want the liturgical experience to be a fruitful moment of communion with God, you must consider the sense of the sacred in the celebration, making the most of silence, the ability to listen, the intimate joy of contemplation and of the encounter with the Lord, and thus banishing all that distracts and that makes your attention drift to aspects that are only human and external to the liturgical celebration.²¹

[31] What St. Francis said in reference to the Liturgy of the Hours is valid for every prayer and liturgical activity: "Clerics should say the Office with devotion before God, not concentrating on the melody of the voice but on the harmony of the mind, so that the voice may blend with the mind, and the mind be in harmony with God. Let them do this in such a way that they may please God through purity of heart and not charm the ears of the people with sweetness of voice."²²

A New Way of Presiding

[32] The celebrant who presides exercises a primary and fundamental responsibility in the liturgical action, though not the only one. In a special way, in fact, he represents and reveals Jesus Christ, the head and savior of the church. He has the responsibility to provide the celebration with a dignified structure as well as an organic vitality. Therefore, the community should truly realize that it is participating in a celebration in which every element (word, attention, silence, song and gesture) has its role and is connected with all the others. The celebrations depend on the entire fraternity.

[33] In contrast with the preconciliar liturgical books, the present ones provide introductions entitled Principles and Norms. As a result, you cannot understand and respect the norms if you have not first tried to deepen your understanding of the principles, that is, the theological content of the liturgical rite. The priest has a serious responsibility to know the mystery that he is celebrating and at which he presides. As St. Paul admonishes: "He who presides should do so with diligence" (Rom 12:8).

Lectio Divina and Penance

[34] In speaking of formation in religious institutes entirely dedicated to contemplation, the document of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life cited above insists on some points that are certainly not foreign to our life of contemplation in action (LM XII 2). We call them to your attention because they are elements of our tradition.

[35] The liturgy is the privileged place for the joyful and grateful celebration of the work of salvation accomplished by Christ in the name of the church. The *lectio divina*, which is nourished on the Word of God, finds its point of departure and arrival here. Together with work, which is service to the community and "an element of solidarity with all the workers of the world," it belongs to the rich patrimony of our tradition, and helps us to make our very existence a perennial liturgy of praise.

[36] Conversion, penance and reconciliation are at the center of our life according to the Gospel.²³ In accepting the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ, we are called not only to overcome our tensions, but also to give of ourselves and to serve the brethren, assuming a precise obligation to eliminate every form of injustice or inequality that alienates man from the source of love.

[37] In the frequent and, wherever possible, community celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in opening ourselves to the work of the Spirit, we will learn to live the new life in Christ that was given in baptism and toward the fullness of which we yearn through the commitment of our religious profession.

The Eucharist as the Summit of Our Life

[38] Without being a theologian, but through his love and purity, Francis already understood that the Eucharist is the source and summit of all evangelization. In fact, he preached the life of penance enlightened by the Eucharist, because in this mystery of the Body and Blood of the Lord, "that which is in the heavens and on the earth is brought to peace and is reconciled to the all-powerful God."²⁴ For Francis the eucharistic mystery was the indispensable foundation of the life of penance and the Sacrament of Penance. He exhorted the brethren that "contrite and confessed, they should receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ with great humility and reverence."²⁵ Within it and its heartfelt celebration, the life of penance and gospel conversion finds its beginning, nourishment, continuous development and completion.

[39] We recall the profoundly ecclesial sense of the admonition regarding the single Mass in the fraternity, suggested by St. Francis.²⁶

[40] The life of an authentic Franciscan fraternity must be informed by the daily celebration of the Eucharist. It gathers us all together in the love of Christ, opens us up to the world redeemed by the paschal sacrifice of Christ and makes our entire existence a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God. There follows from this the practical need to incorporate the people of God into our celebrations, especially members of the Secular Franciscan Order and other ecclesial associations or movements, so that the unity of a community constituted by its various orders and ministries might be visibly revealed.

[41] The same Eucharistic concelebration, exercised with greater commitment despite some psychological or practical difficulties, will permit us to express clearly the mystery of the church, the sacrament of unity and source of communion with God and our brothers and sisters.

The Liturgical Year, Sunday, Franciscan Feasts

[42] We cannot forget to make reference to other fundamental aspects of the liturgical life. What we have in mind is the celebration of the mystery of Christ in time through the cycle of the liturgical year and particularly on Sunday ("The sovereign day of the resurrected Lord" but also a day of joy and fraternity strengthened in the Eucharist, the foundation of Sunday), as well as the Liturgy of the Hours, the prayer of Christ and His church on its journey toward the eternal pasch.

[43] We celebrate with special attention the Franciscan feasts and those of the Franciscan calendar, adapting them to the fraternity and their particular circumstances.

[44] United to the brothers and sisters of our families we remember especially the holy ones who have gone before us in the following of Christ according to the example of St. Francis. Every celebration is a deepening of our rich tradition and propels us toward the future to discover new outlooks and to incarnate our Franciscan life in today's world and circumstances.

[45] We celebrate the divine praises imitating the fervor of blessed Francis, who "used to say the Psalms with such attention of mind and spirit, as if he had God present."²⁷ And in the *Rule* of the Friars Minor he pointed out the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours as the first active service imposed on the fraternity by the following of Christ and the observance of the holy Gospel.²⁸ Even in his *Testament* he considered those friars who neglected this obligation as enemies of the catholicity and unity of the church,²⁹ and in his *Letter to the Entire Order* he admonished them in very strong words: "If any of the brothers do not wish to observe these things, I do not consider them to be Catholics nor my brothers, and I do not wish to see them

or speak with them until they shall have done penance."²⁶

Announcing the Word

[46] Since the conciliar reform has put a premium on the Liturgy of the Word, it would be an error not to view the homily as a valid and most suitable instrument for evangelization. "The faithful assembled as a paschal church, celebrating the feast of the Lord present in their midst, expect much from this preaching, and will greatly benefit from it provided that it is simple, clear, direct, well-adapted, profoundly dependent on Gospel teaching and faithful to the Magisterium."²⁷

[47] "Our responsibility is to preach the Gospel... and the requirements of this proclamation are the following: to believe, to pray, to celebrate. The people must be stimulated, but not discouraged by systematic doubt, nor perturbed by dangerous hypotheses in matters of doctrine and morals. The more that research becomes needed, the more indispensable should certain points of reference become."²⁸

Franciscan Devotions

[48] Finally, we would like to recall fidelity to devotions that are dear to our piety, such as the Way of the Cross and the Franciscan Crown, and the intelligent modern practice of all the liturgical customs proper to each of our families. All this, however, must be in harmony with the sacred liturgy. In fact, devotions "are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them" (SC 13).

[49] Without wishing to draw up a list of all the devotions recommended in various ways by the church, we should like to recall some of them to confirm the church's esteem and to propose them once more to the attention of all the brethren.

[50] The prayer of the Angelus, so dear to the Franciscan tradition, and, during the Easter season, the antiphon Regina Coeli ("for its biblical character..., its quasi-liturgical rhythm that sanctifies various moments throughout the day, its approach to the paschal mystery"²⁹), should be kept alive in our fraternities and spread as a devout custom among the Christian people.

[51] Among the forms of prayer to the Virgin Mary recommended by the church we recall the Litany of Loreto, or other ancient or newer forms used by local churches or religious families.

[52] Finally, let us not forget the various expressions of popular religious practices. Looked upon lovingly and purified of their excesses, as well as improved in their expressions wherever they appeared imperfect or incomplete, these popular religious practices can also become a genuine expression of worshiping God in spirit and in truth.³⁰

Conclusion

[53] We are confident that our fraternities, in celebrating divine worship with love, and guided by our Franciscan saints, will know above all how to obey what remains the fundamental and primary law for every authentic act of worship: letting oneself become molded by the realities that are being celebrated, in order to become worthy of proclaiming them to all people through a life that has been totally transformed by the mystery of Christ.

With our fraternal and joyful best wishes,

Lanfranco M. Serrini, O.F.M. Conv.
Minister General, O.F.M. Conv.

Flavio R. Carraro, O.F.M. Cap.
Minister General, O.F.M. Cap.

Hermann Schalück, O.F.M.
Minister General, O.F.M.

José Angulo Quilis, T.O.R.
Minister General, T.O.R.

End notes

¹ J. Navatel, "L'apostola liturgique et la piété personnelle," *Erudes* 137 (1913): 450.

² See *Mediator Dei*, November 20, 1947, in *AAS* 39 (1947): 524.

³ Pope Paul VI to a study conference of diocesan liturgical commissions, November 7, 1969, in *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, vol. 7 (Poliglotta Vaticana, 1969), 72.

⁴ See *Letter to the Clergy* 13: "And we know that above all else we are bound to observe all of these matters according to the precepts of the Lord and the constitutions of holy mother church."

⁵ *Test 10-11*, See also *EpCler* 3.

⁶ D. Barsotti, "Questo è il mio Testamento," in *Esercizi spirituali sul Testamento di S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Milan, 1974), 96, note.

⁷ The French Episcopal Conference, *Dix ans après Le Concile: Lettre des Evêques aux catholiques de France*, Lourdes, October 25, 1976, *Documentation Catholique* 58 (1976): 961-62.

⁸ Italian Episcopal Conference (hereafter cited as CEI), *Comunione, comunità e disciplina ecclesiale*, nos. 70-73.

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Vigésimus quintus annus*, no. 13.

¹⁰ CEI, 11, *Rinnovamento liturgico in Italia*. A pastoral note from the CEI twenty years after the conciliar constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, November 21, 1983, no. 16.

¹¹ Pope John Paul II, *Vigésimus quintus annus*, no. 23.

¹² The Final Report of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops 1985, II, B, b, 1.

¹³ See Kajetan Esser, "Sancta Mater Ecclesia Romana: La pietà ecclesiale di S. Francesco d'Assisi," in *Temî Spirituali* (Milan, 1967), 147-99; Oktavian Schmucki, "Franziskus von Assisi erfährt Kirche in seiner Bruderschaft," *Franziskanische Studien* 58 (1976): 1-26; Mariano d'Alatri, *San Francesco d'Assisi diacono nella Chiesa* (Rome, 1977).

¹⁴ See also The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* (Rome, 1979).

¹⁵ See in this regard the recent document from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* (Rome, 1990).

¹⁶ See Pope John Paul II, "To a Group of Bishops," in *AAS* (1989): 1209.

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II, "To the Roman Parish of Sts. Fabian and Venance," *OR*, January 16, 1990.

¹⁸ *EpOrd* 41-42. ¹⁹ See *Test* 1-4. ²⁰ *EpOrd* 13. ²¹ *RegNB* XX. ²² See *EpOrd* 38-42.

²³ *LM* X: 6. ²⁴ See *RegNB* III; *RegB* III. ²⁵ See *Test* 31. ²⁶ *EpOrd* 44.

²⁷ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, December 8, 1975, no. 43, in *AAS* 68 (1976): 33-34.

²⁸ *Dix ans après le Concile: Lettre des Evêques aux catholiques de France*, Lourdes: Documentation Catholique 58 (1976), 960-61.

²⁹ Pope Paul VI, *Marialis cultus*, 41: EV 5/72.

³⁰ See the Congregation for Divine Worship, *Guidelines and Proposals for the Celebration of the Marian Year*, April 3, 1987, nos. 51-72: EV 10/1084-1097.

"ON LITURGICAL LIFE":

Franciscans, Liturgy and Eucharist

EDWARD FOLEY, O.F.M. CAP.

Introduction

The Letter of the Ministers General of the Franciscan Families *On Liturgical Life* is a rich and complex document. The task given to me by the editors is to say something substantive about the *Letter* in a few pages. While daunting I do not think such is impossible, as long as the focus is appropriately narrowed, the method understandable and the goal of the analysis clear.

My focus in this article is the use of the term "liturgy" in the *Letter*. More specifically, I will examine the usage of this term in the hopes of unearthing some of the preunderstandings that shape its employment in the *Letter* through the use of a modified literary-structural analysis.

The concept of preunderstandings, preconceptions or prejudices is of considerable importance in contemporary hermeneutics. Philosophers like Martin Heidegger¹ (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer² (b. 1900), have developed this concept in response to the work of Wilhelm Dilthey³ (1833-1911) and others who contend that in the act of interpretation it is possible — and even preferable — to purge oneself of all prejudices, and to set aside one's own horizons through rigorous method. Heidegger, on the other hand, contends that that it is not only impossible to separate oneself from basic preunderstandings or prejudices, but that understanding itself is only possible within a given horizon of preunderstandings. Gadamer goes even further, and stresses the continuity between understanding and interpretation. To understand is to interpret. The challenge for an authentic interpretation or understanding is to acknowledge and test our prejudices throughout the process.

The *Letter* under consideration — like every document — is based on certain preunderstandings. These preunderstandings are useful to explore, for

Edward Foley, O.F.M. Cap., a member of St. Joseph Province, obtained his Ph.D. in Liturgy from Notre Dame University. Presently, he is Associate Professor of Liturgy and Music and the Director of the D.Min Program at The Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

they significantly influenced the writing of the *Letter* and need to play an equally important role in the assessment of the *Letter*. To the extent that one acknowledges, understands and accepts the basic preunderstandings that undergird the *Letter*, then will what follows similarly be acceptable. The converse is also true.

The method that I will employ for attempting to reveal some of the basic preunderstandings of the *Letter* is a modified literary-structural method, focused on the term "liturgy."⁴ Specifically, I will attempt to demonstrate how the *Letter* defines the term "liturgy" by noting synonyms for the term, identifying the literary context in which the term is employed, and by demonstrating variations of the term and what synonyms or literary contexts surround such usage.

Obviously the very method that I employ and the focus of that method is indicative of some of my own preunderstandings or prejudices. While space does not permit an articulation of all of these, one central preoccupation needs to be acknowledged. It stems from my reading of the official documents of the Roman Catholic Church which leads me to believe that the terms "liturgy" and "eucharist" are neither coterminous nor synonymous.⁵ Liturgy is the more generic term, and eucharist a specific type of liturgy. While eucharist is a prized and privileged liturgical expression, it does not supplant or eclipse the rest of our liturgical expressions.

Now it is to discover something of the preunderstandings of the *Letter*, particularly as revealed through the *Letter's* employment of the term "liturgy."

Occurrences and Usage of the Term "Liturgy"

My reading of the text indicates that the term "liturgy" is employed three different ways in the *Letter*: 1) as a noun, with or without adjectival modification, 2) as a noun, modified by a prepositional phrase, and 3) as an adjective, modifying a wide variety of terms.

As a Noun with or without Adjectival Modification: The term "liturgy" or "liturgies" (liturgia, liturgie) appears 23 times in the text without adjectival modification [para. 5 (2x), 6 (2x), 9 (2x), 10 [3x], 13, 16 (2x), 18 (3x), 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 35 (2x), and 48].⁶ It appears twice in titles without adjectival modifications [before para. 15 and 21]. Finally, it appears three times with the same adjectival modification, i.e. "sacred liturgy" (sacra liturgia, in para. 1, 2 and 48).

As a Noun, modified by a Prepositional Phrase: Five times during the course of the *Letter* the term "liturgy" appears modified by the prepositional phrase "of the Hours" (Liturgia delle Ore, para. 25 (2x), 31, 42, 45). Once in the

Letter the term appears modified by the prepositional phrase "of the Word" (*Liturgia della Parola*, para. 46).

As an Adjective: The adjectival form, "liturgical" (*liturgica, liturgiche, liturgici* or *liturgico*) is the most common form of the term to appear in the *Letter*. It modifies the following words:

act (*liturgico fatto*, para. 23)
actions (*azioni liturgiche*, para. 12, 31, 32)
assembly (*assemblea liturgica*, para. 15)
books (*libri liturgici*, para. 16, 33)
celebration (*celebrazione liturgica*, para. 6, 12, 13 [2x], 15, 30)
Constitution (*Costituzione liturgica*, para. 22)
customs (*Consuetudini liturgiche*, para. 48)
directions (*disposizioni liturgiche*, para. 6)
experience (*esperienza liturgica*, para. 30)
field (*campo liturgico*, para. 6, 18, 28)
formation (*formazione liturgica*, para. 4, 5, 6, 19, 20
and in the title before para. 28)
life (*vita liturgica*, para. 6, 7, 42)
presiding (*presidenza liturgica*, para. 19)
quasi liturgical rhythm (*ritmo quasi liturgico*, para. 50)
reform (*rimforma liturgica*, para. 5, 6, 6, 23 [2x])
spirit (*spirito liturgico*, para. 5)
theology (*teologia liturgica*, para. 5)
year (*Anno liturgico*, para. 42)

Definitions of Liturgy in the Letter

This inventory of the usage of the term "liturgy" enables us to begin to say something about the way the *Letter* defines the term. Specifically, we will consider 1) the range of meanings surrounding the term "liturgy" in the *Letter*, 2) contrasts in the usage of the term "liturgy" in the *Letter*, and 3) priorities in definitions of the term "liturgy."

The Range of Meanings surrounding the Term "Liturgy": The wide-ranging usage of the adjectival form "liturgical" (*liturgica, liturgiche, liturgici* or *liturgico*) in the *Letter* suggests that — at least as presented here — liturgy is understood to be dynamic insofar as it is an "act," a "celebration," and an "experience," that involves the act of "presiding," has a distinctive "spirit" and "rhythm," and can even be considered a type or way of "life." The liturgy does not, however, simply appear to be some amorphous experience because, according to the *Letter* it is recognized as a "field" with its own "theology," "books," "customs," "directions," concept of the year and "Constitution" which have recently undergone a "reform." Therefore, it appears that liturgy — as a

dynamic reality wed to visible forms and a distinctive frame of ideas — is either complex or important enough (maybe both?) that it requires and even suggests a particular kind of "formation." To repeat a previous statement, this is a rich and complex document.

Contrasts in the Usage of the Term "Liturgy": Within this wide range of usage, it is interesting that there are certain types of liturgy that often have a further modification. Most notable here are the five occurrences of the phrase "Liturgy of the Hours."⁷ While it is clear from the context of the *Letter* that the "Liturgy of the Hours" could also simply be called "liturgy,"⁸ this seldom happens.

Priorities in Definitions of the Term "Liturgy": Despite a rather wide range of meanings in the use of the term "liturgy," the *Letter* seems to give a certain priority to one definition of "liturgy," i.e. liturgy as eucharist. The unmistakable equation of liturgy and eucharist occurs in the first paragraph of the *Letter*, which places the *Letter* in the context of Holy Thursday, the commemoration of the Last Supper, and follows with the rather dubious assertion that Jesus commanded the apostles and "their successors in the priesthood" to perpetuate this offering.⁹ The second paragraph of the *Letter*, as well, focuses on "this act of thanksgiving" [Greek *eucharistia*], "the paschal supper of Jesus." It is notable that these two paragraphs contain two of the three occurrences of the phrase "the sacred liturgy" (*sacra Liturgia*) in the *Letter*. The message seems to be that "the sacred liturgy" is "the eucharist."

Another key paragraph which suggests a priority or even a narrowing of the wide ranging definition of the term "liturgy" is paragraph 13. In the previous paragraph, the *Letter* quotes the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* [para. 7], which notes that the "Sacrifice of the Mass" is one genre of the church's liturgy, but is not the only or even a complete definition of "liturgy." Paragraph 13 of the *Letter*, however, does define liturgy solely in terms of eucharist by citing the *Constitution* [para. 10] which talks about the liturgy as the source and summit of our entire life, and then cites the *Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests* [para. 6] which speaks specifically of the "Holy Eucharist" (*sacra Eucharistia*). This juxta-position of two disjunct citations from the Second Vatican Council gives the impression that the *Constitution* asserts that the eucharist is the liturgy, and that the eucharist is "the source and summit of our entire life." The *Constitution*, however, is much more nuanced than the *Letter*, and does not equate eucharist and "liturgy."¹⁰

A third way in which the *Letter* tends to define "liturgy" only in terms of eucharist is when it addresses the issue of presiding. In paragraph 16, for example, the document speaks of respect for the texts and signs of the liturgy.

In the following paragraph, the *Letter* employs a citation from a document by the French Episcopal Conference which speaks only of presiding at Eucharist. Further on in the *Letter*, in paragraph 19, liturgical presiding is again identified as something that "priests" do. Finally, in paragraphs 32 and 33, which occur under the title "A New Way of Presiding" (*Nuovo Modo di Presiedere*), the *Letter* speaks about "the priest" [and no one else] having a serious responsibility to know the mystery that "he is celebrating."¹¹ In the official documents of the Church, however, presiding is not restricted to priests, as is true of this *Letter*. The *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*, for example, notes that "In the absence of a priest or deacon, the one who presides (*is qui praeest*) is one among equals" [para. 258].

Conclusions

As noted at the outset, the goal of this brief analysis was an attempt to unearth some of the preunderstandings that lay behind this *Letter* through an examination of the use of the term "liturgy" therein. My reading of the *Letter* suggests that it contains a mixed — even conflicting — message about the nature of liturgy. On the one hand, the varying usages of the modifier "liturgical" suggest a wide range of meanings, and a richness about the nature of liturgy. On the other hand, the sometimes restricted presentation of the term liturgy, and especially the reoccurring tendency to use liturgy as a synonym for eucharist is a limiting and questionable usage of the term. As I have demonstrated, the *Letter* reduces the definition of liturgy to that of eucharist in a way that, for example, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* does not.

My final conclusion from this analysis is that one of the basic preunderstandings, preconceptions, or prejudices that undergirds at least significant parts of this *Letter* is the presumption that liturgy is not only understood as a synonym for eucharist but that, by extension, liturgy is primarily a presbyteral action. This conclusion is not only based on the *Letter*'s equation of eucharist and liturgy, but also on the tendency in the *Letter* to define presiding only in presbyteral terms, and to predicate priesthood and/or presiding as central to certain key biblical memories or dogmatic statements of the Church. As I have demonstrated, many of these are dubious assertions. Furthermore, I would suggest that a presbyteral image of liturgy is not in concert with that outlined in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which defines liturgy not in terms of priesthood but in terms of "Christ the priest and... His Body, the Church" [para. 7]. Such a presbyteral prejudice in this liturgical instruction is also questionable in a fraternity, whose founding and guiding charism was not presbyteral but much more evangelical — what this age might more appropriately characterize as baptismal. Ironically, the *Letter* only contains a single reference to baptism [para 37].

End notes

¹ Especially *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962 (1927)).

² See his *Truth and Being*, eds. Garret Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

³ See, for example, his 1883 publication *Introduction to the Human Sciences*.

⁴ This analysis is based upon the Italian text, which appears to be the original. It can be found in *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* 111:2 (June-September 1992), 85-93.

⁵ See, for example, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which, in para. 7, enumerates something of the breadth of the liturgy (i.e. eucharist, sacraments, proclamation of the word, when the Church prays and sings), or para. 10 which speaks of the "liturgy" and then specifies by noting "particularly the eucharist."

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, the paragraph indications employed throughout this article are based on the numbering given in the English translation contained in this issue of *The Cord*.

⁷ The term "Divine Office" which occurs in the English translation (para. 25) does not appear in the Italian, although the term "office" (*l'ufficio*) occurs in a quote from the writings of Francis (para 31).

⁸ See, for example, the occurrences of the term in paragraph 25, which falls under the larger heading "A New Commitment to the Church's Liturgy" (*Un Nuovo Impegno per la Liturgia della Chiesa*).

⁹ There is no evidence that "apostles" were considered "priests" or "presbyters" in the New Testament; nor is there any evidence in the New Testament that the Apostles (with the possible exception of Paul who, however, was not at the Last Supper) ever presided at eucharist; nor is there any evidence in the New Testament that anybody called a "priest" or "presbyter" ever presided at eucharist. See, for example, Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970), especially pp. 13-20 ("The Absence of Christian Priests in the NT") and pp. 40-45 ("The One who Presided at Eucharist"). For a more recent discussion, see Kenan Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of the Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), pp. 40-85 ("Ministry: 27 to 110 A.D.").

¹⁰ This is evident, for example, by the previously cited para. 7 of the *Constitution*, as well as para. 10 which speaks of "the liturgy . . . especially the eucharist!"

¹¹ In support of this statement, the *Letter* follows with a totally indefensible employment of *Romans* 12:8 which is translated "*Chi presiede, lo faccia con diligenza* (He who presides should do so with diligence)." The Greek text, however, reads "*ho proistamenos en spoude*, which does not mean "preside" but literally "taking the lead in diligence." As Bo Reike comments in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, "Here the second expression (i.e. *ho proistamenos* . . .) is plainly analogous to the other two, which both refer to works of love. The meaning, then, is somewhat as follows: "He who gives let him do so with simplicity, he who cares with zeal, he who does good with cheerfulness." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1968), 6:701. By no stretch of the imagination can the text from *Romans* be construed as even remotely liturgical in its meaning.

"ON LITURGICAL LIFE": An Incarnational Approach

PETER A. LYONS, T.O.R.

The pastoral letter *On Liturgical Life* from the four Ministers General is a helpful addition to the doctrinal and pastoral materials being offered for the general renewal of the liturgy in the church as well as its implementation within the Franciscan family.

The present response will comment on three points made by the Ministers and offer a few suggestions relative to Franciscan themes which have a bearing on liturgical practice.

In their Introduction the Ministers note that the swiftness of changes taking place after Vatican II made for inadequate assimilation not just of the external changes in the Rites but of their spirit and rationale. In retrospect it seems clear that the revision of the Rites should have been accompanied by a more intensive theological assimilation of the principles contained in *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum*, and *Gaudium et Spes*. Revised rites were appearing helter skelter in the years after the Council, with little internal cohesion and without reference to one another. Among the more glaring examples of this was the issuance of a new *Rite of Baptism* in 1969, a new *Rite of Confirmation* in 1971 and the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in 1972, where the last to be issued is really foundational for the earlier ones. Typically in the United States each new rite was accompanied by catechetical and pastoral programs for their preparation and implementation, with catechists having a virtual free hand to create a theological rationale for what we are doing and why. These theologies have not always stood the test of time.

Happily the situation shows signs of improvement as the theological and biblical reforms of Vatican II gain wider acceptance in the church and a new series of ritual revisions is being issued, rooted in both the theology of Vatican II and the experience of liturgical renewal. But the horizon is not without its clouds as reactionary voices in the church seek to induce pastors and office

Peter Lyons, T.O.R., Vice-Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province, obtained his Ph.D. in Systematics from St. Michael's in Toronto. Presently, he is Director of Formation at St. Louis Friary in Washington, D.C.

holders to reverse the process of liturgical renewal and return to pre-conciliar practice. Warnings against taking unjustified liberties with the rites is one thing; apodictic statements that the period of liturgical reform is over is quite another. The Catholic faithful are receiving confusing mixed messages from their pastors and this in turn is fueling dissension and division in the very area that should be the church's source of unity. The Ministers General are to be commended for their balanced presentation in which they warn against the twin dangers of unjustified innovations and that "literal and scrupulous observance of the norms" that results from laziness or fear.

Under Title I, "Rediscovering a Treasure," the Ministers call upon the brothers and sisters to make a critical examination of our actual liturgical practices in light of both conciliar and post-conciliar documents. While this is an excellent suggestion, its full impact may easily be lost because of its vagueness and generality. Perhaps national, regional or jurisdictional groups of Franciscans will develop an instrument for a liturgical audit by which local communities can make such a self assessment. Among the issues such an audit might address would be:

- Are the churches and chapels free of clutter, so that the primary liturgical symbols of altar and ambo, font and chair, are clearly featured?
- Are these primary symbols of noble design and execution and in harmony with one another?
- Are devotional objects placed in such a way as not to compete with the liturgical action?
- Are chairs or pews so arranged that the assembly is drawn into the celebration rather than being passive recipients of the action of another?
- Are the rites prepared each time or do the liturgical ministers merely open the ritual books and go through the motions?
- Is music used appropriately to facilitate the sung prayer of the assembly, especially for acclamations and responses?
- Do cantors, choirs and instrumentalists support the singing of the assembly or do they replace it?
- Is music selected because it harmonizes with the liturgy or for personal, devotional reasons?
- Are the continuous readings of the daily lectionary proclaimed regularly or are they often replaced by readings of the sanctoral cycle which interrupt the continuity of the Word?
- Are the Eucharistic elements consecrated at each Mass for the whole assembly or are the laity offered previously consecrated elements from the tabernacle?
- Where a number of priests concelebrate the Eucharist together, does this become a cause of unity or a sign of separation with those brothers and sisters in the assembly who are not ordained?
- Does the practice of Mass stipends have a more controlling effect on Eucharistic practice than our theological and liturgical tradition?

Surely others will come up with additional criteria, but the suggestion of the Ministers relative to liturgical self examination will have a long list of concerns to consider.

Still under Title I, the Ministers go on to explain that the liturgy reveals to the world who Jesus Christ is and what the church is called to become. This formative and evocative power of the sacramental rites is one of the more valuable elements of our tradition and one re-discovered and developed in the liturgical renewal emanating from Vatican II. It places a special responsibility upon consecrated religious to experience and to embody this power. For sacraments are no longer seen as quick and easy channels of divine grace but as powerful symbolic realities which shape and form the religious consciousness and call forth a response of faith and action. For Franciscans there may be a particular challenge here if we are accustomed to think of ourselves as already saved from the gritty realities of life or if our structures and lifestyle keep us from close contact with the reality of people's lives, because the mystery of Christ revealed in the liturgy is that of the whole Christ: male and female, black, white, brown and yellow, Catholic and Protestant, rich and poor, homosexual and heterosexual, young and old. And the church is called to become the reality which embraces all of these. If worship in friaries and convents insulates us from the reality of crying babies, restless children, militant minorities, alienated women, bored adolescents, poor people, divorced people, handicapped people, homeless people, then we neither recognize nor proclaim the total Christ or witness to his work in the world. We act counter to the dream of Francis if we insulate ourselves in monasteries cut off from the reality of people's lives. We must, in the image of G. K. Chesterton, be like little fish who swim in and out of the net which surrounds this world, able to enter genuinely into the reality of people's lives and lead them into ours. And while the primary reference here is to active communities of Franciscans, this by no means prejudices those cloistered brothers and sisters whose lives give powerful witness to Christ in the world.

Implicit in the letter of the Ministers are certain elements from our Franciscan heritage which ought to shape our attitude and practice in matters liturgical. At the heart of it, Francis' fundamental vision of reality was incarnational. Witness the Canticle of the Creatures and his deep devotion to the humanity of Jesus in the cross, the crib at Bethlehem and the Holy Eucharist. Francis' spirituality was graphic and tactile, expressive and experiential. In other words it was sacramental. For Franciscans today the same incarnational approach to worship can express itself in the following ways:

Popular preaching. Centered in the gospel call to conversion, and accompanied by deep conviction and passion, such proclamation is rooted in the Franciscan tradition and is not restricted to ordained clerics.

Integrity of presiders and liturgical ministers. A simple, unaffected style of liturgical presence is implicit in the Franciscan character. As liturgical renewal places new emphasis on symbol and ritual and not merely on effective causality, it offers new opportunities for Franciscans to make the gospel credible by the integrity and directness of their liturgical presence.

Solidarity among the brothers and sisters of St. Francis. In a church fractured along gender lines and a culture rampant with individualism, a Franciscan liturgical stance is a strongly communal and egalitarian one. It proclaims and embodies a hope-filled message that relationships of equality and respect are achievable and that confrontation and conflict are not inevitable.

We must be like little fish who swim in and out of the net which surrounds this world, able to enter genuinely into the reality of people's lives and lead them into ours.

Concern for the poor. From New Testament times the Eucharistic liturgy created no false dichotomies between the praise of God and the service of the human community. Communal needs were brought into the assembly and met from the assembly. For Franciscans this is a particularly apt part of our heritage to be reclaimed. The liturgical assembly is a place for consciousness raising and gospel conversion, not only in relation to God, but in relation to God's people, especially those who are poor and oppressed. The Eucharistic assembly has ample resources for serving the poor if the gospel mandate of service is clearly proclaimed.

Peace making. Our rites signify and effect reconciliation and unity. Too often these remain abstractions, idealized concepts that are not experienced tangibly or made available to the wider community beyond our walls. If the power of our rites were accessed anew and made visible to others it would surely go a long way toward creating avenues of bridge building among all the groups in conflict with one another in our society.

Concern for the created order. Since liturgy is symbolic and expresses the transcendent through created reality, it is also a privileged place for witnessing to the holiness of creation. For Franciscans this is second nature, and the liturgy provides an ideal forum for cultivating a respectful and conservative awareness of the material environment.

As with most of these points, they are often embodied and transmitted in non-verbal ways. Franciscan liturgical themes are expressed not so much by courses of instruction as by Franciscan persons imbued with the spirit of Jesus and the Paschal Mystery after the example and in the style of Francis of Assisi.

As a final comment upon the letter of the Ministers, I would pose a modest suggestion. The letter is addressed to "Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord" but signed only by the Ministers General of the three branches of the First Order and the Third Order Regular. Thus these pastoral directives and exhortations are addressed to the full membership of the Franciscan family but presumably the leadership of most of the family was not involved in their formulation. By most of the family I refer to the full membership of the Second Order, the numerous congregations of men and women who follow the Rule of the Third Order Regular and who find a common voice in the International Franciscan Federation and the millions of men and women in the Secular Franciscan Order. Admittedly it can become a daunting task to involve everyone in every project, and there are times when a Minister or Ministers may choose to consult only a particular group. But the renewal of Franciscan liturgical life surely touches every segment of the Order and holds out great promise for the spiritual revitalization of the entire Franciscan family. Moreover the sisters and brothers who are not ordained have a great deal to contribute to liturgical renewal since, from where they sit, they have often experienced the pain of unreformed liturgy.

Finally one can only be grateful that the Ministers have addressed this area of great hope and promise for the Order and the church. May the process continue; may we find means to do critical evaluation of our liturgical practices and to listen to the experience and the suggestions of all our brothers and sisters in St. Francis.

It is quite refreshing that our leadership has taken the responsibility of calling us to consider our attitudes toward the liturgy, the quality of our liturgical lives, and the ways in which a liturgical spirituality feeds our ministerial spirituality.

"ON LITURGICAL LIFE": Attending to Ritual Attitudes

DANIEL P. GRIGASSY, O.F.M.

It is indeed a daunting task to respond to the pastoral letter of the general ministers on liturgical life, especially since such a response was not requested. No doubt, one or the other or all of them may read our words here published and will receive them graciously as we have received theirs. Close scrutiny of our liturgical praxis remains an important concern for periodic investigation by those who follow Christ in the way of Francis. Fresh ways to approach the paschal mystery made present and active in liturgical celebration need to be recovered. The liturgy must find its way back to the center of our Franciscan lives as the source of fraternal unity for which we strive, the foundation of the holiness and justice toward which we aim, and the catalyst of evangelical and missionary commitment which remains our charism. What is the lifespan of a ministerial spirituality if it is not first grounded securely in a eucharistic spirituality to nourish and sustain it?

The tone of the generals' letter raises several questions: Why has this letter been written at this particular juncture? Is there a hidden agenda which motivates it? How are the issues addressed going to resolve themselves in actuality? Do the authors have expectations about such resolutions? Do they regard the state of liturgical life in the Order at a critical juncture or is the letter simply a pious exercise admonishing the friars to remain steadfast and faithful?

To draw this string of questions from the text of the letter may be overstating the general ministers' intentions. Whatever their responses may be, this author, nevertheless, finds it quite refreshing that our leadership has taken the responsibility of calling us to consider our attitudes toward the liturgy, the quality of our liturgical lives, and the ways in which a liturgical spirituality feeds our ministerial spirituality.¹ The invitation from the editor of *The Cord* to put ourselves in dialogue with the ministers' letter is a clever attempt to keep in play the issue of our liturgical life, if only for a time. Ideas set out here may stimulate exchange among friars who have experienced in the last two decades a malaise concerning things liturgical. Hopefully, our words will spark further discussion in rec rooms, refectories, house chapters, and perhaps on future pages of this journal.

The general ministers toss out several liturgical hot potatoes: doctrinal principles and normative pastoral guidelines; the ecclesial meaning of the liturgy; the need for liturgical catechesis; the public nature of worship; the priest as servant; the style of presiding; creativity within appropriate limits; the liturgical formation of our candidates; reexamination of attitudes toward the liturgy; the formative value of daily Eucharist; observance of the liturgical calendar

Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province, obtained his Ph.D. in Liturgy and Spirituality from The Catholic University of America. Presently, he is Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology as The Washington Theological Union, Silver Spring.

and Franciscan feasts; reclaiming popular Franciscan devotions; cultivating a liturgical piety. Juggling all these items would certainly stimulate discussion; the other respondents will probably pick up on some of them. Time and space limit this reflection to four items: (1) presiding at Eucharist; (2) liturgical abuses; (3) eucharistic concelebration; and (4) the mutual formation of liturgical attitudes among friars in initial and ongoing formation.

(1) *Presiding at Eucharist.* The general ministers refer to a letter of the French Episcopal Conference in which a useful distinction of roles is made: "The one who presides is not the proprietor of the Eucharist, but its faithful servant, in communion with the entire universal church." In other words, the Eucharist and its rites do not belong to me because I am a priest; rather, it is because I am a priest that I have been commissioned to exercise responsible stewardship over eucharistic rites and symbols such that their power is unleashed for the assembly convoked in memory of God's definitive deed for us in the death of Christ. This servant-responsibility, claim the general ministers, is "to provide the celebration with a dignified structure as well as an organic vitality." They name it "the art of liturgical presiding."

Indeed, it is an art to escort the assembly through the labyrinth of the rite with style and grace so that the same sensation of meaning and intention may nourish and sustain them as a community at worship. The art of presiding demands skills which go beyond the appropriation of technique. The art presupposes the priest's ability to inhabit the rite so that his presence invites the assembly to join Christ's prayer to the Father in the Spirit. The priest-presider is first and foremost the servant of the rite, the one who oversees the proper movement of the rite and leads the baptized as one of the baptized to the source of refreshment for further ministry and service which is the gospel commission of all the baptized.

Indeed, it is true that the ritual texts and rubrics, the symbols, gestures, and postures which the universal Church has endorsed in liturgical books provide boundaries and limits. However, these boundaries are not drawn to shackle or constrain us; they instruct us to move freely within their limits. As the general ministers warn, "barbarous creativity" which does violence to the very nature of the liturgy is to be avoided. To balance a potentially reactive interpretation of that rather humorous phrase, they refer to the Italian Episcopal Conference's pointed statement that addresses the other side of the same coin, that is, the lack of any attempt to be creative: "the literal and scrupulous observance of the norms, excluding the possibility of making choices and adaptations provided by the norms themselves [is not] always a sign of praiseworthy fidelity [but rather] the result of laziness." The responsibility remains for every friar to find that balance.

The American culture has exerted a powerful force on all that occurs in Sunday assemblies. At present there is a movement in several free churches toward "entertainment evangelism" or "performance evangelism" which sets out as its goal the close imitation of current media forms of advertizing and advancement to disarm the audience's sentiments, grip their emotions, and satisfy their immediate needs.² The Catholic spirit since Vatican II has resisted this tendency to reduce the assembly to an audience and has insisted on inviting full and active participation among all who worship. Nonetheless, the seventies birthed forth many young priests who started off as ecclesiastical Johnny Carsons and have culturally adapted to accommodate the changing demands of the nineties, yet insist on placing themselves at the center of the action rather than leading the assembly's worship. There is a significant difference between the two mindsets. Ample literature based on good theology and insightful communication theory has been generated in the last decade. It warns against the effectiveness of the former approach and calls presiders to a renewed style of presiding.³

The general ministers call all the friars to a "rediscovery" of enthusiasm which accompanies the early liturgical reform as well as to a "reconversion" to the liturgy itself. Both entail

a "reexamination" of attitudes toward the liturgy, a deeper understanding of the principles of liturgical renewal, and a "heading decisively toward a new style of celebration." This impassioned call for ongoing conversion causes one to pause. What precisely is the "new style of celebration" of which they speak? A friar who approaches the text, whether young, middle-aged or more mature, whether right or left, whether center-right or center-left, could interpret this call from whichever angle of vision he chooses to legitimate his own stance. The intended meaning of "a new style of celebration" is unclear and leaves room for multiple interpretations. Perhaps the ambiguity is purposeful in order to leave room, but does the lack of clarity here help the situation or frustrate it?

In some pockets of our country, something positive is happening in liturgical presiding these days. A renewed self-consciousness on the part of presiders is crystallizing a refreshing self-awareness of the presider not as performer before but minister to the assembly. Some question this tendency as a move to formalize the rites. As one friar recently stated: "It seems that if it is not high Episcopalian, no one is satisfied!" Other friars see the change in mood as a desire to reclaim the rites in their integrity and to reinvigorate them with "an organic vitality." However one interprets the recent turn in attitude, there is no doubt that the presider brings his personality and personal prayer style to the public act of worship. Wherever he stands on the ideological spectrum, it is important for the responsible steward of Christian symbols to be mindful that rubrics are included in liturgical books as helps in securing a recognizable standard of usage found appropriate in worshiping assemblies.⁴

Fr. Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B., has suggested that, on the one hand, to regard rubrics as more than this is unhealthy and unproductive; on the other, to regard them as less than this is an attitude fraught with risks which ought to be monitored with caution and care.⁵ He then draws parallels between rubrics and grammar, and offers an insightful principle for effective presiding: "Grammatical rules also will not produce great speech any more than liturgical rubrics alone will result in a great act of celebration, [but] neither great speech nor great liturgy can afford to ignore the rules basic to each without risking the collapse of both."⁶ Friars need to consider the wisdom in these words.

(2) *Liturgical abuses.* In the same letter of the French Episcopal Conference which the general ministers used to challenge the proprietor model of presiding in favor of the servant model, there is also a call to bishops and priests to raise objections against abuses when they arise. This notion of "abuse" needs to be broadened. The ordinary interpretation of the term triggers images of ritual renegades who throw all discretion to the wind and "do their own thing" with liturgical form and expression. Indeed, that is an abuse. Unfortunately, that extraordinary interpretation of the term all too often does not include those who still resist even the most minimal adaptation of liturgical expression and thus remain stuck in the priest-proprietor model of presiding at Eucharist which the French bishops contest.

If there are abuses (and there are), they should certainly be corrected. But why are liturgical enthusiasts who step beyond the limits of the rite consistently the ones who are reproved? For instance, a shift in language in the Eucharistic Prayer may cause a stampede from the right, whereas the good people of God may regularly tolerate the elimination of the rite of peace, the refusal of the cup to ministers and assembly, the stockpiling of hosts in tabernacles for convenience sake, or the insulting and alienating effects of proprietor-presiders who allow the people to watch him say Mass rather than inviting them to pray the Great Prayer with him, all of which are directly contested in the normative documents of the Church in this country. Such regressive abuses from the right are equally threatening to integral ritual expression as Progressive abuses from the left appear to be. Frequent abuses of authority and the failure to

minister responsibly on the part of those who have either consistently opposed or given lip service to liturgical renewal need to be named "abuses" and addressed as such.

(3) *Eucharistic concelebration.* For many American Franciscans, concelebration is a word with bells hanging on every letter. They have rung loudly and sometimes fiercely in large communities where the practice becomes especially problematic. In the midst of various opinions playing themselves out in practice, an admonition to continue concelebration now comes from the general ministers. Although their letter slips in a surprisingly brief and oblique sentence on the subject, it warrants attention here because, for many friars, cleric and lay, concelebration is not a positive ecclesial experience. Where some regard it a personal right, others consider it fragmenting the primal eucharistic symbol of unity. Priests who concelebrate are often accused of dividing the unity of the community while those who simply take communion at the conventual Mass are regarded as equally divisive and even contemptuous.

To concelebrate or not to concelebrate is a choice that confronts every friar-priest at one time or another. The dynamics in the choice also provide the arena in which current anticlericalism plays itself out even within our Order which perceives itself as a non-clerical religious institute despite other categories assigned to it from without. To engage the issue of concelebration here is not to insinuate that it is always and everywhere out of order. Indeed, there are times when it is most appropriate, for instance, when the local church gathers and the bishop presides. However, it seems that in recent years what could function as a healthy pluriformity has been muzzled into a mutual toleration of ideologies so much so that there is no fraternal exchange on the subject at all. Of course, for those who live in small parochial communities, this discussion is irrelevant, but for those who find themselves in large academic or (semi-)retirement communities, this issue colors the community's fraternal life. Larger friaries may find themselves dealing with the question of economics and its relation to concelebration. If the accruing of stipends is the singular item that drives the debate in favor of regular concelebration, such arguments misplace the theological focus by privileging economics over theology.⁷

Abundant theological literature on concelebration has been generated in the last decades, but little critical evaluation of the actual practice has been done. While much of the literature stresses the theological value of the unity of the Church as communion, it is not clearly symbolized in the current rite. In fact, the opposite is true. Many Franciscans formed after *Perfectae Caritatis* (1965) experience a fundamental uneasiness with concelebration because it takes the ministerial rite of Eucharist and transposes it to a primatial rite. More emphasis is placed on the unity of the ministerial priesthood or the equality of ministerial priests as distinguished from the laity; less is placed on the unity of the Church at worship. Such a ritual gesture reaffirms the identity of the priest rather than reaffirming the unitive role of the community. Friars need to consider these non-verbal statements seriously.

In ordinary circumstances, concelebration does not function as an effective symbol of the unity of the eucharistic assembly. What may appear to be a committee presidency creates confusion on the symbolic level with regard to leadership. If each priest insists on exercising his office in an active way, then the ritual expresses an individualistic rather than a communal attitude. Never would we imagine setting up a committee chairmanship at a convention or at a formal banquet with each member of that committee delivering a part of the presidential address or with all of them reciting it chorally.⁸

The comments set out here attempt to distill the dissonance that many friars experience in the current rite of eucharistic concelebration. Of course, it is not a black or white issue, that is, concelebration is not always appropriate nor is it always inappropriate. While regular

concelebration may run the risk of reinforcing the primatial character of a ministerial rite, regular refusal to concelebrate may create the illusion that ministerial priesthood is simply a function and nothing more. It is no longer responsible to instruct candidates for the Order, as one recently testified, that only diocesan priests concelebrate while Franciscan priests never concelebrate because the act is one of violence against the fraternity. Franciscans need to reappropriate the healthy distinction between ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the faithful as one of kind and not of degree. Some balance needs to be achieved where presbyters gathered around the bishop with the entire worshipping assembly may indeed be a vital symbol of unity and service.

(4) *Initial and ongoing liturgical formation.* In some ways the first three concerns spill over into a fourth: the reciprocal relationship of attitudes between friars in initial and ongoing formation and the mutually formative power of these attitudes. Consciously or unconsciously appropriated attitudes color the worship event and often influence both the personal and communal reception of the experience. Whether friars prepare for solemn vows, whether they look forward to silver or golden jubilees, they have absorbed dominant American values by a kind of cultural osmosis. Scientific or analytic knowledge remains the only trusted way to grasp reality; communication functions as a process of conveying information about that reality. This cultural mood induces a literalistic mindset which often hinders religious symbols from being experienced as symbols in all their richness. Thus, the symbols are reduced to mere signs. Their meanings are either captured in static statements about an ontological deity who exists in the conscious mind, or they are encapsulized in overly sentimental statements about a feathery deity who lives in a holy elsewhere.

A revitalized notion of the vital role of liturgical symbols needs to be reawakened in us. The purpose of liturgical symbols is not to convey supernatural facts but to engage us in relationships with God and with each other. All too often liturgical rituals seem to be executed to "get the job done." That attitude stymies their primary intention which is to constitute meanings and express dispositions. As friars who are busy about many things, we need to ask ourselves the hard question: are our rituals accomplishing that primary purpose?

Many among us continue to interpret the liturgy as one among several ministerial functions whose purpose is to educate the assembly and to provide an exercise in catechesis to update and inform them on issues of faith and morals. Though these concerns are important, they are not the primary goal of liturgical celebration. The real objective of the liturgy is an encounter with the mystery of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. That encounter then gives rise to thought, insight, and recommitment. Creative imaginations are presupposed. Reflective dispositions and lives of personal prayer on the part of those who participate are presupposed. An ability to engage the event of word and sacrament not only analytically but also analogically is a requisite. Willingness among the participants to bridge the gap between themselves and the celebration is presumed so that the symbols may enable them to experience reality in new and transformed ways. Ordained or lay friars who lead the faithful in worship must be willing to enter into the symbols, to lead the assembly into the symbols, and to dwell there, even if just for a time. If we inhabit the symbols with a sense of expectation that, indeed, something is going to happen, that sense of joyful expectation may be revitalized.⁹

Several provinces of the Order as well as other religious institutes are currently absorbed in the responsible task of refounding through ministries. They are about the business of recrafting religious life for a new era. However vital this task is, it may be blinding us to our own need on a regular basis to express ourselves as Church and thus constitute ourselves as the Body of Christ. Some Franciscan communities rarely if ever express themselves liturgically because everything they do is centripetal; everything has an outward thrust. This, of course, is

a prized piece in our charism. But there is a hidden demon here that, over a protracted period of time, can be corrosive. In other words, the Eucharist, seasonal communal penance services, individual penance, regular popular devotions, and other public liturgical acts can be perceived as services which we perform in order to ingratiate the people who come to our churches to pray. Thus, the friar's personal prayer runs the risk of remaining extrinsic to the act of public worship. Should we not be perceiving our liturgical ministry as public acts of prayer into which we enter with the People of God who assemble with us in the name of Christ?

Slowly and unpredictably, understanding dawns and new meanings are disclosed to those who become involved in the symbols and who linger over them imaginatively. What remains a lost piece in the liturgical puzzle of the last several decades is the development of this symbolic disposition. How has this tendency affected the liturgical behavior of friars currently in formation to solemn vows? Of course, it is always a danger to generalize when one has not been exposed to everything that lies beyond one's own limits. But indulge this author for just a moment.

Most friars with a living memory of the day prior to Vatican II have noticed that recent candidates have not been marinated in the Catholic ethos or socialized to its structures and language as in the past. At present, we are reaping the harvest of the last few decades. Of course, through no fault of their own, they have not assimilated dispositions or appropriated worlds of meaning generated by image, symbol, posture, gesture, and movement. The cultural mood has induced a literalism which is difficult to crack or stretch. Compounding this situation are friars well beyond the years of initial formation who long ago relinquished those burdens and now find themselves stuck in their most formative years of the seventies with little else than "entertainment evangelism" as their liturgical *modus operandi*. The liturgical style which accompanies this attitude has the potential to create confusion for those in initial formation. They do not know where to find a standing place: with those who desire to call them beyond informal deritualized liturgies, or with those who tend toward a neo-iconoclasm and barb at any ritualization whatsoever, such as the sign of the cross, praying the presidential prayers with arms extended, signing the gospel, genuflecting, bowing, wearing appropriate vesture, etc. The deritualization of rites brings on the malaise which our candidates often sense in acts of worship. Inconsistency in the celebration of public rites make them appear as private rites which are then often interpreted as private worship for a private church. As Franciscans, that is not what we are about. The tendency of the past decades to appropriate a minimalistic attitude toward liturgy or even total deritualization of public worship inevitably leads to privatization of rites and their ecclesial meanings.

Further compounding an already confusing situation are recent choices of design for building new worship spaces or renovating old ones. The physical context for ritual often demands the deritualization of rites. This is an unfortunate turn which determines liturgical style. The mood of the seventies created a reactive tone which influenced a move from choirstalls and bare floors to comfortable chairs and carpets. Austerity meant coldness; decor meant intimacy. Since hindsight sharpens vision, we can see that some of these choices were unfortunate. While this judgment may smack of a restorationist position for some, be assured this is not the intent. The question, nonetheless, must be raised regarding the wisdom of some hasty shifts in worship spaces which have proven to restrict the experience of worship. As Sir Winston Churchill said somewhere: "We form our buildings, then our buildings form us." Vital to the overall spiritual formation of candidates for the Order (and thus ministerial formation) is the design and furnishing of chapels in pre-novitiate, novitiate, and post-novitiate houses. Recently, a colleague claimed that, for the last decade or more, most religious in local formation houses have had the singular experience of worship within the context of "boutique liturgies."

Do we as followers of Francis perceive this concern as an issue which debilitates the spirit which he desired to secure for us? We form our worship spaces, then our worship spaces form — or deform — us.

This sort of analysis, no doubt, causes some friars to bristle. Abstracting from the space around them, they are convinced that, as Franciscans, these things do not and, indeed, should not matter. On the contrary, a corollary of the sacramental principle is that environment conditions us. The physicality of our world permits things to happen or limits things from happening.¹⁰ Therefore, a chapel with wall-to-wall carpeting and white-washed walls may please some eyes, yet the space has all the acoustical vigor of an elevator. Spoken or sung words behave in a very limited and limiting way. The texture of sound and sense are constrained to a one-dimensional surface. This judgment is not simply the whimsy of "liturgical types." Communication theorists also insist that, with no "ding" in the air and no sharpness of visual lines or focus, ritual speech, music, and movement are impaired and thus debilitate the entire ritual action.

The current tragedy is that missed opportunities abound due to physical constraints. It seems the dominant therapeutic culture of the last two decades has successfully insinuated itself into liturgical architecture and furnishings and continues to massage and soften us. Aidan Kavanagh boldly claims: "[The liturgy] needs hardness, sonority, and a certain bracing discomfort much like the Gospel itself. Liturgical ambience must challenge, for one comes to the liturgy to transact the public business of death and life rather than to be tucked in with fables and featherpuffs."¹¹ As friars, we need to consider the wisdom of these words.

Architecture either hamstring ritual postures, gestures, and movements, or it frees them. Soft ritual spaces spawn a singular style. The liturgy is thus straight-jacketed into sameness and runs the risk of becoming rote, disengaging, even alienating. Over a protracted period of time, this is usually experienced not as fostering and nourishing faith, but as weakening, numbing, or even destroying it. Liturgical spirituality, which is the condition for the possibility of ministerial spirituality (and thus a refounded Order), does not seem to hold a priority, or, more subtly, it becomes simply a concept around which one thinks, not an experience which one remembers and values. The general ministers' pastoral letter calls us back to a value.

Concluding Remarks. Given these four items which open up all sorts of Pandora's boxes, a few concluding remarks are in order. The anniversary of the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* will be celebrated on 4 December 1993. Thirty years ago, the fermentation of the early part of this century finally gained papal approbation. We all have stories to tell of the liturgical battlefields upon which we nobly fought, or of the liturgical adolescence which we endured in ourselves and in others. As the turn of millenium approaches, despite the restraint and sometimes mixed signals from those entrusted with authority, a new fermentation percolates.¹² A certain well-balanced maturity has been straining to eclipse the awkward yet stubborn liturgical adolescence which from time to time shows itself. Most Franciscans wince at the trivialization of public prayer when it is reduced to blowing liturgical bubbles or when it acquiesces to idiosyncratic spiritual therapy encounters, all in the name of the Lord. Many of us desire with Francis an observant, dignified yet simple life of common worship.

The Holy Thursday 1992 publication of the general ministers' pastoral letter affords friars the opportunity to bring to the top layer of discussion the quality of their liturgical life together as well as the quality of their liturgical ministries to the churches in which they serve. One wonders why some provinces alerted their friars to the letter's existence while others did not.¹³ Thanks to this publication which serves the English-speaking Franciscan world, it is now accessible as a catalyst for discussion to a much broader Franciscan audience. Let us begin again, for up to now we have done very little.

Endnotes

¹The general ministers tend to use "liturgy" and "Eucharist" interchangeably. The larger term, "liturgy," will be employed here to include Eucharist and all other acts of worship.

²For a fascinating diagnosis and prognosis, See Patrick R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 15-55.

³See Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer: Not For Clergy Only* (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1988) and Dennis C. Smolarski, S.J., *How Not To Say Mass: A Guidebook For All Concerned About Authentic Worship* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

⁴See Theresa F. Koernke, I.H.M., "Toward An Ethics of Liturgical Behavior," *Worship* 66 (1992): 25-38.

⁵*Elements of Rite* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1982), 3.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷John H. Huels, "Stipends in the New Code of Canon Law," in *Living Bread, Saving Cup*, R. Kevin Seasoltz, O.S.B., ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, rev. ed., 1988), 347-356; Edward J. Kilmartin, "Money and the Ministry of the Sacraments," in *The Finances of the Church*, Concilium 117, William Bassett and Peter Huizing, eds. (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 104-111; M. Francis Mannion, "Stipends and Eucharistic Praxis," in *Living Bread, Saving Cup*, 324-346.

⁸R. Kevin Seasoltz, O.S.B., *New Liturgy, New Laws* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980), 86-90. See also Patrick W. Collins, *Bodying Forth: Aesthetic Liturgy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 112-134 and Gilbert Ostieck, O.F.M., "Concelebration Revisited," in *Shaping English Liturgy*, Peter C. Finn and James M. Schellmann, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1990), 139-171.

⁹See Robert Taft, S.J., "What Does Liturgy Do? Toward a Soteriology of Liturgical Celebration: Some Theses," *Worship* 66 (1992): 194-211.

¹⁰See Patrick Collins, *Bodying Forth*, 11-36.

¹¹*Elements*, 21.

¹²See the collected papers of the December 1988 colloquium at Georgetown University marking the twenty-fifth anniversary: Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., ed., *The Awakening Church: 25 Years of Liturgical Renewal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992).

¹³The letter was first published in English in *Greyfriars Review* 6, no. 3 (1992): 267-278.

"ON LITURGICAL LIFE": An Inter-jurisdictional Conversation

BRAD A. MILUNSKI, O.F.M. CONV.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. Eliot

Though T. S. Eliot most probably was not thinking of Christian liturgy when he composed these lines, they struck me as particularly apt words with which to continue this inter-jurisdictional conversation concerning "On Liturgical Life." When Christians take one or two steps back to reflect on this primary language of communal worship, it is done — one would hope — not to enforce norms, or worse yet, to attempt to create an experience where none yet exists. Rather it is done to celebrate in a more profound way God's saving action for us in Christ. The rituals, songs, and gestures which remember what God has done for us in Christ are not the products first of abstract philosophical and theological treatises but of the faith-born experience of salvation. Liturgy is an action which invites our response as if we were discovering salvation for the first time in awe and wonder. I believe it is within this context that the letter from the ministers general should be received and welcomed. Given the time which has elapsed since the words *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were first heard, this exhortation for a deeper and richer liturgical reform from our own brothers is indeed late in coming, but as the saying goes, better late than never.

Brad A. Milunski, O.F.M. Conv., is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province of Conventual Franciscan Friars. Presently he is finishing requirements for the degrees of Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in systematic theology at The Washington Theological Union in Silver Spring.

Before I begin my own reflections it might be helpful to the reader to hear the context out of which I write this response. As a friar nearing the end of initial formation, I used the letter first as a springboard to reflect on the past ten years in thanksgiving for the friars who have helped form me and my peers in the church's rites by the example of their own lives of faith and celebration. They have taught me not only the "how to's" but also the theological, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions of the liturgical life of the body of Christ. I remember with gratitude my pre-novitiate director who instilled in me a love for the liturgy by walking through its rituals in a way that invited participation, enthusiasm, and reverence. My current professors in presiding and liturgy have continued to form me in this living tradition as I am called to delve more deeply into the liturgy's theological richness with its pastoral implications.

Formation has not consisted solely of peak liturgical experiences, however. I have also witnessed by chance private Masses by lone presiders at solitary altars and the occasional matter-of-fact liturgies—all having the propensity to weaken rather than foster and nourish faith.¹ These occurrences notwithstanding, the liturgy prepared and prayed as an expression of the communal and ecclesial experience of faith has won the day in my own life. It is this hope which propels my own enthusiasm for the length and breadth of the church's ancient and venerable traditions and their future expressions. I have no doubt that the gifts I have been given by formation directors, professors, and peers are set upon a firm foundation.

The tensions and compromises often come in the proverbial "out there," that is, in the places we minister, whether as ordained ministers or not. It is for this reason that I applaud the letter's call for ongoing formation in the liturgy. The first cry of exasperation might be, "More workshops? Who has the time?!" Ongoing formation in the liturgy does not necessarily entail even leaving the comfort of one's home. What it does entail, however, is a willingness at the very least to re-read the principles and theology which undergird the conciliar vision of the liturgy. There is no time like the present to allow our pastoral praxis and manner of celebrating to be critiqued by the vision of Vatican II concerning the liturgy. If this necessary dialogue between theology and liturgy does not continue in the life of each professional minister, especially those who preside daily at the church's rites, both theology and liturgy show forth debilitating effects.

One of the most daring yet honest statements of the letter concerned the tension which results when conciliar theology clashes with a training characterized as "mostly rubrical." [para. 5] Such a training, taken for granted in its day, may have instilled a reverence for the liturgy; however, such a reverence would be characterized today as divorced from its moorings. What grounds the believer to celebrate is the conviction that the liturgy is meant to be transformative of the whole human person in Christ—not human persons as solitary

individuals but as members of a community which celebrates and remembers in a most profound way its salvation. Precisely because liturgy, the *lex orandi*, is the heart of the church's expression of itself, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the quality and prayerfulness of a community's liturgical celebrations indicate its vitality as a community committed to the realization of God's reign among us. From my limited albeit diverse experiences of liturgy, it seems that the vitality of liturgical celebration, especially of the Sunday Eucharist, and the degree of welcome given by members of the community to strangers in their midst are two very significant factors which draw people inside the doors of our convents, friaries, and church buildings. And should this surprise us if we really believe, in the words of the often-quoted axiom, that liturgy is the source and summit of our life as church?² No doubt such vibrant, often simple celebrations strike at something in the hearts of those in the assembly and contribute to whatever degree to their authentic human development as Christians.

Perhaps the ecclesial and communal nature of the liturgy is one of the most valuable reminders to take from the letter. This is a lesson which we have known and theologized about for centuries but need to be reminded of sometimes as if we were hearing it for the first time. The liturgy is essentially ecclesial, therefore communal, therefore not private—in theory or in pastoral praxis.³ The letter promptly reminds us that one implication of this is that we who celebrate the liturgy, whatever our ministerial function, must respect its texts and signs and pay attention to the whole celebrating assembly [para. 6-7]. Liturgy is never celebrated in the abstract but only within the concrete context of a community remembering its salvation. As the sources quoted in the letter reveal, however, "respect" should not mean rigidity or failure to promote real creativity. "Respect" also means the legitimate use of options which the texts themselves provide but which are not used because we have slid into comfortable patterns of complacency. Too often, it seems, our corporate ministries are governed not by real fidelity to the liturgical norms and principles but by the "L-word" which the document itself uses: laziness [para. 18].

The letter rightly acknowledges the role of presider as servant of the shared rituals of the church; the presider is therefore not the owner of the liturgy. One should also add that the presider is the servant of the community as well and that each community gathered has the right to all the richness of the church's heritage of ritual, song, and symbol.⁴ As diverse as the liturgical ministries in a given community may be, "[N]o other single factor affects the liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the celebrant...."⁵ From welcome to homily to appearance, the presider sets the tone, regardless of how diverse and well-prepared the other liturgical ministers may be.

As I stated above, this letter from our brother friars is a little late in coming; it also has its limitations. The language of the text is such that it could have been written in 1972 as well as 1992. Perhaps this is a two-edged sword. On the one hand this letter manifests the felt need we have as communities of friars and sisters minor continually to imbibe the principles of liturgical reform. This is done so that our liturgical life celebrated with the wider church community suffers neither neglect nor so much creativity that its ecclesial character is called into question. On the other hand, the language of the letter serves to ignore the thornier issues which engage many in our church, especially religious communities, for example, the official exclusion of women from sectors of ministerial life. No amount of quotes from the Second Vatican Council or Francis of Assisi will make such issues dissipate.

A second caution concerning the letter concerns the suggestions toward the end as to concrete forms of liturgy and devotions which should have pride of place in our ministries and communal life. For the more rubrically minded among us who take this letter as more legislation rather than no-less-important exhortation, the temptation is to use the letter as a checklist and perfunctorily implement all the devotions and forms of liturgy listed without attention to the way in which they are implemented, and more importantly, celebrated. As the letter implies, no amount of legislation alone is going to make the liturgy the center of our lives. Only prayerful discernment of the liturgy as a vital part of our spirituality and attention to the theological principles which underlie the liturgy will do this for us and the people whom we serve.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, what the letter calls for at the very least is for friars and sisters minor to be active promoters of the church's tradition of liturgy by encouraging study of the documents, and more importantly, by the hard work of quality celebration of liturgy. If the liturgy is indeed the source and summit of our lives as those washed and reborn in Christ's dying and rising, then attentiveness to how we celebrate the church's rites cannot but be a priority for Franciscans who profess, like our founder, to be in tune with the church. The paradoxical result of this willingness to be attuned is that our exploration of the church's rituals and symbols lead us not to something alien and completely new to our experience, but to the dynamic presence of Christ in our midst as if we were seeing him for the first time.

End notes

¹ *Music in Catholic Worship* (1972), 6.

² *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 26-27.

⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

⁵ *Music in Catholic Worship*, 21.

Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular, of the Brothers and Sisters of the United States

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JULY — AUGUST, 1993

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Fr. Joseph Doyno, O.F.M.

Assistant Editor: Robert Stewart, O.F.M.

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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 the 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
Form Viv: 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 Commercium
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).

“Signs of the Times — Traces of Life”

LETTER OF THE MINISTER GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST 1993

To All the Brothers of the Order
For Information to all Poor Clares

Prot. 080229 Rome,

8th May 1993

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

From my heart I wish all of you the Peace of the Risen Lord!

Introduction

Today I would like to continue on from my letter of Lent 1992. In that letter I spoke of a “new culture of solidarity.” Such a culture, I said, grows out of respect for the other and out of a conviction that the Spirit of God is working in every human being, that every Brother is a gift (CCGG 40). It must also be the distinguishing mark of a world-wide Order which realizes that its identity depends on a constantly renewed openness to mission. In the extremely complex world in which we live today, we need, in addition to an unshakable faithfulness to our original calling, a great sensitivity to the countless new questions, a courage for new ways. And this especially for the reason that our life in accordance with the Gospel and our proclamation of the Risen Lord makes us prophetic witnesses of the future world. And my question was this: are we sufficiently courageous in witnessing to the new reality which God is always working in his history, although often in a hidden way? To my question and suggestions I received many responses, written and oral, from individuals and from groups, and this from the whole world. This touched me deeply. To every one of these I want once more to express my thanks. With this new letter I want to continue and develop the dialogue which was then begun.

The Feast of Pentecost is a particularly good occasion for it. Pentecost means for Christians the Feast of thinking on a universal scale, of new language, of deep understanding, of clear vision, of courage restored after a moment of resignation, of creative awakening after a period of uncertainty, stagnation, or doubt. On the Day of Pentecost the Gospel began to “take off” (2 Thess 3:1), to get under way towards the “other”, into new cultures and contexts. Francis chose

the Feast of Pentecost for the assembly of his Brothers in Chapter, in order to contemplate the working of the Holy Spirit in each individual friar and in the Fraternity as a whole, to have them sent out over the Alps and the oceans, for admonition and instruction to all to obey the true Minister General, the Spirit of God. The Spirit is always at work in history, even when we do not notice it. What then could be more appropriate on this day than for us to ask ourselves once more what it is that "moves" us in our innermost being, and what it is that we see with our eyes today: signs of mourning or fear? of hope or of confidence? Signs of life or of death? Signs of resignation or signs of an ever new "Pentecost"? Or both? Is a new Pentecost in our Fraternity or in ourselves still possible today?

In this letter I would like to attempt to read with my own eyes some of the "signs" of our time and of our Fraternity, and to encourage you to do the same. In the now almost two years of my service it has been my lot to come across many signs, some disturbing and some encouraging. I am certain that, if our reading them and contemplating them is based on faith, we will uncover many traces of life, yes, traces of God and of his living Spirit, and also come to realize that signs of crisis can be invitations to a new beginning and advance messengers of new life.

Signs of Encouragement

In my encounters with you and with very many Sisters and lay-people who are inspired by Francis and Clare, in personal contacts, Chapters of Mats, and other meetings throughout the world, I am constantly surprised and deeply moved by the unmistakable climate of joy in encounter, of hospitality, of prayer, of contemplation, of courage, of humour, of mutual sympathy and encouragement particularly in times of difficulty and crisis. Indeed we still speak a common language: a language of humanity, of love, of respect, of comfort, of solidarity. I know only too well that this is not the merit of any man, certainly not of the "earthly" Minister General of the time. For me it is a sign of the uninterrupted presence of the Divine Spirit which Francis and Clare brought to the Church and to the world.

Very much alive to be the awareness that we must never lose sight of the priority of all priorities and, if necessary, make it ours once more: it is always, everywhere and for everyone a matter of first "possessing the Spirit of the Lord and His holy operations" (Rb 5). There is a great deal of genuine "longing" for prayer, for inner renewal, for contemplation. This gives me a feeling of great confidence.

I see traces of this spirit in the longing for a real fraternal and sisterly relationship both among ourselves and in relation to the great Franciscan Family, to the Church, to creation. Many are seeking a form and quality of fraternity which is a reflection of the "Franciscan experience of God": God Himself is present in the encounter (CCGG 40). This faith permits us to see in

the "other" a brother or a sister. And in them, in the "others", we experience nothing less than the God Who become flesh in solidarity, who creates peace, who loves life and gives future and hope.

I see traces of the Spirit in the closeness of many Brothers and Sisters to other people and their problems, in their capacity and willingness to engage in dialogue with various cultures, religions and sciences, in their hunger and thirst for peace, justice and reverence for creation, in life among the poor, in the service of liberation. I find great hope in the countless Sisters and Brothers, young and old, who anchor their "option for the poor" in contemplation and in the radical following of Christ. I take courage from all those who do not let themselves be discouraged on this path by reverses and human failures and who preach more by example than by words. I see this option being rooted in our Order ever more firmly.

I see the operation of the living Spirit in the twenty or so young Provinces, Vice-Provinces, Custodies and Federations, which have been given to the Order in the last two decades (the most recent, in March 1993, being a new Custody in Mexico and another in Ukraine), in their enthusiasm and their bold readiness to undertake new forms of presence and Franciscan service in the Church, among other religions (especially Islam), among the poor. The numerous young friars whom the Lord has given us in the new international Provinces, especially in Africa, are a sign of life for all.

I see signs of the Spirit, in spite of — or precisely because of — the "distress of death" (2 Cor 4:12) which has been overcome or still endures in Albania, China, Lithuania, Russia, Kazakhstan, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, the Czech and Slovak Provinces, Cuba, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the Middle East, In Vietnam, South Africa, Zaire, Mozambique and Angola. Francis is continuing to live in these and other places through his Brothers and Sisters as peace-maker, as the humble preacher of a human dignity deriving from the Gospel, as a co-worker in the building up not only of churches but also of a just society, peaceful because built on justice. It is surely also a sign of the times and a trace of the Spirit, that the poorest and neediest Provinces as a rule develop a more forward-looking outlook than others. So our Province in Vietnam has had in the last ten years a stronger growth than any other in the world. In mainland China, too, young men are finding their way into our Order in these months.

Our Order is being built up "in the Spirit" and its bearers in the future will be the many Brothers who have let themselves be "sent" in recent years, in the first instance by way of constant conversion, personal study and continuing formation. But also "ad extra", wherever the need is greater than at home. I am thinking of those who have offered themselves in readiness for service to the whole Order, particularly in the young Churches and the new Franciscan presences, in the service of formation and the centres of study. A sign of the

Spirit is given by all those Provinces who, often out of their own poverty, share with others both material means and hope. But the best gift of all are Brothers. I have seen in these two years that there already exists a genuine "culture of solidarity" in many places and in many hearts. The most beautiful sign of it is the fact that several Provinces in Latin America, Africa and Asia, which owe their origin to missionary enterprises from Europe or North America, are now themselves beginning to send out missionaries. It is certainly true: solidarity and communion is always both a giving *and* a receiving.

For me personally particularly encouraging experiences in the last few months included the Franciscan Week in Taizé, the meeting of prayer for peace in Assisi, my meetings with Patriarch Alexej II in Sagorsk, with Pope Shenouda in the desert monastery of St. Bishoy, in Cairo with Sheik Giad-el-Hak, the spiritual leader of the Muslims in Egypt, the Beatification of John Duns Scotus in Rome. What is the Lord of History trying to say to us by means of such meetings and events? I believe he wants to open our eyes, to show us new horizons, and to "send" us to new shores.

Signs of Crisis

On the other hand, we should not allow the great dynamism and enthusiasm which I see at work in the Order to lead us into a naive optimism. There are at the same time other aspects to which we cannot close our eyes: signs of tiredness, crisis, and break-down. Many among us take fright at such signs. Some say that Saint Francis indeed remains an attraction, but the Order does not. But signs of crisis, too, must be recognized and interpreted in the light of the Spirit. It is very important not to see our "crisis" as purely negative, but to take it in its original meaning. Then it primarily connotes not sickness or creeping death, but an occasion for renewal, transition, radical change, transformation on the road to resurrection. In the Christian and Franciscan reading of the signs of the times, a crisis is above all a moment of testing, a means of purification, a path to new life, a chance for renewal granted by the "creative" Spirit of God.

Some examples are these: not a few Provinces are "grieving" at this time, because their membership is continually decreasing in number, because there are no young members, or if there are, they leave again after a short time, or because local and regional traditions which have a long and glorious past (at least in part) are coming to an end. Some ask themselves if their Province will survive at all. What is to be done? What have we failed to do? Where are we to find any chance of renewal?

The plethora of questions, problems, old and new challenges. leads some friars and perhaps some Provinces into the danger of looking for their salvation in an activism which neglects the dimension of the spiritual and the quality of fraternal life. They are still merely reacting to inevitable developments, some-

times very energetically, sometimes wearily and hopelessly, but they are not (yet) capable of looking beyond their own boundaries and, trusting in the Spirit, together *with* others — other Provinces, other Families in the Franciscan Movement, and lay people — to develop *new* perspectives, e.g. in the question of closing houses or the founding of a new presence in accordance with the priorities of the Order today, or assuming a common responsibility for houses of formation or study, in missionary projects and initiatives for justice, peace and respect for creation. I at any rate am quite convinced that every crisis contains within it a summons and an opportunity to make a new beginning.

Many of you have also reminded me in letters or conversations that there rightly exists within our Order the precious value of respect for the individual and his personal way in the sight of God. This is a heritage which we want to preserve. But respect for the individual must not be allowed to become, and many feel that it is so becoming, a pretext for escaping from the duties of solidarity which bind the individual to the Fraternity, the local Fraternity to the Province, the Province to the concerns of the world-wide Order and the Church. I have come to realize that in this area, which is a matter of our very identity, we must indeed treat each other with care, but at the same time and more than ever before find new ways of collaborating and of expressing our regional and universal solidarity. The danger of splintering, of individualism, of immobility, of the culpable irrelevance of our witness, of missed chances in the face of new global challenges, is very real, and much more real than the danger of an exaggerated centralism, also feared by some. We are faced with carrying out tasks, above all in evangelization and in the area of formation and studies, which have been entrusted, not to a Province, but to the whole Order and therefore require and effective supra-regional co-ordination.

Three Points for Reflection

I would like to repeat for your reflection three propositions which I put forward at the meeting of the Conference Presidents in February of this year:

(1) Our time is a time of crisis, but more than that it is a time of unrepeatable grace, a *kairos*. If we do not wish to miss the "time of grace" (Rom 13:11), we must avoid every form of provincialism and of collective or personal individualism. The Order must live in accordance with its dimensions of universality and internationality much more strongly than previously.

(2) All Provinces, including those now grown "tired", will gain new vitality and new perspectives, if they do not close in on themselves but rather open themselves up to collaboration with others, if they are ready to give and to receive, that is to say, if they remain "missionary" and "in solidarity".

(3) We are in need of a new "global" awareness of our mission. No one of us, and no individual Province of ours, lives and evangelizes for himself alone.

Invitation to Confidence

At the time of the prophet Ezechiel the people of Israel lived in exile, discouraged, with an uncertain future, without any vision of what might lie ahead. It is into this situation that Ezechiel brings his vision of the Spirit. He hears the voice of God, "Do you believe that these dry bones can take on life again? I myself will put life into you. You will live again" (Ez 37:3-5). If we Friars Minor want to sense in our hearts, in our Fraternities, and in our Provinces, the transforming, consoling, revivifying, encouraging Spirit of Pentecost, then we must not allow ourselves to trust only in what is visible, and especially not in the "dead bones". We need, if we are to cultivate a truly contemplative attitude, a sense for the hidden — but for all that no less real — developments in the Church and in society, for the dynamism and vitality of the Gospel in our Order. It is important to trust the invisible Spirit who has not abandoned us. I invite you, above all, to break through the barriers of fear, of prejudice, of language and culture; once again to "fan into a flame the gifts" (2 Tim 1:6) of vocation, experience of God and mission, which each one of us has already received; not to have any fear for the future, even though some signs of the time cause us to feel afraid; to widen the space of our tent of fraternity, of solidarity and of dialogue with the "other", stretching it very far (cf. Is 54:2); to learn new languages and to expose yourselves to new cultures; to remain attentive to the voice of the poor and of the younger generations. "No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it?" (Is 43:18-19). What can you see, my Brothers and Sisters?

I would like to conclude this letter with a prayer:

"Today, O God, we pray for your Spirit. May he be for us a bright, light-giving fire, enlightening our darkness and re-kindling once more our love. May he be for us a cooling breath, consoling us and calming us in our faint-hearted agitation about our future. May he be for us a strong breeze, allowing us to set sail boldly and steer our way to new horizons. May he be for us the tempest which cleanses the air. May he be for us the water which lets new growth blossom after the drought. O Lord of our life and our history, may your Spirit show us that the old commission which you have in truth given us can in these new times, too, transform the world."

To all of you my cordial greeting of "Pax et Bonum".

Hermann Schalück, OFM

P.S. Replies will again be very welcome. A starting-point for your reflections could be, apart from the letter as a whole, the three propositions, with the question, "What can you see?"

The Third Spring: Our Heritage And Our Future

SISTER MARY FRANCIS HONE, O.S.C.

Theme

Springtime has a sacramental quality that lends a special significance to this assembly.

Thousands of years before Christ, ancient writers insisted God created the world during the spring season. Later, Rabbinical law decreed that Passover must be held at the spring equinox as a sign of the new chance at life it commemorated. Further into our age, the Fathers of the Church concluded this was the reason Christ's resurrection took place in the springtime, so Christians would have their origin at the precise time in which we had first received natural life.

With this in mind, we can understand why the thirteenth century was called the "first springtime" of the Franciscan Order; it witnessed the flowering of the Franciscan ideal. But its significance for us goes even deeper; our Poor Clare story actually began in the spring of the year 1212.

At that time, when Clare left home to follow Francis, she was graciously received by the Friars as their sister. Since those founding days the "Poor Ladies" and the "Lesser Brothers" were closely bonded as a family. They cared for each others' material and spiritual needs, and together they confronted the complexities and uncertainties involved in initiating new concepts of religious life. The "Poor Ladies" lived their Gospel message of poverty and prayer. The friars carried the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world. They put in a good word for us, too, so that our Order became known and our monasteries multiplied throughout the world. Their presence must be considered essential to any celebration of the "little plant" and most faithful follower of St. Francis, and is, therefore, especially welcome at this Federation Chapter.

The CORD is privileged to share with its readers Sister Mary Francis Hone's address at the Triennial Chapter of the Poor Clare Federation of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, April 23, 1993. Sister Mary Francis is a member of the community of St. Clare's Monastery in Jamaica Plain, Ma. She has contributed to this periodical over the years. This particular piece is most fitting for this 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Clare.

The proposals that came forth to shape the substance of this Chapter are special too. My first impression on hearing them was: How beautiful! This time we'll be doing what we are! We're growing as contemplatives!

The interests we've shared in past meetings tended to consist of information useful in adjusting our lifestyle as renewal proceeded. This time we seem to be caught up into a remarkable stirring of the Spirit; one that inspired our Holy Father, John Paul II, to proclaim how much the world stands in need of the charism of St. Clare again. (Protomonastery, Assisi 9-10 Jan. 1993) For, we have felt drawn by this same Spirit to spend this meeting rediscovering our holy foundress and the particular energy we receive from her charism.

Our Heritage

The effects of the graces given to Clare have endured since that first springtime centuries ago, and throughout 800 more. If we expect to contemplate Clare's meaning for us at this point in history, we need to recall, even if briefly, its passage through those years down to the present day. For, we are entwined in a saga of 8 centuries of valiant women who have channeled those graces to us through their holy lives.

The gift we have been given has a cast of many thousands, beginning with the Damianites of the 13th. century who carried on after Clare. We were formed by the dignity and gentleness of many royal or noble ladies in those days, like Agnes of Prague, a princess; Cunegunda, daughter of the King of Hungary; and Queen Isabella of France.

We have been influenced by the bravery of our 74 proto-martyrs of Antioch in 1268, and by more than 150 others who witnessed to their love of Christ with their lives in that century alone.

And we are heirs to a tradition of prayerfulness like that of Clare's sister Agnes, and Agnes of Prague, Ermentrude of Bruges, Helen Elsemini, and Philippa of Mareri.

We do well to keep our eyes on the example of those forerunners of our Order, and on the early events that shaped us, but we can't rest there, either. Our Minister General, Hermann Schalück's "fioretti" style narratives have an important purpose; they bring our attention to the continuing work of the Spirit among us today that is no less colorful to relate.

The 14th. century was the time of our greatest expansion; we grew to 15,000 members. Three-hundred houses were added to the 110, or more, existing before Clare's death. But our success brought us wealth and power and, like other great Orders, we drifted from our ideals.

Still, there were always faithful women who kept the Clare-flame alive through those regrettable circumstances; women like Catherine of Rufini, Battista of Montefeltro, Matitia of Nazareth, and Constance of Donatus. For all its difficulties, it was in this century that we attained a deep relationship with the friars; the kind that must have finally equaled Clare's fervent longings for our unity.

The 15th. century has been called the "Second Franciscan Spring." This revitalization of the entire Order was brought about through the collaboration of Friars and Clares. We owe our successful reform at that time to the initiative of the Observant Friars, who included us in their efforts to return to the spirit of our founders.

At this crucial phase of our history, the Clares of the 15th. century, displayed extraordinary leadership through holy and capable women, like Antonia of Florence, Felice of Milan, Cecilia Coppola, Eustochia, Seraphina, and others, who saw that the advice and instructions of the friars like Bernardine of Siena and John of Capistrano were implemented throughout our monasteries. We owe a great deal to these reformers, including others like Colette of Corbie, who worked to replenish our Order with new life when they saw it was waning.

We have been inspired by pioneers of the spirit among us like Battista Varana (+1524), who presented a way of contemplating Christ's passion beyond His physical pain by entering into His interior sufferings.

We have benefited from women of the arts among us, like Catherine of Bologna (+1463). Her paintings and calligraphy, preserved in Art Galleries of Spain and Italy, are well known. This attraction helped transform her monastery into a center of spirituality.

Our minds have been formed by scholarly women like Caritas Pirckheimer (+1532), who exerted a lasting influence on the 16th. century. As an educated person herself, she persisted in teaching her sisters scripture and theology, subjects women were not considered capable of in those days.

Caritas was dauntless in refuting the errors of Lutheranism even when the whole of Nuremberg embraced them. We have been strengthened by her fearlessness and that of others, like Joanne of Jussie, who wrote against the heresy of Calvinism.

We have been formed to be women with hearts big enough to hold the whole world and convert it to Christ. In the 17th. century the world's first woman missionary to the Philippines was a Poor Clare: Jeronima of the Ascension.

The Clares of the 17th. century also led new reforms whenever it was necessary to call us back to Clare's ideals. Among these women were Mary of Calvary in France, and Frances Farnese in Italy.

We had defenders of women's equality among us even then. One of the greatest poets Spain has ever known was Juana Ignes de la Cruz, a Clare who defended her right as a woman, to study, to write and to teach. She was forced to relinquish her books and her pen because she used them to criticize a theologian.

Luise of the Ascension (+1649, Spain) was known as "The nun of Carrion". (La Monja de Carrion). She was another Clare who exerted a powerful influence upon her society. Luise was brought before the Inquisition because of the popularity of her writings. Her sentence was that she could never write again, and her name was to be erased from the memory of the people. They were forbidden to speak it from that time on.

We have been formed by the heroism of victims of the French Revolution in the 18th. century, like Jeanne le Royer and whole communities who suffered long ordeals bravely, and Josephine Leroux, who was martyred.

Our spirituality has brought forth many extraordinary mystics who recorded their spiritual journeys. Among them Mary Magdalen Martinengo, whose volumes are now being edited, and Veronica Giuliani, a stigmatic of the 18th. century, who penned 14 volumes already widely known.

Marie Dominique Berlament was a 19th. century Poor Clare with an extraordinary desire to spread our charism throughout the world. She traveled about finding new Monasteries. Yes, we have been influenced by traveling Clares, too!

The 19th. was the century that gave us our own Mother Maddalena, and the beginning of the Poor Clares in the United States. Our more immediate experience of her holiness and the heritage she left us is a good example of the kind of life generated by those who have gone before us.

Throughout our own 20th century our legacy continues in the exceptional life of Clares like Marie Imelda of the Eucharist, born and raised in Marlboro, not far from Boston. The monastery she joined in Canada, wrote of her holiness. We see it in a biography composed by the sisters in Africa concerning their novice, Clare of the Eucharist who died in 1984. We see it more recently in the biography of a north American Poor Clare, Bernadette of Brenham, Texas, and in the autobiography of Mother Veronica of France.

Besides these, we are joined to all the Clares whose life stories are not so

famous. Old martyrologies still hold the records of over 800 outstanding Clares, most of whom we've never heard of. Hundreds of books or monographs about these women, or their writings, are scattered throughout the world.

We have received our charism from Clares who will remain totally unknown to us on this earth, and from those who have influenced us intimately by their example. In Clare's garden of consecrated women we have much to celebrate!

Our Times

Besides recalling the thrust of Clare's spirit through 8 centuries, we are here to renew, strengthen, and celebrate its expression in this grace-filled time in which we are privileged to live it.

In his book entitled *Behold the Spirit*, Allan Watts describes the advantage of our age as one in which Western Christianity is pivoted at a turning point in the history of religion. He displays the externalism and legalism of the Middle ages as the trappings of spiritual childhood. Christianity's adolescence of revolt against tradition followed in the succeeding centuries. Now he sees its physical phase approaching a climax as materialism fails to come through with the fulfillment it offered. A sign of progressive spiritual maturity is the increasing awareness, gradually taking hold, that God is given to us now, that real religion happens in the "flesh" of daily experience. We are on our way to a fuller experience of the Spirit, to the consummation of Karl Rahner's prophecy that "The coming Christian will have to be a mystic."

I've observed a parallel growth taking place in many of our monasteries across the United States. We've outgrown our childhood stage to the degree of our conviction that we can't remain in the externalism and legalism of the 13th. century religious life, nor need we glory in the "little flowers" of earlier days. As for our liberation from adolescence: we have no desire to reject the wisdom and inspiration of our founders but, on the contrary, we are drawn to study it, again and again, and learn from it. And as for resting in materialities: we have passed through a purifying night that has freed us from the temptation to weigh our progress and security by numbers or large, wealthy monasteries. Just as a deeper interiorization of religious convictions is taking place in the world today, we, too, are being prompted by this current quickening of the Spirit to embrace, with all our hearts, the highest ideals of our Clarian spirituality. In his composition "Pilgrimage of the Poor," our Delegate General, Herbert Schneider, presents these ideals leading us to be Christ-mystics for our society; women who live with Christ now.

Our Holy Father is calling upon us, to influence and foster throughout the Church the development of this innermost kernel of the Gospel upon which our

Poor Clare life is based. We are being summoned to be, as Clare would have us be, "mirrors and examples" for others, of the union with God people are longing for.

Clare's Charism

Our efforts since Vatican II, to understand our roots more fully, have brought us to a greater understanding of the particular thrust of our vocation. Clare's followers are especially called to be lovers of Jesus Christ. We are called to become images of the Poor Christ as Clare was. We are to be women of the Word, open to the spirit of the Lord. We are to be Mothers of Jesus, learning from Mary how to make a home for God within ourselves and how to bring Him into the world.

Though the centenary celebration may tend to focus upon an endless multiplication of images of Clare, we know that we are, in fact, celebrating the One who was Himself Clare's brilliance. He is the light we will happily discover in one another as we share her life within us during these days, and He is the Motive behind the dreams we dare.

To quote from the **Letter from the Four Ministers General**, Clare bids us "and all Christians, to recognize our need to concentrate on the Person and Life of Christ, a life which frees and develops the human condition, and contains all the values needed today." (#59) For this reason, we are urged to "make the 'way' of St. Clare a potent force again in our times," (#48) and by this means "give flesh to the Gospel." (#57)

It's all in our hands now. Each of us is challenged to be especially present to the world at this great moment of humanity's spiritual ascent, as the life-giving fountain Clare was for the people of her day.

Relationship with Clare

But years ago, when I decided to be a Poor Clare, the charism of Saint Clare never entered my mind. Perhaps some of you will identify with me when I tell you relationship with Clare really didn't mean much to me when I entered the monastery. It was through Francis that the deepest part of me had come alive. I believed I could best follow him, and love God as he did, in the contemplative life he had established for women. Clare was hardly a part of this, except to verify my attraction to Francis' holiness as something other women had known, too. Although I certainly revered her as our Foundress, Clare remained in the background of my earlier years in the monastery. It was Francis who held first place.

A little later on, when I was a novice, some former teachers came to visit. As Mother Mistress bade them farewell, I overheard them telling her: "She's a writer. You should make her write."

A few months later an elderly sister died, and I was asked to compose a sketch of her life. I requested facts regarding the deceased sister, and in keeping with customary answers of those days, I received the reply: "Why do you have to know that? They said you knew how to write." Anyway, that was my first, and last, literary contract in the monastery,

Years later, after Vatican II, when we were allowed time for study and hobbies, I sometimes found myself thinking about writing. But a question kept returning: What shall I write?

When news of changes in religious life succeeded in making it past the Abbesses' desk, we learned there were doubts concerning the validity of our enclosed life. It was confusing to hear the life I felt called to considered a mistake. I wondered how people outside our Order could know more about us than we did.

All this helped me realize the need for us to study our history to better understand it's present state and discern its future direction. Thinking along these lines, it suddenly occurred to me that this was precisely what I should write about.

But research and writing were not considered "work", neither were they considered "Poor Clare." Besides, it meant relinquishing any number of hand crafts and activities I enjoyed doing in free time, and could do very well, in exchange for a project I didn't even know how to begin.

I gave this idea much prayer and thought because I experienced it as a grace from God. Then, I decided to do whatever I could, in the hope that it might help someone more qualified to do more. I prayed to St. Clare to show me her true spirit and her intentions for her Order so I could make a positive contribution to it.

It was the feast of St. Clare 1983. It was only then, 28 years after I entered the monastery, that Clare truly entered my life.

Research

With great enthusiasm I began to search our library looking for resources. Our limited supply of reference material proved to be a sobering readjustment to reality: If you intend to do research you need access to books.

Within a few weeks a young woman studying at Harvard came to borrow books on Clare. In making conversation, I mentioned that I hoped to do some research on Clare and our Order. Her exuberant response was: "I'll bring you books!" With that, she related how Poor Clares with whom she had some contact needed to know their origins and their history. "Now that I've found someone who wants to do this," she added, "I want to help you."

I'll never forget the impact this had on me. It gave me the impression Clare really wanted to do something, and that I would be simply providing the motions. I remember thinking: "Gosh, she's powerful!"

From this time on, I found myself turning to Clare and searching her life for direction in the new circumstances in which I found myself. Walking in uncharted territory wasn't easy, but then, Clare had to do that, too. I could look at her and feel at peace in that kind of insecurity.

I had responded to the Lord with a willingness to do something for our Order, but exactly what that was I didn't know. I soon learned, through pondering Clare's openness to the Spirit, that allowing the Lord to use you has to mean "following" Him, taking one step at a time, never knowing the next one until it's given to you. Direction has come in the form of insights and surprises, and it comes through the people the Lord sends into my life.

In all of this Clare came alive for me as a companion who also had to find her way along, too, and had to have experienced that certain kind of solitude that seems to be part of venturing out to break ground in new areas. In each situation in which I found myself I felt Clare assuring me this was how it has to be; this was how it's done.

Learning to let the Lord work has opened my research to developments I could never have imagined. When I started gathering the sermons on Clare from around the world, I had no idea what I was going to do with them once I had them. But just as each step becomes clear only when the time comes for it, once I had gathered them, the Lord sent a capable scholar to work on them.

There are hints of this consciousness in Clare's Testament where she writes: The Lord led us to St. Damian's... the Lord increased our number. She was letting the Lord lead. I'm learning to do this in my research and writing.

Writing

So much has happened since I began. Clare's 13th. century miracle of filling a jug with oil doesn't seem so great anymore compared with some of her recent feats, like turning up a state of the art computer, complete with experts to teach me, supplies and maintenance. Whatever I need comes along when I need it. This is an awesome experience of God's nearness every time.

Even with a good computer, writing comes slowly for me. Learning to trust the movement of the spirit and allow the thoughts to be shaped by it, takes time. There's a real sense of personal poverty in waiting for inspiration to come.

Clare's concept of "Highest Poverty" provides an important principle for writers. I have learned that I have to be ready to let go of precious things over and over again. It's not quite as painful now as it used to be, but there's a real dying involved in having to eliminate paragraphs, sentences, and even words that I've invested with endless hours of labor. This process of eliminating any hindrance to the unity of the text is made easier by recalling Clare's doctrine of exchange: . . . we must let go of everything that would hinder union with God. (1st. letter)

Study

Becoming familiar with Clare's life and writings through study, makes further insights possible. When you know the sources you become more able to apply other studies to them to flesh out their meaning. For example: It was when reading one of my favorite scriptures, the Book of Wisdom, that it became clear to me that in her 4th. letter Clare had traced the beginning, middle and end, of the times of Wisdom (Wis 7:18), rather than compare Christ to a hand mirror. Other references from the same chapter would seem to confirm that she had very probably drawn from this section, like those that allude to Christ as mother, mirror, radiance of eternal glory, and so on (Wis 6:24; 7:12, 26, 29). Since that day, her title "Mirror of Wisdom" provides a meaningful dimension to our relationship.

The nature of our contemplative life makes us especially adept for study because it provides an atmosphere conducive to attentiveness. I find myself unconsciously tuned in for connections with Clare and our Order that people with more diverse interests might not be aware of.

I believe we need sisters among us dedicated to studies pertaining to our life, because we need the support and strength that comes from a more thorough knowledge of our vocation. It's important that we be informed concerning Clare's influence upon her society, and the early and later expressions of her charism, if we are to discern its meaning for today. Otherwise, we risk imitating a course of action suitable for other contemplative communities, or repeating mistakes of the past.

Our Minister Provincial, Anthony Carrozzo, fittingly stated this in a lecture he delivered last year: "Our times are complex and challenging," he said, "our Franciscan response must be contemplative and intelligent. . . so that we do not allow ourselves to be so assimilated by our culture. . . that little remains."

Given women's advancement in the 20th. century, we tend to forget Clare had the highest education possible for a woman of her time and place, and she used every bit of it all her life long. There must be room for Poor Clares to incarnate this dimension of Clare, too.

She was, very likely riding the momentum of the 13th. century "women's movement," when she dared compose a religious Rule; something that had never been done before. Our life, too, must reflect women's advances in our society, where intellectual and technical work has long replaced the sewing skills expected of women who entered 50 years ago.

However, we can't let ourselves be drawn into a degree of activity detrimental to contemplative life, either. Clare's injunction: "Know your vocation," has to be the measure of our involvement in the scholastic field. Although I sincerely appreciate the encouragement of interested persons, our contribution must be the overflow of our lives as Poor Clares, first of all.

Her graces are woven like threads throughout the lives of each living Clare, creating unique patterns in each of us.

Sharing the Fruit of My Work

Our Holy Mother Clare was concerned that our lives be such that they bear much fruit; "for those who are near and those afar off," as we read in her testament.

Finding that articles I've written, or lectures and classes I've given have been helpful, has been gratifying. It's been a resurrection experience for me to bring forth something from inside myself. I have found that research and writing are a help to interiority and prayerfulness because they demand a receptivity and detachment far beyond anything required by projects I use to plan and control with my hands. These personal benefits are probably the first-fruit of my work.

Other results of my endeavors, like the bibliographical lists I accumulated, grew as part of the process of searching for studies, prints, and manuscripts in order to locate the sources historians used for their work on Poor Clare life. I shared my findings so others wouldn't have to spend precious time repeating basic work. It has been a joy to be able to help people locate specific information on Clare and our Order. I'm happy to give whatever I can, and to know my findings have fostered advanced studies.

Dreams

I have no idea what the future will bring, but, I dare to dream. I dream of gathering books and articles from all over the world to make further research possible. I dream of Poor Clares quietly working to translate and study all this

material, to trace the biographies of hundreds of our members, the development of Poor Clare spirituality, the adjustments in our form of life within various cultures, and the forces of change throughout our history. Something tells me we need to do this ourselves. We need to be the specialists in all that concerns us, and I pray that day will come.

Our Future: A Third Springtime?

I see all this as positive action to insure the preservation and continued progress of our very long and utterly marvelous tradition. I see it as the work if women in labor to bring forth new life for the Third Springtime.

Our tradition, spanning so many centuries as it does, bears witness to the presence of certain catalysts for spiritual growth inherent in the following of St. Clare of Assisi. Her graces are woven like threads throughout the lives of each living Clare, creating unique patterns in each of us. We've come together to celebrate this energy in ourselves and direct it toward the coming millennium.

Perhaps in those future years, there will be Clarian historians, and perhaps they will refer to our era as the commencement of our Third Springtime. Perhaps they will trace its source to the joyful surge of spiritual energy that arose from the Holy Name Federation Chapter of 1993. And perhaps they will write something like this:

How the Third Springtime of the Franciscan Order came about.

The sisters and brothers assembled in chapter in the spring of '93. But this was more than an ordinary Triennial Federation Chapter; it was also a special gathering of the Poor Clares of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Federation in preparation for the celebration of the 800th. birthday of their Mother Clare.

During their days together, they took special care to look at all that had been, and they praised the Lord for his loving care. They unfolded stories witnessing to the life they shared and the wonderful things taking place in their midst, and they dreamed their dreams for the future. Filled with joy, they prayed together, and they broke bread together, giving thanks.

When five days had passed, they returned, traveling by land and by air, each to their own monasteries scattered all over the country, nay, even to far corners of the world. They carried with them, to all these places, the seeds of a new Springtime. And so it came to be.

In the Name of the Lord. Amen. Alleluia!

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* * *

Lady Clare

The smiling, happy children, skipping in the streets where holy Clare
grew up,
Eating gelati, singing in the streets.
Rieti-quiet place for solitude and prayer.
Eight hundred years later the narrow stone streets of Assisi cry out:
LADY CLARE, PROTECT THIS CITY, LEAD US TO THE POOR AND
GENTLE CHRIST.

Rosamond Jasinski, O.S.F./S.

Bicentennial of A Poor Clare Odyssey

FATHER JEAN DESOBRY

Two hundred years ago, the first Poor Clares arrived in the United States. Mother Saint Hugues Chevalier, abbess of Amiens, had emigrated with two sisters, originally from Tours. After revolutionaries disbanded their community, they had lived as refugees with Amiens' Demons family, but the law of August 26, 1792, expelling priests, did not apply to female religious, even aristocrats, so the sisters' safety was not threatened in France. A Havana Sulpician, Pedro Babad, wrote their story, and official documents confirm its authenticity. It appeared in English in 1936, (A. Boyer. *The Voice*, Baltimore: St. Mary Seminary Bulletin XXI, 3, 4) and was revived in 1980 by Mary Camilla Koester, O.S.C., (*Into This Land*, Cleveland: Poor Clare Monastery, pp. 142-154).

Babad identified the sisters as forty-seven year old "Mother Genevieve de la Marche, former abbess of Tours" and twenty-seven year old "Sister Marie des Anges leBlond de LaRochevoucauld," noble names, but which would not have caused deportation. Forty-nine year old Mother St. Hugues' commoner name, Chevalier, could not impress foreign dignitaries as would her prestigiously named companions, but her sole objective was to found, in the Baltimore Diocese, North America's first Poor Clare monastery.

On October 11, 1792, the nuns got passports for England via Calais, but instead, they left Amiens, October 24, on a four-day trip to Le Havre. En route, they were anxious because their papers were not in order and their baggage concealed a chalice, its paten, a silver ciborium and their breviary. Whenever they met soldiers, they shouted, "Long live the Republic."

Translated by Sister Mary-Theresa McCarthy, R.S.M., Ph.D., Georgian Court College, Lakewood, NJ. this article is from UN ASPECT PEU CONNU DE LA REVOLUTION FRANCAISE DE 1789 A AMIENS (Amiens: Musée de Picardie, 1987), pp. 111-133.

According to Father Jean Desobry, author of this article, "no other sisters exiled during the French Revolution had adventures comparable to those of the Poor Clares from Amiens who landed in America in 1793." Father Desobry, director of archives for the Diocese of Amiens, member of the Academy of Picardy and executive secretary of the Société des Antiquaires de Picardie, is a history professor and prolific author.

When the Poor Clares left Baltimore, October 10, 1793, they had no idea of the life they faced.

At Le Havre, they waited eight days for a ship to America which sailed, November 4. The crossing took two stormy, winter months. January 11, 1793, they reached Charleston, South Carolina, where they spent three weeks with an English-speaking religious community and suffered from the language barrier. Mother St. Hugues later complained of being misquoted by interpreters. She was unhappy in a setting so foreign to her European background that on Sundays the nuns processed to a drumbeat.

Expecting help in getting settled from French Sulpicians exiled at Saint Mary Seminary, Baltimore, they sailed there, February 9, 1793.

"Because they were noble religious women," Babad said they were welcomed personally by John Carroll, the United States' first Bishop. He spoke to them in French and found them housing. Two months later, they tried to start a school for girls but since they knew no English, only five pupils enrolled. Opening a monastery was impossible, for the few Catholics in the new Baltimore Diocese could not support contemplative nuns. Bishop Carroll advised they go to New Orleans where, in spite of Spanish dominion, French was spoken and Catholicism was well established.

The trade route to New Orleans was a perilous one from Pittsburgh via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The Ohio's violent floods and whirlpools uprooted trees which wrecked ships and hindered navigation. There was no channel charting rocks and shoals. The river flowed past forests where Amerindians, even some considered cannibals, waited to capture booty or slaves. French deserters who became "white pirates" plundered unarmed boats, caused shipwrecks, claimed the wreckage and slaughtered travelers. The current's power was the main source of energy moving flatboats on the Ohio. The Mississippi was big enough to allow for sails on raft-like barges steered by pilots with oars. A deckhouse sheltered crew and passengers at night, but freight and cattle remained in the open. At mealtime, smells of frying catfish mingled with stronger odors from trappers' bundles of skins; seamen's pipes smoked constantly to repel clouds of big mosquitoes rising from riverside marshes to attack and torture people and animals.

When the Poor Clares left Baltimore, October 10, 1793, they had no idea of the life they faced. To reach Pittsburgh, they had to travel two hundred fifty miles, crossing the Appalachians. Their journey by coach started comfortably except for jolts. About halfway, the coachman left the main road and drove into the wilderness to visit his family. The frightened nuns walked back to a hamlet

they had passed. There, a minister lent them two horses they could leave at the next relay. One sister walked behind the two inexperienced riders. After a night at an inn, they stumbled along a six-mile, rocky, mountain path in the rain. Exhausted, they stopped to get food and change horses. Two days later, numb from the cold, they were resting at a village when a friendly, local resident, who had seen them in Baltimore, pitied their situation and arranged a coach ride to complete their eleven-day journey which ended, October 21.

At Pittsburgh, the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers joined to form the Ohio which depended on waters rising in late autumn to carry boats. The disappointed nuns had a long, lonely two-month wait. Their boat finally left, December 11. Four days later, it was beached on a shoal, apt to be crushed by passing ice floes or attacked by prowling Indians. Only a swollen river could free the flatboat which was stranded eight days. It was loose only for one day when a deep freeze brought it to a standstill, December 24, near a village where the nuns spent Christmas, New Year's and Epiphany. A few days after re-embarking, they reached the Ohio's dangerous rapids, fifty miles above Louisville, where they learned that a boat which passed theirs had disappeared after an Indian attack. Everyone aboard had been killed. The nuns could have met the same fate, but their boat shot the rapids smoothly and two weeks later, they saw the Mississippi.

At Cairo, where the rivers met, they changed directions and boats, probably to a better equipped, leaner, keelboat, able to oppose the current since it was propelled by as many as twenty oarsmen. They sailed up the Mississippi two weeks. Night travel was impossible, so they would anchor and find a place to rest, protected from mosquitoes by a tent of canvas-covered sticks above a mattress. They were too scared to sleep once they had seen bears approaching on the bank. Finally, February 19, 1794, they arrived at Ste-Genevieve, Louisiana, southeast of Saint Louis, Missouri.

French from Illinois had settled there because of lead mines. They warmly welcomed the nuns, giving them a large house where they could teach children. After traveling four months and covering twelve hundred fifty miles, the sisters hoped to have found a home, but they only stayed one summer.

The governor of Louisiana, Baron Francois de Carondelet, learned they were there, insisted they come to New Orleans and sent a boat for them. They reluctantly acquiesced and went down the Mississippi. As Mother Genevieve, their superior, talked to a helmsman, his tiller slipped from his hand and struck her head when the boat hit a boulder. She spent days unconscious, and her health remained fragile.

By obliging the Poor Clares to come to New Orleans, the governor wanted to protect them from a war threatening northern Louisiana and also to encourage more French Catholics to immigrate. By helping a new religious order settle in his capital, he hoped to increase political power of Catholic Spain over a cosmopolitan population, and perhaps even to improve moral standards. He had a personal reason, too, for his interest in the nuns. His was a Burgundian family living in Cambrai not far from their Amiens monastery.

The Poor Clares had left Sainte-Genevieve, September 14, 1794, and arrived in New Orleans, October 16, a thirty-two day, nine hundred thirty mile sail on the Mississippi.

They immediately had to place themselves under a bishop's jurisdiction since they had perpetual vows. The New Orleans Diocese had just been established, September 12, 1794, and Bishop Louis Penalver y Cardenas, had not yet arrived. Philippe de Trespalacios, Bishop of Havana, had been ordinary. His vicar general, Father Patrick Walsh, was the administrator who approved the governor's plan to house the Poor Clares at the Ursuline Convent where they lived in a room above the classrooms for nearly two years. On November 25, 1794, the governor asked the King of Spain for support, explaining that the nuns were from illustrious families and deserved the same stipend as Ursulines. Letters of May 15, 1795, indicated that the King granted an alms of eighteen pesos a month to each Poor Clare who stayed with the Ursulines and kept the Ursuline rule.

Besides the king's modest allowance, other advantages included a home in the Ursuline convent, where they spoke French, enjoyed the religious atmosphere and participated in community. Nevertheless, the orders from Madrid destroyed hope of founding a Poor Clare Monastery in New Orleans. The nuns began to concentrate on political events in far-off France. Mother Genevieve's physical condition was weakened by New Orleans' climate. The governor and bishop agreed with the nuns' decision that they sail to London where other French exiles awaited the opportune time to return home.

Before crossing the Atlantic, ships from the Gulf of Mexico called at Cuba. Sister Monica Ramos, Assistant Superior of the Ursulines, probably advised the nuns to visit the Poor Clare Monastery there. She had been a postulant in that community before going to New Orleans. The French nuns sailed on October 9, 1796.

After three days on the Mississippi, their ship crossed the Gulf of Mexico toward Havana. They were all seasick throughout the five-day trip. As Morro, a fort at the mouth of the harbor, came into view, Mother Genevieve fainted and her frightened companions thought she was dying, but she recovered as the ship docked. They were cordially welcomed by the Havana Poor Clares who

numbered one hundred fourteen choir nuns and as many lay sisters. It was no hardship for them to give the visitors hospitality for six months.

Here, Mother Genevieve's health improved, and Babad became interested in writing their story. His account ended this way: "They were given every comfort and they thanked God daily for such a paradise. They would not have left except that once God's will dictated their departure for France, their only wish was to return to their sisters in their own convent. The account of their ordeals was written to inspire generous donors to help them achieve this goal."

No doubt, the Poor Clares of Havana as well as wealthy property owners, wanted to subsidize restoration of monastic life in France; they certainly contributed substantially. Nevertheless, the sisters changed their plans. Instead of heading for London, they arrived in Baltimore in the spring of 1797. St. Mary Seminary professors were aware of events in France, where "the Second Terror" was to resume religious persecutions the following September. It was those French Sulpicians who advised them not to go home. They contemplated buying a house with their Cuban money and opening an American foundation. On June 16, Father Jean Testier, seminary bursar, took them to see Hollingsworth Plantation, which they were considering. On July 18, Father Tessier again inspected the property, and although the sale never happened, he recorded its possibility in his *Journal historique* (Baltimore: Sulpician Archives 1795-1835). Instead, the sisters rented a townhouse, and on Christmas Eve, 1797, Father Antoine Garnier celebrated Mass in their temporary convent. Father Tessier's journal recorded their January 9, 1798, visit to the Seminary where they learned to bake altar breads.

According to N.J. Naughten, O.F.M., ("The Poor Clares in Georgetown," St. Bonaventure: *Franciscan Studies*, 1943, p. 67), after leading a contemplative life for a few months, the Poor Clares had opened "Georgetown Academy for Young Ladies," in September 1798. It was unprofitable, so Guillaume Dubourg, a Sulpician, rector of Georgetown College, obtained a \$300-grant from St. Mary Seminary for the sisters. Leonard Neale who replaced him as head of the college, and was to become the first bishop consecrated in the United States, also did all he could to assist them.

A local newspaper, *Sentinel of Liberty and Georgetown and Washington Advertiser*, in its March 8, 1799 issue, published an advertisement through which Mother Genevieve hoped to recruit pupils and to earn money by selling eyewashes and ointments made from old convent recipes.

The *Sentinel* article described the faculty as a "very honorable lady" and "other respectable ladies," referring to Alice Leloir and her two companions whom Bishop Neale had brought from Philadelphia to help the Poor Clares by teaching in their Academy. These women would become Georgetown's first Visitation community.

Several times in 1799, the *Sentinel* advertised that the house the Poor Clares were renting was for sale. On August 1, 1800, the nuns bought property at the corner of LaFayette and Third Streets for 312 pounds sterling paid to John Threlkeld; they bought an adjacent lot from George Fenwick for fifty dollars, according to deeds filed in Georgetown.

In spite of help from a black married couple and Alexis Jeffrey, a lay brother, the nuns had trouble surviving. Mother Genevieve's health had deteriorated. May 18, 1801, she placed a newspaper advertisement to sell the property. On October 19, she became critically ill and was taken to Frederick, about sixty miles west of Baltimore. Ten days later she signed her last will, naming Celeste LeBlond de LaRoche foucauld as her sole heir. One of the witnesses was Marie Françoise Chevalier, (Mother Saint Hugues).

Once more, Mother Genevieve recovered and lived in the Georgetown house until her death, November 20, 1804. Twenty priests were present when she was buried in the cemetery at St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore.

Mother Saint Hugues had returned to Amiens, May 1, 1804. Her hope of a United States foundation had failed after a modest trial in Georgetown. She kept memories and insights of the New World that very few daughters of St. Clare shared in those troubled days. She refrained from discussing her extraordinary adventure, so Amiens archives hardly recorded it. But for Father Boyer's article in 1936, recapitulated in Sister Camilla Koester's *Into This Land*, in 1980, the American odyssey of three Poor Clares would have remained relatively unknown.

Sister Marie des Anges waited alone in Georgetown to claim her inheritance. On January 28, 1805, she signed an agreement to sell Leonard Neale the property for \$4,000. His brother, Francis, bought the Poor Clares' library, according to Eleanor Sullivan in *Georgetown Visitation Since 1799* (Baltimore, 1975). It included a copy of *The Rule and Statutes of the Visitation Institute* by Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal. Leonard Neale used it to make his "pious ladies" from Philadelphia America's first Visitation nuns.

In 1804 or 1805, General Tureau, French Plenipotentiary, met Celeste LeBlond de LaRoche foucauld. He advised her to go to Paris where Napoleon, eager to surround himself with great names of the Ancien Regime, would welcome her at court. She avoided any such thing and replied rather curiously

that it was no longer feasible because she was "already pushing up daisies."

From Amiens, Mother St. Hugues kept urging her to return and even borrowed 2,500 pounds from a Mr. Desusanne in Paris which she sent to cover the passage. She was anxious to get the proceeds from sale of the Georgetown house so she could do as the Havana donors had stipulated, i.e., put a roof over the heads of her reunited community.

Sister Marie des Anges finally decided to leave America. According to the 1936 article in *The Voice*, she wrote from New York to Father Dubourg on July 12, 1806: "I had decided to write you after my return to France. . . You knew I went from Georgetown to Baltimore and back. I was too ill to visit you. I left Baltimore so as to reach New York as fast as possible, but sickness obliged me to spend a few days in Philadelphia where Father Carr provided hospitality. I had to see a doctor because I feared I had lockjaw. My health has not improved since. In spite of that, I am leaving for Bordeaux Sunday on Captain Salter's fine ship, *Resolution*. I will be comfortable at sea since I have a private cabin."

At last, Sister Marie des Anges reached Amiens, October 18, 1806, more than three months after leaving New York.

She had agreed that payments for the Georgetown estate be made in five installments. A deed was signed March 1 and filed June 29, 1805, in the hall of records for Washington County. The last thousand-dollar payment was sent with interest by the Carrere Agency to the offices of Ducourneau in Bordeaux in 1808, (*Archives Départementales de la Somme*, p. 370; *Archives des Clarisses d'Amiens*, Vol. XXI 03, pp. 2, 8). Thus concluded the odyssey of America's first Poor Clares.



Saint Clare and The Order of Penance

GABRIELE ANDREOZZI, TOR

In celebrating the eighth centenary of the birth of St. Clare, the brothers and sisters of the Secular Franciscan Order, which until recently was known as the Third Order Secular, and still before that appellation, referred to as the Order of Penance, could be tempted to regard this commemoration as one which honors a distant relative. However, if one leafs through the Omnibus of Franciscan Sources, one immediately sees that St. Clare lived her entire religious life, from her conversion until her death, in the ambient of the Order of Penance. Clare is therefore a true sister for the Seculars.

The conversion of Clare, the flight from her family home, and the cutting of her hair by the hands of Francis occurred already in 1211, when the same saint was still at the beginning of his own conversion. That conversion had begun barely four years prior, and he did not yet have an exact idea of the mission to which he had been called. Thus, Francis, together with his first companions, professed himself to be "a man of penance."

He was aware of only being called to live according to the Gospel of the Lord. As the saint would later write in his *Testament*,

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).

Certainly the three passages that his eyes fell upon at the church of St. Nicholas of the Piazza contained a strong invitation to evangelical penance. But the divine revelation needed the confirmation of the Pope: "And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for Me." (Test 15)

Father Gabriele Andreozzi holds a doctorate in Canon Law and has worked for many years for the Roman Rota. He is also the author of several books and innumerable articles dealing with the history of the Third Order and the Secular Franciscans. This article was translated from the Italian by Fr. Patrick Quinn, TOR, who is completing a doctoral degree at the Gregorianum in Rome.

What was the state in which St. Francis and his first companions were to find themselves after the revelation from the Highest and the confirmation had been given by the Pope? It is certain, that from that moment they felt themselves to be true "men of Penance," invested in the evangelical mission of practicing and preaching penance. And in fact, to whomever would ask of the brothers who they were, St. Francis and his first companions "replied simply that they were penitents from Assisi." (3S 37; AnonPer 5)

Much the same was true for Clare when she verified her own vocation. There was absolutely nothing novel about men and women entering into the state or the Order of Penance. The life of Penance was open to all and one could lead such a life in one's own home as well as in a hermitage. The admission of Clare into the Order of Penance could be received by any minister of the Order and so, she was received by Francis. It is probable that from that time, Francis intended to found a new order, for men and women. But at that time it was not possible because the laws of the church prohibited it, and very soon afterward canonized the prohibition at the Fourth Lateran Council, stating that

in order that too much diversity of religious institutes not induce great confusion in the Church of God, we firmly prohibit that anyone in the future institute a new religious order. Whoever wishes to convert to the religious life must assume one of the approved rules. Similarly, whoever wishes to found a new house, must take the rule of approved religious institutes. (T. II Conc., 952)

The approved rules were only three: those of St. Basil, St. Augustine and St. Benedict. It was however, conceded to all, by an ancient concession and by papal decrees, the right to enter into the order of Penitents. Francis therefore adhered to this while waiting to see if a new rule for the brothers and sisters minor would be approved by the pope in which the highest poverty would be the norm of life.

No doubt the *altissima paupertas* would have been immediately obligatory for the friars minor, so much so, that for their sustenance they could depend only on remuneration for their labor and on the "table of the Lord," that is, on alms. However, the same can not be said of the sisters. Wadding (*Annales Minorum*, a. 1238, XIV-XV) records a procurement document dating from 1238, by Clare and her sisters, for the sale of a portion of land. Further, it happens that in 1253, at the death of St. Clare, the nuns of San Damiano were in a position to acquire the church of St. George and connected lands and to transfer themselves thither. In 1354, the same monastery was the owner of other parcels of land (Fortini, *Nova vita* II, p. 424). Therefore, not all of their goods were sold and given to the poor.

How does one then explain the *privilegium altissimae paupertatis*, that Clare and her sisters requested and obtained from Pope Gregory IX in 1229? In

it is conceded that the proceeds from the sale of any property be distributed to the poor; from then on, the sisters could possess no property and no one could constrain them to do so (*Seraphicae Legislationis Textus Originales*, p. 97). Evidently there were some serious and objective difficulties that impeded the execution of the papal privilege. Clare and her sisters, not yet having their own rule, adapted themselves to the laws and customs of the Order of Penitents to which they belonged, whose form of life was not limited to contemplation, but extended itself in service of the poor and the sick. They lived from their own work and in extreme poverty, not accepting property which was held by others outside the community, but they held in common the ownership of goods derived from the dowries of the sisters that entered the monastery, and these were employed for the necessities of the monastery and for helping the needy. It is known that in the 1300's there existed a hospital near San Paolo in Campiglione, administered and sustained by the monastery of St. Clare (Fortini, op. cit., p. 424 ff).

Besides caring for the poor and the sick, the charitable works of Clare also were extended toward churches. Already St. Francis lamented "consider the sad state of the chalices, the corporals, and the altar-linens upon which the Body and Blood of our Lord are sacrificed" (LCler 4). Clare undertook the task of refurnishing the churches with corporals and altar linens:

... when she was so sick that she could not get up from bed, she had herself raised to sit up and be supported with some cushions behind her back. She spun (thread) so from her work she made corporals and altar linens for almost all the churches of the plains and hills around Assisi." (Proc 1, 11)

It is without doubt that Clare by the inspiration of St. Francis, had always aspired, for herself and her sisters, to a rule parallel to that which Pope Honorious III had conceded to "his beloved sons, Brother Francis and the other brothers of the Order of Friars Minor" on November 2, 1223. But such a rule was very late in coming. After the privilege of *altissima paupertas* conceded by Pope Gregory IX on September 15, 1229 and then not applied, perhaps because even among the sisters there existed divergences in understanding poverty, as occurred among the friars minor, Clare would have to wait until August 8, 1253 to finally receive her Rule, approved by Innocent IV. It was not until that time that there sprang up in the church a new order, that of the Poor Sisters. In the last three days of her life, Clare was thus no longer a penitent, but a member of the Order of the Poor Sisters, a follower of the *Forma vitae . . . quam beatus Franciscus instituit*" (Rule of Innocent IV, ch. 1, n. 1).

In closing let us recall an episode from chapter XVI of the *Fioretti* regarding the founding of the Third Order. Francis was tormented by doubt over whether he should pray or also preach. He called Brother Masseo and told him to go to

Sister Clare and to Brother Silvester, so that they would pray the Lord that he would know his will. After a lengthy period of prayer, Sister Clare and Brother Silvester together responded that God has called him not only for himself, but for many, so that by means of him, many would be saved. Francis then felt "afire with divine power" and he set off in high spirits. Arriving at Cannara Francis started to preach,

... first ordering the swallows who were twittering to keep quiet until he was finished preaching . . . he preached there so fervently that all the men and women of that village, as a result of his sermon and the miracle of the swallows, in their great devotion wanted to follow him and abandon the village. But St. Francis did not let them: "Don't be in a hurry and don't leave, for I will arrange what you should do for the salvation of your souls." And from that time he planned to organize the Third Order of the Continent for the salvation of all people everywhere. (Fior 16)

But also due to the prayers of Sister Clare is the existence of all the multiple families of religious and laity that were drawn from the ancient Order of Penance.

It is very true that the erudite could oppose that in the womb of the order of Penitents, there already existed those that abandoned the vanity of the day, resolving themselves to do penance with contrite hearts, be it in their own homes or in secluded recessed. However, it is an undeniable fact, recognized by all who were there at the time, that through the work of Francis and his first companions the penitents not only multiplied, but organized themselves and undertook the works which required the greatest rectitude and spirit of charity. It was precisely at this time, between the years 1221 and 1228, that the *Memoriale propositi* of the brothers and sisters of Penance living in their own houses appeared. It is not for nothing the church credits St. Francis with having founded the Third Order. But also due to the prayers of Sister Clare is the existence of all the multiple families of religious and laity that were drawn from the ancient Order of Penance.

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Book Reviews

Tales of St. Francis: Ancient Stories for Contemporary Living. By Murray Bodo, O.F.M., Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1992, Pp. 187. Paper, \$7.95

Barr, Robert. **Scriptural Comfort for Trying Times.** Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992. Pp. 204, inc. index. Paper, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Sr. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.F., Pastoral Minister at St. Mary's Church in Baldwinsville, New York. MA in Franciscan Studies from SBU. Member of the Editorial Board of CORD.

Murray Bodo is certainly a real artist with words. He has the ability to translate on paper what Francis beheld; what Francis dreamed; what Francis hoped and what Francis longed for. In his first book, *The Journey and the Dream*, the author took the reader on a delightful, yet realistic journey as a companion of Francis. This companioning brought an intimacy that the reader could not forget long after finishing the book. Now, the author has taken the reader on another journey, another step into the essence of what made Francis and challenges the reader to delve into his/her own center.

Each of the fifty tales is told in such a fashion that the reader becomes the main character walking, talking, laughing, crying, praying and loving

with Francis. Each tale is a separate entity so that the book need not be read in sequence allowing the reader to select at random and discover a story so old that it is ever new. To enhance this newness Murray has concluded each tale with prayer or an instruction containing contemporary values. He has artfully overcome the didacticism and preachiness of the early writers.

Not in spite of, but because of its simplicity, this short work of 187 pages will remain in one's heart and mind during the busyness of each day to inspire and to encourage one to greater efforts for the kingdom of God. Indeed, this work has the forcefulness of biblical parables.

The author concludes the book with a very complete chronology of the life of St. Francis thereby giving the reader the clear facts of his sanctity as well as the inspirational tales.

Robert Barr has produced an artistically woven handbook of spirituality for readers of all times. By dividing the contents into three main parts: Good News in Times of Personal Difficulties, Good News in Times of Family Difficulties and Good News in Times of Community Difficulties, he provides the reader with themes pertinent to all life styles. Each theme is developed by the use of scripture, personal meditation and very often personal circumstances of his own life.

The biblical passage which is used to introduce the meditation is further explained in the meditation. Sometimes the author even questions the biblical passage as to its interpretation.

Show not pity; life for life,
eye for eye, tooth for tooth,
hand for hand, foot for foot (Deut. 19:21) P. 54.

Barr claims, "The mistake we make is that we inject our own viewpoint into the divine message, representing it as the viewpoint of God." (p. 55). There is one theme which the author continues throughout the sections of the book: the theme of Death. He considers death to be an interior and exterior trial for a person as well as in family and community difficulties. He points out to the reader the passage from Revelation 14:13, "they will rest from their labors for their deeds follow them. "In this is our hope as Christians. Barr concludes this first meditation on death by referring to Bryant's "Thanatopsis" (Vision of Death) and follows the sonnet pattern in his own "Thanatopsis" II where he questions the reader about knowledge of death. His final lines end with an optimistic query:

Are you not bright child
of dawn instead?
Do I not read "For
Morning" on your head?

In his second section on the Fear of Death, Barr quotes the immortal:

"Death has been
swallowed up in victory."

Where, o death, is your
victory?
Where, o death, is your
sting?

(Cor. 15:51; cf. Isa. 25:7. Hos. 13:14)

In this section the author generalizes about fears that all persons experience, when death draws near. Quoting Browning's poem "Prospice", Barr divides death into: fear, fight and reunion. He dwells upon the reunion of loved ones after death. "And I shall embrace them all again. The prospect (Prospice) fills me with cheer, hope and optimism."

The Third section on death follows the very touching story of Jesus and the death of his friend Lazarus. On page 158, the author beautifully portrays the value of a friend.

One day, somehow, a certain special person became my friend.

Now I see that this was no more coincidence. It was an act of divine providence, and an "actual grace." A very special grace indeed. It was God's gift to me of the greatest gift that anyone, even God, can give: someone.

Jesus knows what the most precious thing on the face of the earth is: someone you love.

My friend is dead. My friend is gone.

I had the privilege of delivering the eulogy at his funeral.

Then I told him that I knew
I would have him as a friend
once more, loving him in Christ
in the next life as I loved him in
Christ in this.

In the third section on death, Barr speaks of the Death of a Baby and the Death of a Child. "Jesus... took her by the hand and said to her, Little girl, get up!" The author sets the meditation in the form of free verse and/or many phrases. and concludes with "For love in stronger than death."

The Death of a Child follows immediately. Here he returns to the personal experience of the immanent death of their child, Katherine. Barr is aware the somehow this child is important to his perfect existence and God, who is his greatest friend guarantees the return of his lost friend. As it happened Katie did not die, then. But he knows he will lose her someday and that God

will again bestow her presence to him, "And nothing will ever take it away again." p. 178

That the author has relied upon scripture in the trials of his life is obvious and that he senses a value to the sharing of these trials is further obvious. The greatest gift that Barr gives to the reader is his gift of faith in an age when materialism and secularism seem to be at an all high.

This is assuredly one of the finest and one of the easiest books to read. While the reader is aware that there is a particular theme for each section, the style and the personal sharing hold one's attention. Since each theme is independent and brief, it enables the reader to open at random rather than read it from cover to cover for it to make sense. I believe it is a book for all people and for all times.

Clare of Assisi 1193 — 1993



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The CORD

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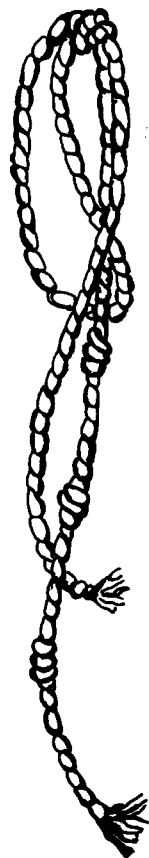
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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

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 the 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
Form Viv: 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 Commercium
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).

Consecration — Transformation: A Homily

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, OFM

After a day dedicated especially to prayer and penance we have come now to our eucharistic liturgy to thank our God for today and for so many other things for which we believe we must be grateful. Our THEME for the liturgy is CONSECRATION — TRANSFORMATION.

Consecration indicates the total dedication of a person or thing to God. The most common application of this term is to the bread and wine that is transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus at the Eucharist. This is the sign, par excellence, for us of our consecration through Baptism for in the liturgy of the Eucharist, we recall the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and we share the bread and wine transformed into his Body and Blood for the salvation of the world; and in the Eucharist we offer ourselves through him, with him and in him hoping for our transformation.

Transformation in its basic meaning implies change, and in our Christian context it is change for the better and is concerned with the conversion process in which we are involved from the moment we are baptized. Baptism is the fundamental sacrament of personal consecration. Vows taken in a religious community further dedicate a person to the service of God's people in a particular congregation ratified by the authority of the Church. Baptism is therefore above all, the sacrament of that faith by which, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel of Christ.

Fidelity to the consequences of our divine consecration in Baptism and to our human dedication through Religious Profession is promised again when we share

This homily was delivered to the General Assembly of the Third Order Regular during the eucharistic celebration on May 20th of this year in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi. Over 200 sisters and brothers from 32 countries participated in the International Franciscan Conference-TOR. The CORD is grateful to Fr. Hermann Schalück, General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, for permitting us to publish his homily in this special edition. Sr. Kathleen Moffatt, Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, deserves our heartfelt thanks for assembling the materials for the September issue of the CORD.

in the Eucharist and brings about a transformation in our lives that makes us authentic Christians who give credible witness to the People of God. The reading from Acts in today's Eucharist gives an example of this in the account of Paul's fidelity among the people of Corinth. We see Paul as zealous, ready and willing to work at his trade, single-minded about Christ, dedicated to preaching Christ.

"The people of the household (where he stayed) all became believers in the Lord. A great many Corinthians who had heard him became believers and were baptized."

Receiving Baptism and accepting the consequences means that we try, in spite of our human limitations, to be authentic signs of Church, and healthy, active members of the Body of Christ. For this we must be ready to be possessed by the Spirit of God, and transformed into other Christs, exercising and sharing in his priesthood, his prophetic role and his teaching mission. Everyone of us is consecrated for this through Baptism, and we find our own particular way to respond to this great privilege and responsibility.

We who follow St. Francis follow what we call the Franciscan Way by professing publicly to live a simple lifestyle based on the Gospel. It is through this that we hope to be changed into what God wants us to be. The conversion process which opens our hearts and minds more and more to the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit introduces us gradually to the person of Jesus and our growing recognition and friendship with him transform us into Disciples who are new beings with new freedom, and new life.

Today's gospel passage is a realistic reminder to us that there is a price to be paid, in that we must die before we can live. Each of us must identify with the crucified Christ who has paid the price so that we too may become Resurrection People.

"You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy."

Consecrated in Baptism, dedicated through profession, and transformed by the Spirit as we continue to offer ourselves, we have this joy of knowing that people hearing us and seeing us will come to believe in Christ or be confirmed in their faith.

The notion of conversion, perhaps, carries with it more emphasis on the human efforts we make to find God, while transformation implies the love and peace and joy of the Christian who experiences the presence and power of a loving God, the Christian who has a reflective awareness of the divine presence and lives in patient expectation of further revelation of the divine in the ordinary everyday things of life.

We all know so well how this conversion process transformed Francis into "another Christ," beginning with such incidents as the encounter with the leper. We have had our own grace-laden encounters, and will have more. Each one of these in some way asks us to step aside to let the Lord move in. As his presence grows, so does our transformation for it is he who is becoming more and more manifest.

And so we reflect regularly on our Baptism to learn more and more about who we really are — God's People. We contemplate the person of Jesus who came to serve not to be served, as we live out our dedication to the service of the People of God; and we look forward in joyful hope to ever new ways of meeting our God and bringing others to him.

I would like to offer you two suggestions for reflection: one is from the Admonitions of St. Francis where he gives us a beautiful example of the peace and love that comes to the soul transformed by the work of the Spirit as the gifts of that same Spirit become Christian virtues which replace the vices to which we are all prone.

When your life is centered on love and you are being taught by God, you will really have nothing to fear; and you will come to know all you need to know.

When you are patient and humble, you will not be aggressively angry or a disturber of the peace.

When you are content to accept your human limitations and joyfully admit your need for God, greedy desire will not have you hankering after what others have.

When you are calm and give yourself to contemplation, you will not let restlessness and curiosity make you deviate from your true path.

When the fear of the Lord sets the theme of your thinking, you will not give a hearing to the harmful suggestions of the worldly person.

When you are compassionate and use good judgment, you will not exaggerate things or be slow to forgive.

The second suggestion for reflection is in the form of a prayer asking that we be always, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, young-hearted and light-footed, free to let go of old securities and ever ready for adventure — a necessary transformation in the Church, religious life and in individuals.

"Comfortable and well-worn are my daily paths whose edges have grown gray with constant use. My daily speech is a collection of old words worn down at the heels by repeated use. My language and deeds, addicted to habit, prefer the taste of old wine, the feel of weathered skin.

Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new. Come and refresh me, Creator of green life. Come and inspire me, Risen Son, you who make all things new: I am too young to be dead, to be stagnant in spirit.

High are the walls that guard the old, the tired and secure ways of yesterday, that protect me from the dreaded plague, the feared heresy of change. For all change is a danger to the trusted order, the threadbare traditions that are maintained by the narrow ruts of rituals.

Yet how can an everlastingly new covenant retain its freshness and vitality without injections of the new, the daring and the untried?

Come, O you who are ever new; wrap my heart in new skin, ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit. Set my feet to fresh paths this day; inspire me to speak original and life-giving words and creatively to give shape to the new.

Come and teach me how to dance with delight whenever you send a new melody my way."

Contemporary Franciscan Woman, an Image of God

ROSE FERNANDO, FMM

"Woman, an image of God / Contemporary Franciscan Woman facing today's challenges along with her brothers" is the topic on which I have been invited to speak. We have listened to presentations on Mary and Clare, and we have seen how they were able to accomplish their mission, because their constant contemplation of God helped them to image the true God, revealed in and through women.

The scenario of 13th century Assisi was not very different from the scenario today: political tensions and wars, violence and bloodshed, class differences and divisions, the oppressive rich and the oppressed poor, the "center" and the "periphery," the secondary role of women. However, the situation today is even more critical because of the highly bureaucratic interplay between technology, politics, and economics. Theologically and ecclesialogically, now as then, we operate from an incomplete image of God and Church. Francis and Clare are "called" and "sent" to the thirteenth century Assisi and Church. They respond with faith and courage, with daring and prophetism.

Until recently, we drew our inspiration mainly from the Scriptures, and from the life and writings of St. Francis of Assisi. Today, in addition to the above, we also have as companion for our journey, the first Franciscan woman, Clare, whose faith and courage, daring and prophetism are reflected:

- in her integrated understanding of gospel poverty, personal and communal, and its total permeation in all of life
- in her struggle to preserve the unity of mutual love
- in her sense of discernment and co-responsibility, in community and as church
- in her search for a *new form of religious life*, and the responsibility she assumed for the legal and canonical consequences of her choice.¹

Sister Rose Fernando is the Director of the newly organized Office of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary at their Generalate in Rome. The Congregation numbers over 7500 Sisters in more than 70 countries throughout the world.

Here we present the powerful, inspiring, and challenging presentation that Sister Rose offered at the Third General Assembly of the International Franciscan Conference-TOR, held in Assisi in May of this year.

We see reflected today a similar faith and courage, prophetism and daring, in contemporary Franciscan women, who seek to be faithful to the Franciscan vocation, as we journey further into the 90s.

From Exclusion to Inclusion



Within themselves, let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so that with undivided hearts, they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and neighbor. (RegNB 22,27; EpFid I 1:5-10; EpFid II 48-53) [Rule TOR 8²]

At a recent "Expo" held in Paris, on Human Rights, ten challenges were presented to humanity. "Inclusion" was the common denominator. The principal factor underlying current global and local crises is exclusion. God is Love. This image of God is familiar to all religions and cultures. God's love is inclusive. Francis' love was inclusive: his whole life was a manifestation of an inclusive and harmonious relationship with God, with others, with creation. Clare's love too was inclusive: God, her sisters, her Franciscan brothers, the hierarchical church.

In history, we have several examples of "exclusion," due to an "either/or" approach. It is no exaggeration to say that all the wars of this century have been a subtle form of "exclusion," of "ethnic cleansing." During the 92 years of this century, over 116 million people have been killed by other people, because they were "not wanted," and needed to be "excluded." There have been several "Bosnias" in our world, and there continue to be "Bosnias," because "exclusion" in subtle forms continues to be on the agenda of many of our governments and political parties. The present world situation is calling out desperately for a New World Order of Inclusion, where the "both/and" approach will come into focus.

Many Franciscans are making clear options for an "inclusive" love. In the Americas (both North and South), we have the example of several communities who are reaching out to "excluded" groups, especially among the two most marginalized in history, in this particular continent, the native indigenous peoples and the African-Americans. Among the former, many have been exterminated. Today, they number 41,977,600 (that is, 6.33%), speaking 400 different languages.³

Among those who have opted to be inserted among the indigenous peoples, for some, it is a presence of Franciscan poverty, simplicity and minority. For others, in addition to this, they also work in collaboration with the indigenous peoples, for their basic human rights, especially the right to possess land, for this is vital to their religious and cultural life. We have the concrete example of Marie José and her community, in Laguna Yema, Argentina, who after a long and tedious struggle with the local authorities eventually succeeded in obtaining the above-mentioned right.

Paraguay: Thanks to the persevering courage of Maria, who in spite of many difficulties and obstacles continued to "reach out" to an indigenous group who resisted her visits initially, today, a community of five (Paraguayans, Chilean, Argentinean) is inserted in Tava'i. They share all that they are and all that they have with fourteen indigenous communities in the region. Their house is simple and welcoming, with a part which resembles the dwellings of the indigenous peoples, and which is reserved for them whenever they come to the "city" to buy provisions or such. The indigenous peoples have no more fear, for they now know that this group of religious respects their religion, culture and social customs, and hence do not feel threatened any more in their presence. Relationships have deepened, through a mutual experience of "inclusion," and are now at a stage where they participate in each other's "sacred" celebrations.

In Tava'i the celebration of the Eucharist is rare, but the daily contemplation and adoration of the Eucharistic Lord is source of their radical offering, becoming "bread broken, shared, given" to bring new life to their indigenous sisters and brothers.

In South Africa, a few years ago, when "exclusion" on the basis of race was still very much legalized (apartheid), a Franciscan community opted to be inserted in a purely "black" area, on the periphery. The community was mixed, and its very choice announced "inclusivity" at all levels. The sisters' option to defy the unjust law was gospel-inspired. Their presence re-imaged God and the Church to an excluded, marginalized and oppressed people.

In Australia, Frances and Miriam have opted to be among the Aboriginal communities. They travel to different settlements, camping among them, covering an average of 1,000 kms fortnightly. The Toyota Land Cruiser is their home. Their Franciscan presence can be summarized in the words of the Aboriginals themselves: "...clean, straight and have no favorites," which in our vocabulary means "chaste, honest and loving - without exclusion." The Aboriginals are the "excluded" of the Australian society. Frances and Miriam say they have "little power as church," but they have succeeded in making the 1,200 Aboriginals, with whom they are in contact, become Church through their option and life-style with its in-built simplicity, poverty, penance, and desert experience.

Also in Australia - in Palm Island, Alice Springs, Mount Isa and Collie - there are other Franciscan communities among the Aboriginals, with a similar vision and goal.

Fundamentalism and Integrism are born out of a tendency to "exclude." In every religion and culture, we have extremists. Sects too, manifest such tendencies. Often, we see them as a problem, a threat ... Some Franciscans seek to understand them in an attitude of minority. Others search for gospel solutions, in

respect, dialogue and providing opportunities for mutual appreciation. In Shibin, Egypt, Ancilla and her community have taken up the challenge, in a climate of growing fundamentalism, "to provide a milieu in which Moslem and Christian girls can grow together, and come to a deeper understanding of each other." Projects for the promotion of women (both Moslem and Christian), organized by Franciscan and other communities, are not uncommon in such regions.

For Reflection and Discussion

In all of us, there are tendencies to exclude, consciously or unconsciously. God's image is all-inclusive. Jesus' love is universal. Francis reached out to all peoples. Clare lived the dimension of inclusion in all her contacts. In our respective contacts, which categories of people are most excluded? Consciously? Unconsciously? Globally, which groups are the most excluded? How has our Franciscan presence and options made a difference? Where it has not made a difference, what are the difficulties/ obstacles/ reasons? How can these be overcome?

Poverty and Poor of the 90s



All the sisters and brothers zealously follow the poverty and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though rich beyond measure (2 Cor 8:9), he emptied himself for our sake (Phil 2:7), and with the holy Virgin his mother, Mary, he chose poverty in this world. Let them be mindful that they should have only those goods of this world, which, as the apostle says: "provide enough food and sufficient clothing; with these we are content" (1 Tim 6:8). Let them particularly beware of money. Let them be happy to live among the outcasts and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed and the destitute. (RegNB VIII:11; RegNB IX:1-2; RegB V:3-4; EpFid II 5) [Rule TOR 21]

"If you want Peace, reach out to the Poor" was the Pope's invitation to all of humanity on the first day of this year.⁴ The growing poverty in our world is a threat to Peace. Poverty is erupting into violence. The 1992 Report of the World Bank declared that two billion people live in poverty. This number continues to increase. "Banks kill 1,000 children a day" is the headline of an article that goes on to say that the International World Debt has emerged as the main cause of poverty and misery in the world.⁵ The present International Debt scandal is a subtle form of a world war: all countries are implicated. Its consequences are many: increasing poverty, violence at all levels, local wars, hunger, illness, growing illiteracy, unemployment — in brief, destruction of people and environment. Women and children are the worst affected. Sex Tourism has become "legalized."

Structural Adjustment Programs are affecting mainly health and education.⁶ The banks responsible for this debt have received £83 billion from debtor nations. UNICEF has described the drain of £6,500 million a year in debt service out of Africa, as "one of the greatest international failings of this century." There are several "Somalias" in our world. The poorest countries have 60% more debt than a decade ago. The Philippines debt payment is £4 million a day! 70% of Filipinos live in absolute poverty.⁷ In the Philippines, Franciscan communities are responding to this challenge in different ways: memoranda, demonstrations, organized action with the people, alternate models of development and life-styles. Their situation of poverty is even further aggravated by repeated natural calamities, including the Mt. Pinatubo devastation. Carmen, Thea, Veronica and Leonila, have been re-located with 300 other families, in simple dwellings, in Palauig, all victims of the Mt. Pinatubo volcano eruption. Their presence reflects Franciscan simplicity, minority and solidarity; they have taken seriously the invitation of John Paul II to "fight hunger by changing life-style."⁸

In Amsterdam, Holland, a community of five have their house (resembling any other in one of its "hot-spots"), mingling freely with prostitutes, drug-addicts and AIDS patients. "Sex-shops" where women are "exposed" as commodities behind glass windows, a bridge where drug dealers traffic freely, St. Vincent's Home where the homeless and people with AIDS are equally welcome, are all in the immediate neighborhood of the community. Together with their Franciscan brothers, this community considers the zone as a "new reality of the presence of God, for he is present in the realities of humanity." They say there is nothing much they can do.... They welcome all those who come, take time to listen... do not judge them.... At the "Welcome Center," Gaby shares "time and friendship," distributes clean syringes and needles...; at "Myriamhuis" each night, they receive about 60 women who come there to rest, take a shower and sip coffee with them.... Marie José, Christine, Johanna, Rosa and Gaby find the time to meet each day as a community, to contemplate the Eucharist, drawing their missionary strength from the One who is the greatest missionary. Their life is impregnated with all that it means to be "contemplatives in action."

The phenomenon of the increasing number of the "Fourth World" in and around every big city is not being ignored by Franciscan women. Challenged by this reality, communities are moving away from the "Center," to be inserted in the "Inner cities." In Brixton, England, we hear of Gisele, Margaret and Dymna, whose dwelling is an "open house" for their neighbors who come there for recognition of their human dignity. The fact that it is now a formation house provides opportunities for the youth to give a radical gospel response in authenticity, as Franciscans.

Homeless women, who are stereotyped as "bag ladies" are among the many challenges to our society. Their numbers are increasing, and so too our desire to "share home and bread" with them. Poverty suddenly had a face for Nancy and her community, who had been on a "quest for a more radical experience of Franciscan simplicity and sharing, when one day they found a woman outside their gate picking through their garbage for something to eat. This led to the founding of the "The Dwelling Place," in the U.S.A., a temporary shelter for homeless women, estimated at 3,000 on the streets of New York alone. Services include physical and mental health care to these women who would otherwise not have this care. St. Francis moved away from the "center" to the "periphery," to care for the lepers, the rejected of his society. So too, these Franciscan women.

The Elderly, in many cultures, are among the needy. In Canada, we hear of Suzanne, Lea and Collette, among others, who reach out to them in their homes, or in "Foyers," revealing to them the image of God who is "Love and Mercy." Their role as "Eucharistic Ministers" is being lived in an attitude of Franciscan offering and sharing. In many industrialized countries, there are several examples of Franciscan communities who have made a similar option on behalf of this new group of emerging poor, an evidently marginalized group in our societies. In Spain, the Franciscans of the "third age" are receiving "new Life" as they organize themselves to reach out to people of their own age. The steadily growing number of soup kitchens and shelters as "responses," in these countries, are indicative of this new form of poverty.

The poor are becoming poorer because the rich are becoming richer, both at the national and international levels. Tommaso Larranaga links the present critical situation to "unjust trade relations, multinational companies, arms sales...." He also says that it is due to the consumeristic tendencies of the rich. He asks the question: "Are we aware of the tremendous injustices of the present World Order?"⁹ We are desperately in need of a New World Economic Order. Franciscans seek to respond to this challenge by collaborating with other groups who have a similar vision. It is in view of changing current economic policies and structures that certain Franciscan congregations cooperate with the "Africa Justice and Faith Network" both in Europe and the U.S.A.

The creation of an "International Franciscan Network" for the promotion of Human Rights (1992), with its headquarters in Cochabamba, Bolivia, is an additional effort on the part of Franciscan women and men in Latin America, to work for changes at all levels. In fact, in most countries in this continent, Franciscan women work in close collaboration with their Franciscan brothers, in the spirit of Francis and Clare. There is a continual search to give a relevant response as Franciscans. At a recent meeting held in Bolivia, the women in their quest for a new methodology for a New Evangelization, had this to say in their concluding statement: "As Franciscan women we wish to continue along the path of an au-

thentic conversion, without pointing an accusing finger at others, but seeking only to reveal the merciful face of God to all of creation...."¹⁰

For Reflection and Discussion

There is an escalation of violence in our world. Increase of poverty increases violence. In developing countries, the external debt is suffocating still further the poor. In industrialized countries, the high degree of consumerism and the unjust elements existing in the present free market system, are widening the gap between the rich and the poor. As Franciscans, how do we let ourselves be transformed by the above and other realities? Concretely, up to now, what changes have taken place in our options and life-styles? Has the Why, What, and How of Mission changed for us? What do the words New Evangelization mean for us?

Choosing Between Non-existence and Non-violence



As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. No one should be roused to wrath or insult on their account, rather all should be moved to peace, goodwill and mercy because of their gentleness. The sisters and brothers are called to heal the wounded, to bind up those who are bruised and to reclaim the erring.... [Rule TOR 30]

One of the greatest challenges to the contemporary Franciscan woman is in the area of Peace. Peace comes through Justice. Justice is lived in Non-violence.

Violence is everywhere: outside of us and deep within us; institutional, structural, international, interpersonal; on the streets and inside our houses; in our way of thinking, speaking, acting and reacting; psychological, physical, and social. Sexism, Racism, War, Militarism, are but some manifestations of violence.

Franciscan women on every continent are responding to this challenge. In Las Vegas, U.S.A., a group of Franciscan women and men, together with others who have a similar vision and conviction, form the Pace e Bene Animating Group. They seek "to transform the violences and injustices of the North American culture through Non-violence, which they see as a way of life." Their approach is nurtured by:

- Contemplative prayer developed by meditation on Scripture, immersion in creation, and discernment of God acting in history;
- Reflection shaped by scholarly analysis and activists' struggles, and helping to incarnate the Gospel of Justice and Truth in society;
- Retreats and workshops on non-violence spirituality and methodology;

- Non-violent action, including resistance to nuclear weapons, military intervention, homelessness, racism, sexism, domestic violence, and other destructive conditions that prevent the emergence of a more just and peaceful world;
- The Transformations Groups Project designed to deepen and strengthen groups working for social change in the U.S.A.;
- Publications: a newsletter, *The Wolf of Pace e Bene*, and essays on non-violence, including a study on non-violent action at the Nevada Test Site.

In March this year, the group completed twelve years of resistance, rising out of a conviction, ... "that economic motives, not world security, motivates arms production.... If weapons testing stops, at least the development of new weapons will be greatly impeded."¹¹ Theirs is a prophetic resistance, in a Franciscan spirit, to the violence being done to people and to creation. Their liturgical Eucharistic celebrations have taken on a deeper meaning, because they live the Eucharist throughout the day, being "bread broken and given" for a non-violent world.

"No war is just"; "no more can we make a difference between a just war and unjust war."¹² War is the worst form of terrorism. It is a violation of all rights: human, cultural, environmental, economic, political. Having seen/lived the evils and consequences of war, increasing numbers are now advocating an active non-violence. Before, during and after the Gulf War, several Franciscan groups protested, together with other Peace Movements. The war in ex-Yugoslavia continues to elicit a varied response. Recently, in collaboration with the movement "Builders of Peace," Carmela, Carla and Grazia, from Italy, went on a Peace March to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dorica from Ljubljana, Slovenia, was part of an Ecumenical delegation, who crossed the capital cities of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia to place in the hands of the religious leaders, an appeal for peace: "The war in ex-Yugoslavia shows once more that it is not by means of arms that conflicts are settled. A modern war has neither conqueror nor conquered. It leads to hatred and a spiral of violence. That is why we call on all believers, and all people of good will to have confidence in the power of non-violent methods to resolve conflicts...."

In the Middle East, in a context of war and violence, Franciscans are responding by making conscious efforts to be instruments of peace and reconciliation. In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, they take the initiative to be bridges among the different religions, nationalities, ethnic groups, religious rites and other warring factions. Mixed communities where Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians live together witness to the Franciscan values of reconciliation, equality and sisterhood. Therese from Saida, Lebanon, says: "in a context of war in which one group was crushed by another, we were able to live in solidarity with both groups because of our option for reconciliation, in the name of Christ, in the footsteps of St. Francis...."

If our fraternity had not been deeply united, if we had not experienced mutual support, we could not have lasted in such a context...."

In Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Zaire, the option of Franciscan communities to remain with the people at frontier posts, at times of war, witness to their courageous Franciscan missionary dynamism. A young Mozambican religious, when given the option to leave a war zone, replied: "...from the moment I entered, I have heard examples of what it means to be Eucharistic, Missionary, Franciscan.... This is my moment to live these dimensions.... I opt to remain here." The previous night, this community of four had been crippled with fear, because of cross-fighting in their immediate neighborhood. Having spent this time before the Blessed Sacrament, they were renewed in strength. It was also an experiential moment of utter poverty because all their provisions, clothes and possessions had been stolen that same night.

Non-violence as a way of life takes on a special significance in contexts where governments opt for new forms of Socialism. The Franciscans in Burma and Vietnam, through a continual process of reflection and interiorization have given a new face to the Franciscan values of poverty, simplicity and minority, in their respective contexts. In Vietnam, the women have the additional advantage of having their Franciscan brothers to help them in their faith journey. In Burma, we hear of the missionary courage of Chantal, Justina, and Elizabeth who are involved in a healing ministry, among the wounded of different factions. All are equally welcome to their clinic. Katherine, a young religious, says she is growing in her religious and Franciscan vocation, in and through the lived reality.

For Reflection and Discussion

St. Francis' life, his options, his value-system, continue to attract the youth of today. Authenticity and coherence, when lived by Franciscans, are essential elements for the youth, in their choices.

- How are Franciscan women responding to the aspirations/expectations/ "calls" of the youth:
 - to commit themselves in volunteer services, within the countries or overseas?
 - in their discernment process to respond to a Franciscan vocation?
 - in their desire for a formation program in and through today's realities?
- What are the difficulties/obstacles we face with regard to the first question?
- Share any new insights/convictions you have with regard to the first question.

Women Awake ...



Let the brothers and the sisters keep in mind how great a dignity the Lord God has given them, because he created them and formed them in the image of his beloved Son according to the flesh and in his own likeness according to the Spirit. (Col 1:16; Adm V:1) [Rule TOR 14]

"Woman is created in the image of God." No one denies this statement. "Sexism is as serious a moral and social issue as racism, classism, militarism." Many deny this statement. Concretely, how do we interpret, both in the church and in society, "Woman is created in the image of God"? In the correspondence course on Franciscan Missionary Charism, there is a chapter on "Addressing Sexism: A Franciscan Challenge." Here sexism is defined as:

the prejudice or discrimination based on gender.... It is regarded as one of the most pervasive and dehumanizing forms of structural oppression in our world. Frequently, it is heightened by historical-cultural attitudes, socio-economic conditions, and religious beliefs that serve to justify the subjugation and devaluation of women in relationship to men.¹³

Some facts and figures:

- two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women.
- 50-80% of production, processing and marketing are in the hands of women.
- women run 70% of small enterprises.
- women are the providers of health care, yet have minimal access to medical facilities.
- women in rural areas spend 2,000 to 5,000 hours a year just on the transport of water, of fuel and goods to and from market.
- one of every three households is totally dependent on a woman for its livelihood.¹⁴
- 35,000 girls and women have been raped in Bosnia (between the ages of 7 and 80), during a period of nine months.¹⁵ Every country at war has similar figures.

When we read such facts, when we listen to women sharing their own personal stories of oppression, exploitation, frustration, do we stop and ask ourselves WHY? I would strongly recommend to you the book, *Awake: Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice*¹⁶ which recounts the personal stories of about twenty women who are victims of a patriarchal system of exploitation (at home and at work), of sexual harassment/raping (at home and at work); women who do not have the basic human rights to food, house, family, health, education, name and recognition, land and country - in brief, to human dignity. We as religious, have all the above. Do we ask WHY they do not have the above rights?

As Franciscans, we share a common commitment to respond as God did, to every person that cries out to us for justice and compassion (Ex 2:23-25; 3:7-12). Franciscan women are becoming increasingly aware of the plight of the vast majority of the 51% of the world's population, and are seeking to respond, by revealing to them the image of God: Woman and Compassion.

In India, in a context where the degrading situation of women, due to religious and cultural factors, is increasing cause for concern, Franciscan communities have mobilized women helping them to grow in awareness of their own situation, and to act as catalysts of change. Celine says: "our priority is to work for the promotion of women... being aware of, and involved in the issues affecting them today...." They do this according to each one's gifts and capacities. Stella, who works in collaboration with CARITAS, has as her goal: "Empower Women, Transform Society." She organizes women's groups, networks, and has initiated training leadership among them. Anne, a lawyer, works with "Saheli" (a Hindi word meaning "companion"), dealing with women's situations: rape, alcoholism, wife-beating, dowry, harassment, murder, violence in the family and problems of working women. Leelamma, as a member of the Islamic Study Association of India, builds awareness among Moslem women concerning their rights and dignity. Edith has initiated functional literacy classes in one of the slums of Delhi. Her imaginative and creative methods, use of traditional dramas, puppet shows, songs and street plays, her use of visuals and posters, have helped to bring home to women, in a non-violent way, the message of liberation.

Gandhi, himself a staunch Hindu, often is being quoted on this issue:

Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal, to me, as is the abuse of the better half of humanity, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two.... The remedy is in her hands rather than in man's.... If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women....¹⁷

In Asian countries, where Buddhism is the pre-dominant religion, Franciscan women quote Lord Buddha, in an effort to correct erroneous interpretations of Buddhist religious culture, on the image of women. He strongly emphasized the equality of man and woman, and their equal status in society.¹⁸ In the Islamic religion, although Muhammad, the "holy prophet" advocated equal rights for both male and female, in practice, the patriarchal society uses religion as a tool for exploitation of women.¹⁹ Franciscan women, working in predominantly Islamic countries, with much discretion, are encouraging Moslem women to become more aware of their rights and duties.

In Coroico, Bolivia, a vivid memory for Angelica is "the picture of a woman, in her late thirties, a baby on her back, who went to the blackboard with a piece of

chalk and slowly wrote the letters of her name. From the energy used, perspiration fell from her face in huge drops; also because of the awesomeness of such an accomplishment! Never before in her life had she taken a pencil in her hand, nor dared to be different...." The above is the fruit of workshops: "Enabling Women."

In But Village, Papua New Guinea, we hear of the courage of Terry. Re-reading the Scriptures, especially on the powerlessness of women in the Old and New Testaments, brought out in her the giftedness of daring and audacity. She takes concrete action, vis a vis a village leader who treats his people unjustly and violently. Contemplation led her to action, for she says, Jesus inspired her to speak out in the face of evil: "...for evil grows when it is not talked about and brought out into the open, where the light of Christ and his truth can shine.... I shared my reflections with my community who gave me confidence to do something about it." Terry's actions could have serious consequences for her family still living under the leader's rule....

For Reflection and Discussion

For over 3000 years, men have played the dominant role in the imaging of God, through the writings of the Scriptures, and through preaching. For nearly 2000 years, men have continued to play the dominant role in the imaging of the Church. The images from which we operate today need to be changed/completed, if we are committed to a New Evangelization. What are some of the present key images? What images need to become more evident in the process of a New Evangelization? How would you see women re-imaging God and the Church, in co-responsibility?

Without Land, Home, Future ...



Let them be happy to live among the outcasts and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed and the destitute. (RegNB IX:2) [Rule TOR 21]

Eighteen million refugees, of whom the majority are women, children and elderly, cry out for mercy. They have not become refugees through their own choice. Political, economic, religious conditions have forced on them what they would not otherwise freely choose - to leave their country, land, home, family, loved ones. Many categories of immigrants are in a similar situation. It is hard to understand the depth of their sufferings, their experiences of rejection and exclusion, both in their home countries, and in the countries where they seek asylum.

In all countries, where there are refugees and displaced people due to civil and international wars, Franciscan communities have opened their doors to welcome them, giving them hospitality, or protecting those who flee from death and vio-

lence. Some work in refugee camps, rendering medical and other services: in Ivory Coast, Liberia, Zaire, in India, Sri Lanka, in French Guiana, Surinam. In the United States, Canada, and in many countries in Europe, individuals and communities are working for the rights of those who seek asylum. In France, we hear of Antoinette, who in collaboration with the parish, has succeeded in obtaining legal refugee status for several who have fled their countries for political motives. In order to help them in their faith journey, the parish assures the presence of chaplains who represent different cultures and languages.

In North Providence, Rhode Island, a Franciscan community has divided a part of their property into thirty vegetable plots and shared these among thirty Hmong refugee families. Franciscan values of sharing and detachment take on a new face in present realities.

For Reflection and Discussion

"Forms of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language or religion, must be overcome and eradicated as incompatible with God's design." (GS 29)

The above statement of the Second Vatican Council is clear on the essential equality of all people, this being a vital element of social justice. In all our societies today, there exist in some form, racism, sexism and various forms of discrimination. Maybe, there are such victims among us. As Franciscans, what is our prophetic response there where we are inserted? How can our presence/ options/ attitudes, make a difference?

Conversion Through Encounters

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. [Test 2,3]

"The Lord himself led me among them" said Francis of his meeting with the lepers, a meeting which turned his world upside down." Anne feels she understands how this can happen. Let us listen to her experience:

Five years ago, a friend and co-worker at St. Joseph's Hospital contracted HIV. At a loss for a way to deal with his illness, he asked Anne's help. She continued to minister to him throughout the last weeks of his life. His belief in a merciful God, his faith in reconciliation, and the love with which he accepted death, are etched in Anne's memory. The conviction that she wanted to work in AIDS ministry was born on his last breath. The support group which she founded grew into a family and then a community comprised of men, women and children. One young man asked Anne to help him compose a liturgy for his own funeral. Another asked her to come to his home to offer Eucharist for him. "You know I can't do that" she replied. "But we can have a special agape service," he said... "Jesus will be where he wants to be."

Encounter with the leper was the turning point in Francis' life. Today, encounter with AIDS patients or their families, is the turning point in the lives of many Franciscan women. Some reach out to them, while others keep away through fear, prejudice and ignorance. While there are still lepers in certain countries, people with AIDS are on the increase in several countries. By the year 2000, a cumulative total of 15-20 million adults plus 10 million infants and children will be infected with HIV. Already cases have been reported from 150 countries. They urgently need to experience the tenderness of God. For Franciscan women it is an opportunity to re-image God and the church. It is a call to give a new meaning to the Eucharist, as developed by Julian Filochowski:

For most of us, the starting point and reference point for all our work is the Eucharist. As we share the body and blood of Christ as our food and drink in the Eucharist, may we also affirm that it is the real body of Christ, who suffers today through HIV and AIDS. It is the real mind of Christ which is racked by fear and confusion. It is the real image of God in Christ which is blasphemed through prejudice and oppression.²⁰

Institutions, as Agents of Change

In Institutions, run by Franciscan women, in the fields of Administration, Education, Health, and other Professions, the process to integrate Franciscan values is moving forward slowly. Charisms are being shared and lived with lay people. In some instances, there have been initial resistance on the part of lay people (as there has been on the part of sisters), especially when it entailed change of options, patterns and life-styles. However, the number of committed people who are now collaborating in promoting Franciscan values is increasing.

We have the concrete example of a Franciscan community, who in their Operational Philosophy for their Health-Care system, have included the Franciscan values of Peace-Keeping, Non-violence, and Just Relationships. In their business endeavors, their goal is to assure that "Justice takes precedence over profit." Their way of re-imaging the gospel of sharing is inspired by their foundress' slogan: "As long as God does not stop giving to us, we shall not stop giving to the poor."

For Reflection and Discussion

Recent Pontifical Documents and other pastoral letters speak often of the "Church of the Poor," "the Poor Church," etc. A Franciscan sister has this to say: "In general, we religious are better off in many ways.... We have educational opportunities, dress well, have enough to eat.... We travel comfortably.... We have many opportunities that the others, especially the poor do not have.... In such an atmosphere, it is easy to kill within us, as individuals and congregations, the spirit of sharing/ detachment/ sacrifice... Instead the desire to accumulate increases."

We religious are the church: what images of the church do we reflect? For Francis, solidarity had a double dimension: interior and exterior. For us Franciscans today, what does it mean "to be in solidarity with the poor"?

Contemplation Leads to Action



From the depths of their inner life, let them love, honor, adore, serve, bless and glorify our most high and eternal God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.... The sisters and brothers whom the Lord has called to the life of contemplation, with a daily renewed joy, should manifest their special dedication to God, and celebrate the Father's love for the world. (RegNB XXIII:11) [Rule TOR 9]

Technology has contributed immensely to the advancement of humanity; it has also contributed to the destruction of humanity and creation. Technology has reduced manual labor; it has also made us too busy. Today, we do not allow ourselves to be nurtured by silence and solitude. We find it difficult to be present to the Presence within. Franciscans are becoming increasingly aware of this reality. Responses to this challenge vary according to contexts and situations. Houses of prayer, retreat houses, "desert" days and sessions, are all in view of deepening the Franciscan contemplative dimension. In India for example, prolonged moments of solitude and silence in "Ashram" styled retreat houses are not uncommon. In the West and in the East, Franciscans are letting themselves be enriched by other spiritualities, linking St. Francis' journey of faith with other faith journeys. Francine says that such an experience helped to deepen my knowledge and love of St. Francis of Assisi; I grew in my appreciation of my own Franciscan spirituality.

While Patricia says her contemplative prayer has deepened progressively since two years through regular meditation and "centering prayer," Irene, in the light of her experiences with other religious, sends an appeal in the following words: "I personally feel the need for a renewed call to all Franciscan men and women, especially to the women in the Third Order Regular, to review the place of contemplation in our religious communities.... I would be happy if St. Clare's centenary could provide a starting point for our life of contemplation, for our witness is being weakened...."

Planetary Option, Local Actions



The brothers and sisters are to praise the Lord, the King of heaven and earth, with all his creatures, and to give him thanks, because by his own holy will, and with his only Son with the Holy Spirit, he has created all things spiritual and material, and made us in his own image and likeness. (RegNB XXIII:1; CantSol 3) [Rule TOR 10]

"Eco-1992" was given wide coverage in the mass-media in all countries. Never before was there such global concern, interest, and waiting in hope. A year has passed. The responses are varied. For some Franciscans it was an invitation to make concrete changes in life-styles. For others it was just an event among others. We as Franciscans cannot be indifferent to our threatened planet, which is being destroyed progressively. Africa has lost 50% of its forests; Asia 42%; Latin America 37%. The world is losing its trees at the rate of 7% a year. Rich and poor countries consume the world's trees. Trees bind the earth with their roots, protecting the soil from erosion, and reducing water evaporation. Deforestation is a main factor in the increase of both droughts and floods.²¹ We see disappearing from the earth several varieties of food, medicinal plants, fish, birds, animals, all due to pollution of land, air, water, and ecological disasters.

Woman, image of God, is giver of life. The present ecological crisis is an invitation to women, to nurture life that is being destroyed. To Franciscan women, it is a call within a call, to give life and to protect life. Many are responding to this call. The Franciscans at the U.N. made an appeal to plant trees: in 1990 alone 20,844 were planted in 33 countries. In Garba Tulla Kenya, Chamberino U.S.A., Piura Peru, Franciscan women have literally made the "desert bloom" through their efforts to relate with nature. In Australia, Franciscans were initiators and animators for the "clean up Australia" project in their respective districts. Such examples can be multiplied.

Franciscan tradition is rich in eco-spirituality. St. Francis' "Canticle of Creatures" is the clearest expression of universal brotherhood/sisterhood; he incorporates into it both the human and the cosmic world. It reflects his whole personality, as one who is constantly in the presence of the Divine, the human, and nature. These three realities form one whole in his way of thinking and acting. Relating with one leads to relating with the other. It is the fruit of his contemplation of the Triune God.

The World Council of Churches, at its meetings in Switzerland (1989), Korea (1990), Australia (1991), in a true spirit of Ecumenism, searched for responses to today's challenges. On each occasion, the messages were powerful on the theme of "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation." Today, efforts are being made to go beyond the Christian world and to collaborate actively with other faiths. A New World Order can be achieved only by international cooperation and solidarity. Interdependence among nations includes a "giving and receiving" of cultural and religious values. There is much we can receive from the eco-spiritualities of the African traditional religions and the Indigenous religions. Isolated efforts are being made to collaborate with other christian denominations and other faiths. In the context of the present ecological crisis, our role as "nurturers" invites us to take

the initiative, with Franciscan prophetism and daring, for planetary options and local actions, with all groups. Because of our Franciscan heritage, there is much we can "give," and in an attitude of Franciscan minority, there is much we can "receive" from others.

For Reflection and Discussion

"We are God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor 3:9); "I consider you a co-worker of God himself" (St. Clare's Third Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague). If we are co-workers with God, what is our mission as Franciscan women in the face of the present ecological crisis:

- as individuals?
- as prophetic communities?
- as congregations?
- in collaboration with our Franciscan brothers and secular Franciscans?
- in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other groups?

The Franciscans have a non-governmental organization status at the U.N. Together with the other non-governmental organizations there, they have an impact on the 180 governments that form the U.N. In the light of the present situation in our world and in the light of your lived experience here, what would be your message to the Franciscans at the U.N.? (The present vision statement of the Franciscans at the U.N. includes care of creation, peacemaking, concern for the poor.)

Conclusion

Woman, an image of God: we see emerging in the contemporary Franciscan woman the images of God as revealed in a re-reading of the Scriptures.

In the African woman and in the woman of the Pacific, rooted in their cultures and enriched by the Franciscan charism, we see the relational image of God: relationship with "God - divine - sacred," with the other, with "Mother Earth." In the Latin American woman, inserted in her context, and gifted with the Franciscan vocation, we see the liberational image of God - the God who liberates from personal and social sin. In the Asian woman whose identity is necessarily impregnated with the religious and cultural values of her environment, the Franciscan value of non-violence is reflected in her image of God. The "Western" woman (Australia, Europe, North America), who lets herself be constantly challenged by the values and non-values of her context in response to her Franciscan call, mirrors the compassionate image of God. The world today needs to see this cumulative image of God as reflected in the Franciscan woman.

Francis' biographers link his conversion to three events: the message received through the gospel at the Portiuncula, the encounter with the leper, and the mission he received from the crucifix at St. Damian's. Three calls in one: to live a simple and poor life-style, to reach out to the poorest and most marginalized in society, to "re-build" the church, with a view to building the Reign of God, which is Justice, Peace and Joy (Rm 14:17). In the lives of the contemporary Franciscan women,

we see emerging the above image of the religious life; today too, Jesus "sends" us, speaking to us from the crucifix, through the voices of the crucified, on every continent, "Go, rebuild the church... Go, protect life... Go, save the planet..."

Like St. Francis let us also say humbly: "Until now, we have done nothing. Let us begin today." Let us continue our journey with Mary, the perfect image of God, and in the company of our Franciscan brothers and Secular Franciscans.

End notes

¹ Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap., and Ignatius Brady, OFM, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

² *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis*, Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation, 1983.

³ Statistics compiled by A.V. Gleich (1989), F. Chiodo (1991), *Movimento Franciscano*, Bolivia, January 1992, 101.

⁴ John Paul II, *Peace Day Message*, January, 1993.

⁵ *WORD*, Ireland, October 1992, 30.

⁶ Changes that a developing country must make to its economy in order to qualify for further IM loans or extensions on repayments. These changes consist of an "austerity package" of cuts in public expenditures (welfare, health, education), reduced imports, and increasing emphasis on export products (for example, cash crops), mostly to industrialized countries.

⁷ *WORD*, Ireland, October 1992, 30.

⁸ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 59.

⁹ Tommaso Larranaga, OFM, *Per i sentieri della verità al perdono*, Assisi 1991, 6.

¹⁰ *Las franciscanas en su labor evangelizadora*, Bolivia 1992, 5.

¹¹ Statement of the Franciscan members, Las Vegas, 1 January, 1991.

¹² Gino Concetti, *La guerra e le sue tragedie*, Rome: Edizioni Studium 1992, 158-168. Concetti takes a clear stand on the evils of war. We inherited the expression, "a just war," from St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. This was uncontested until the end of the last century when it was first taken up by Leo XIII. Since then, this concept has been much debated. On the occasion of the Gulf War, and since then, John Paul II has clearly condemned all wars as being morally unacceptable.

¹³ *Build With Living Stones: A Program of Study on the Franciscan Missionary Charism*, Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation of the Brothers and Sisters of the U.S., 1987, Lesson Unit 24:24/1.

¹⁴ *Franciscans at the U.N.* Newsletter, July 1991. Quoted from a UNIFEM Report (A funding organization for women's issues and projects).

¹⁵ Message of Muslim representative from Bosnia, Day of Prayer, Assisi, 9 January 1993.

¹⁶ *Awake: Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice*, Australia: Asian Partnership for Human Development, 1985.

¹⁷ Mohan Rao (ed.), *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India) 1981, 63.

¹⁸ *Awake: Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice*, 64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁰ Julian Filochowski, *A Measure of Our Humanity: The Church's Response to the AIDS Pandemic*, Opening Speech at the CARITAS consultation on AIDS, Hong Kong, 7 January, 1991.

²¹ "Third World Forests," in *WORD*, September 1992.

"With Swift Pace and Light Step"

ANNE MUNLEY, IHM

Introduction

Across the last few years I have had wonderful opportunities to reflect on the NOW and the FUTURE of religious life with persons, lay and religious, from various parts of the country and from different parts of the world who care deeply about religious life and its future direction.

These experiences have filled me with hope. Typically I am asked to present data descriptive of religious life and of pressing societal needs. This often involves looking at difficult and somewhat sobering realities. In working with such groups, I have come to realize that despite acute awareness of a corporate poverty of diminishing numbers, increasing median ages, fewer young or new members, and expanding demands on shrinking human and fiscal resources, U.S. religious are persistent in their desire to respond to urgent needs in a world and a society characterized by rapid rates of change. In a time of flux and downsizing, there is substantial evidence that suggests a conscious refusal of religious institutes to turn inward. A stance such as this springs from hope.

The more immersed I have become in recent research on religious life, and most especially in the LCWR studies, the more attuned I have become to the sense of hope that pervades much of the data. The lens of rational analysis is not strong enough to see hope. It takes the eyes of the heart to recognize mystery.

In considering the Franciscan Response to the LCWR Ministry Survey we will do well to keep before us a definition of hope by the Brazilian writer, Ruben Alves, that has poignant relevance to religious life at this moment in history:

What is hope? It is the presentiment that imagination is more real and reality less real than it looks. It is the hunch that the overwhelming brutality of facts that oppress and repress is not the last word. It is the suspicion that Reality is much more complex than realism wants us to believe; that the frontiers of the

*Sr. Anne is the Director of Planning and Institutional Research at Marywood College, Scranton, PA. She is the author of the LCWR study on Ministry, *Threads for the Loom*. This presentation was enthusiastically received by the members of the Franciscan Federation at the 28th Annual Assembly, June 2, LaCrosse, WI. The Ministry Survey conducted for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious included among its respondents 82 Franciscan women affiliated with the Franciscan Federation.*

possible are not determined by the limits of the actual, and that in a miraculous and unexpected way life is preparing the creative event which will open the way to freedom and resurrection. (Ruben Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972, 194).

Having acknowledged the deeper realities that move hearts and shape events, let us consider briefly some starting points that provide a contextual framework for discussing the data.

Visioning to the Future versus Visioning for the Future

The first starting point is concerned with the difference between visioning to the future and visioning for the future.

Visioning to the future involves conscious commitment to converting ideology to value-based action. The present and the future are not discrete, discontinuous realities. Visioning to the future heightens awareness that the NOW and the FUTURE of religious life are linked in a process of becoming. We are already living into the future. In many ways, the future of religious life, like the reign of God, is both here and not yet. As we review the Franciscan data, I think you will see many ways in which the future is both here and not yet.

Religious Life as a Social Movement

Secondly, as a sociologist, I find it helpful to describe religious life as a social movement. In a broad historical sense, religious life is a dynamic, value-oriented movement in the Church and society arising from a Gospel vision of "what ought to be" that is articulated and lived according to diverse charisms in concrete circumstances of time, history and culture. As a social movement, religious life has been both shaped by and is a shaper of social and ecclesial realities.

This past year or so I have been reflecting on the paradigm shifts in society and in religious life and on the implications of the LCWR data; my imagination has been captivated by the image of a Spirit-woven tapestry. In a poetic sense, religious life is a dynamic tapestry made up of various segments woven in response to specific needs and challenges of different historical times. The huge tapestry of religious life is still in process. Much of its beauty is due to the diversity of charisms that weave changing patterns of life and ministry into the total fabric of religious life.

Individual religious congregations and federations such as the Franciscan Federation are social movement organizations with formal structures designed to facilitate implementation of group-shared values and goals. They are social structures for converting ideology to action. Like social movements, social movement organizations are by their very nature dynamic rather than static. In the imagery of weaving, there have been and will be ongoing changes in the patterns, textures and colors of Franciscan threads in the tapestry.

The Function of Religious Life: Prophetic Liminality

A third starting point is that throughout history, religious life in various cultures has had a distinct purpose or function: the embodiment of liminal identity. To be liminal is to be situated at the threshold, the place or point of entering or beginning. Every society creates liminal groups to embody core values and to reflect back to society at any given time those tensions that exist between "what is" and the ideals and vision of "the ought to be." Liminal groups and organizations help society to clarify values and to change social structures. They can be initiators and effective agents of value-oriented change. Liminal groups are both at the edge of and at the heart of society.

In this respect liminal groups are prophetic. They are called to the tasks of the prophet that Walter Brueggemann named so clearly in his book, *The Prophetic Imagination*, especially the task of reading the signs of the times, critiquing sinful distortions in society while, at the same time, not draining people of their energy. Liminal groups are called to foster hope, to inspire a passion for possibility, to speak to the profound spiritual questions of the day and to facilitate movement toward an alternate vision.

Prophetic liminality is central to religious life and to religious congregations as social movement organizations. Prophetic liminality demands focus and flexibility, willingness to pursue the vision without total clarity, ongoing personal conversion and organizational transformation. In Franciscan terms, prophetic liminality involves the life-long process of metanoia, a turning to God and a turning to neighbor, an ongoing process of Gospel living, a process of becoming conformed to Christ. Prophetic groups and individuals are willing to confront gaps between "the is" and the vision of "the ought to be" in themselves as well as in society.

Religious Life and Paradigm Change

A final starting point is an assumption underlying various recent studies that religious life in the United States is in the midst of a major paradigm shift. A paradigm shift is far more than a process of adaptation; it is a process of substantive change. In the context of religious life, a paradigm shift is a process of substantive change that generates a new configuration of the stance and meaning of religious life within culture.

Serious efforts to articulate emerging understanding of the new paradigm are a significant contribution to religious life. There are obvious parallels among the LCWR/CMSM "Transformative Elements," The Religious Life Futures Project's "Components of a Future Vision," and the "Elements of the Vision" gleaned from Convergence gatherings. (See *Elements of the New Paradigm of Religious Life* at end of article)

Each of these listings projects sensitive awareness that a call to contemporary religious life is also a call to contemplative receptivity, prophetic liminality, inclusive community, global spirituality and cultural interdependence. Underneath all

of these elements is a call to INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION, and INCULTURATION.

It is important to remember that paradigm shifts arise out of the profound needs of the times. In many ways, the closing decades of this century are a *Kairos* moment, a moment for significant choices. Most present-day religious hold in their memories the dramatic changes of Vatican II and the years of participatory efforts to re-image religious life according to the vision of Vatican II. At the same time, we religious, like everyone else, are struggling to absorb the impact of the massive social changes of the last few years: the end of the cold war, changing geopolitical boundaries, a re-emergence of ethnic cleansing in various parts of the world, global economic and political shifts, changing demographic patterns, a worldwide economic crisis, and power and ideological shifts in the United States as signaled by the election of a U.S. president from the Baby Boomer generation.

Currently U.S. society is fragmented by a host of "social sins" in need of redemption: hunger, homelessness, violence, normlessness, disproportionate representation of women, children and minority groups among the poor, ecological irresponsibility, skewed access to educational and health care opportunities, and a growing body of throw-away people — children, the elderly, young black males, the unborn, persons with AIDS, refugees, undocumented aliens, the incarcerated, the dying. At the core of these problems are systemic racism, sexism, classism, ageism and militarism. These are times filled with prophetic possibilities for religious, for religious institutes and for works sponsored by religious institutes.

In these times, as Marie Augusta Neal, SND de Namur, is quick to point out, social analysis is necessary for discerning appropriate prophetic response to concrete circumstances in society that cry out for truth, justice, transformation and healing. Such tasks are central both to the mission of the Church and to the mission of religious institutes.

In *Threads for the Loom*, six challenges posed by the emerging religious life paradigm are developed.

First, the new paradigm is challenging religious, religious institutes, and works sponsored by religious institutes to model commitment to PROPHETIC INTERDEPENDENCE. Prophetic interdependence involves a reordering of priorities to take into consideration the common good. Today this demands a global world view that includes all peoples of the world as well as the planet itself.

Underneath this challenge is the fundamental human tension between self-centered individualism and repressive collectivism. It is part of the age-old struggle between love and selfishness. Such selfishness can be corporate as well as individual.

In an essay, "The Power of the Powerless," Vaclav Havel wrote about "living within a lie" and "living in the truth." These phrases are helpful for getting at the

issue of individual and common good. Rugged individualism and repressive collectivism are both forms of "living within a lie." Structural change happens when groups and individuals refuse to live within a lie and choose instead to live in the truth.

In these times "living in the truth" involves having a profound sense of collective responsibility. It springs from a belief that it is possible to shape a new reality. It involves having a world view that is based on relationship. What goes on in the micro world of everyday life must be considered in relationship to the macro world of much larger structures and the interests of people who are otherwise nameless and remote.

Prophetic interdependence is transformational. It demands appropriate balancing of the rights and needs of "the one" and "the many." When a right ordering of relationships in society is distorted, an existential revolution is required. Havel describes such a revolution as: "a radical renewal of the relationship of human beings to the human order. A new experience of being, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped sense of higher responsibility, a new-found inner relationship to other people and to the human community." For Havel, the heart of the issue "is the rehabilitation for values like trust, openness, responsibility, solidarity and love." (Jan Vladislav (ed.), *Vaclav Havel or Living in the Truth*, 1987, 117).

Think again of the current examples of "social sin" that I mentioned earlier and imagine what our situation might be in 1993 if values like trust, openness, responsibility, solidarity and love guided economic and political decision making.

Living the truth of prophetic interdependence includes sensitizing one another to the devastating consequences of stagnant relationships based on dominance and subordination. Prophetic interdependence is rooted in a circular rather than a linear world view. It is characterized by modes of interaction that are cooperative, collegial and collaborative.

Commitment to prophetic interdependence is the leverage that can help religious institutes and works sponsored by religious institutes to address a major problem of our society, a problem on which Robert Bellah and his associates focus in their book, *The Good Society*: the loss of a capacity to cultivate a shared form of life oriented to human dignity and wholeness rather than to private acquisition and consumption. Religious institutes can exercise a key role in stimulating consciousness of the importance of such questions as: How do the decisions we make as individuals, as communities, as federations, as Church, as society affect the life chances of others, particularly the poor?

The second challenge that the new paradigm of religious life poses is OPENNESS TO CHANGE AND TO BEING CHANGED. It is important for us to realize that we are living in times characterized by an enormously rapid rate of change. Change is a constant of contemporary experience.

Change happens when experience leads us to see with "new eyes." We can

only see with new eyes when we are flexible enough to enter into the worlds of others and respond with thought as well as feeling. There is no substitute for direct experience of people and cultures which are in some ways unfamiliar. Experience is a fundamental aspect of the educational process. Experience impacts attitudes; attitudes impact behavior.

Openness to change and to being changed in these times includes willingness to become and to help others become listeners and learners in social or cultural contexts different from their own. Taking on the stance of a learner involves letting go of the notion that the way we see and do things is necessarily the best way. That's not easy to do especially when we've been "successful" with what we have done.

Some questions that the challenge of openness to change and to being changed raise are: How often in ministry situations do we expect other people to become like us? Whom do we allow to teach and evangelize us? How often do we place ourselves in or facilitate opportunities for others to experience situations where they can learn through the eyes, ears, head and heart of another. How can this transform us?

A third challenge of the new paradigm and perhaps the greatest challenge of all is that of INCULTURATION. Inculturation is a theological term used to describe the interconnectedness between faith and culture. Faith is situated in culture and culture is to be permeated by faith.

We are living at a prime moment for inculturation, for uncovering the Word of God, the seeds of faith, that are already present in different cultures. When we go into a ministry situation we are not bringing the Word; we are there to encounter the Word. Insertion of the Christian life into a culture or cultures requires prophetic liminality that reflects an authentic embodiment of Gospel values.

For a long time the United States has given uncritical acceptance to the myth of the "melting pot." There is no such thing as a "melting pot." In ministry and in community it is important to realize that the human spirit resists homogenization. This world and this country contain a mosaic of cultures, each blessed with goodness and beauty; each carrying within it elements of its own destruction. As theologian, Virgil Elizondo puts it: "Every culture is in need of redemption." The challenge of inculturation demands that we confront distortions that are present in every culture including our own. The mission of Jesus and the mission of the Church are situated in human history and culture. Christianity is not one big melting pot; it is meant, rather, to be expressed through a variety of cultures.

Inculturation is a complex process. All of the cultural overlays that have impacted each person across a life history must be drawn into interaction with the Gospel — ethnic, social and religious heritage, U.S. values and First World mass culture, the subcultures that we become part of when we entered religious life, the group or corporate cultures of the settings in which we live or minister. What inculturation means in everyday language is that the total social, economic, politi-

cal and cultural reality of a people is the context within which and upon which the life and teachings of Jesus must be brought to bear. This is what the pastoral letters of the U.S. Bishops on the economy and on peace were attempting to demonstrate. Faith must become incarnate in cultural forms. The challenge of inculturation is intrinsic to our mission.

In a world and in a society of pluriform cultures, ministry on behalf of the mission of Jesus demands far more than tolerance of difference; it demands sensitivity, respect and reverence for cultural diversity. It also demands fidelity and Gospel integrity.

The challenge of inculturation raises significant questions: How aware are we in the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives that the call to discipleship is a call to inculturation? To what extent am I helping to make faith become incarnate to cultural forms? (See Avery Dulles, "John Paul II and the New Evangelization," *America*, February, 1992).

The fourth challenge of the new paradigm raised in *Threads for the Loom* is the challenge of MULTICULTURALISM. The magnitude of this challenge for U.S. society as well as for religious life is substantial.

Analysis of U.S. population growth between 1980 and 1990 indicates that different ethnic groups grew at very different rates during the last decade. While the percentage of population increase for white non-Hispanics was 9.8%, that for blacks was 13.2%, Native Americans 37.9%, Asians 107.8%, and Hispanics of any race, 53.6% (Hodgkinson, *A Demographic Look at Tomorrow*, 1992). By 2000, the United States will have approximately equal numbers of blacks and Hispanics, Asians will double to about 14 million and Native Americans will increase to about three million. With respect to youth increases in population, projections for 2010 suggest that four states, California, Texas, Florida and New York will have one-third of the nation's youth and that more than half of the youth populations of these states will be "minority" (Hodgkinson, *Independent Higher Education in a Nation of Nations*, 1993).

Data like these have huge ramifications not only for ministry but also for the membership composition of religious institutes. The current membership profile of American religious is 96% white (Munley, 1992; Neal, 1991; Nygren and Ukeritis, 1992). This reality raises significant questions: Why is it that there are so few blacks, Native Americans, Asians or Hispanics in U.S. religious congregations? Are American religious and their co-workers willing to **change** and to **be changed** by welcoming persons of diverse races and cultures? Today the challenge of multiculturalism necessitates honest recognition of prejudice, ethnocentrism and racism plus a willingness to change and be changed.

In a multiracial, multicultural society, the challenge of multiculturalism is much bigger than merely becoming comfortable with cultural pluralism. It involves developing a competency to function well in two or more different cultures. It includes acknowledging, cherishing and retaining one's own primary cultural iden-

tity while at the same time developing a capacity to take on the perspective of another culture. Very concretely, multiculturalism demands willingness to learn about and experience the joys and struggles of other people and, in certain circumstances, proficiency with more than one language.

Culture provides access to the meaning systems of people. The greater the capacity to appreciate culture and cultural diversity, the greater the capacity to participate in building worlds of mutual trust and understanding. The new religious life paradigm is directed toward developing interdependence among people of diverse cultures. In a social milieu in which cultural clashes capture the headlines, persons, groups and institutions that can recognize, celebrate and enter into an experience of multiculturalism are prophetic.

In these times, a renewed grasp of the significance of culture as a shaper of identity, values, beliefs and behavior is essential for living in the truth that recognizes the fundamental dignity of every person. The paradigm shift in religious life necessitates a paradigm shift in mindsets about culture. Contemplative receptivity to such cultural forms as symbols, myths, legends, sagas and rituals is a necessary threshold for cultivating a mindset that views culture as a bridge rather than a barrier. Language and faith sharing are critical vehicles for bridging cultures. In embracing the challenge of multiculturalism, religious can play a key role in re-imagining culture as a bridge rather than a barrier.

A fifth challenge of the new paradigm is the challenge of BOUNDARY CROSSING. As used here, this phrase refers to willingness to risk new margins rather than to issues of maintaining corporate identity. In relation to the emerging religious life paradigm, boundary crossing can mean stepping to the edge of one's own culture to measure it against the life and teachings of Jesus. It can mean pioneering corporate outreach to urgent human needs. It can mean stepping into another culture as "guest" and "stranger" and risking an experience of vulnerability. It can mean following the prompting of the Spirit to a radical living of the Gospel that flows from the deepest desires yet which may be resisted because it will mean moving from the familiar, the secure, the already successful.

The challenge of boundary crossing focuses attention on a critical question for religious in these times: How willing are we individually and corporately to experience vulnerability to foster oneness with God in all things and all people? For people of faith, vulnerability is a powerful paradox. For people of faith, it is often in the poverty of weakness that the strength of grace is experienced. The 21st century will be a time for challenging self-created boundaries as well as those created by others.

A final challenge of the new paradigm that is raised in *Threads for the Loom* is the challenge of LIVING IN CONTEMPLATIVE OPENNESS. In times of

substantive change, spiritual nurturance, rootedness in the Word, faith sharing, and personal and communal prayer are absolute necessities. Contemplative receptivity is essential to prophetic liminality. In the words of Anthony de Mello, SJ, "The desert is the furnace where the apostle and the prophet are forged" (*Contact with God*, 16).

Prayer and contemplation are the energy that transform service into ministry. Thomas Merton grasped this essential connection when he said of contemplation: "It is the mark of the true mystic that, after their (sic) initiation into the mysteries of the unitive life, they are impelled in some way to serve humanity" (Chittister, *Womanstrength*, 51).

Merton's definition of contemplation has great relevance to the emerging paradigm: "Contemplation is the keen awareness of the interdependence of all things." It is learning to see with God's eyes. It is being present to God who is present to all creatures. It is, as Joan Chittister, OSB, notes, "the ability to see a whole world rather than a partial one" (Chittister, *Womanstrength*, 57). Contemplation awakens one to "the real within all that is real." It fills the human heart with reverence and awareness of the holy in all that is.

These times need to be transformed by contemplative consciousness made manifest in ministry that flows from a spirituality of wholeness, reverence, interdependence, non-violence, nurturance and reciprocity. In a time of shifting paradigms in society as well as in religious life, spiritual hungers are profound. In these times as well as in earlier moments, religious institutes and works sponsored by religious institutes have a wonderful potential to provide sacred space for expansion of constricted inner worlds. The emerging paradigm of religious life is a new opportunity for religious to challenge ourselves and others with the questions: What is really happening in and among and around us? And, how must we respond?

When people of faith ask such questions, the God who ever makes things new provides insight. The new paradigm of religious life and the prophetic liminality that it calls for demand of us that we continuously and courageously ask such questions and that we continuously and courageously respond. Vision is the warp and action is the weft for weaving a paradigm of religious life that is desperately needed in these times.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is much in both the overall LCWR Ministry findings and in the Franciscan findings that suggests the dynamism present in the ministries of U.S. women religious. In the midst of significant changes impacting society as well as religious institutes, U.S. women religious are tenaciously committed to preaching the Good News with lives that are focused on narrowing the gap between "the is" and a Gospel vision of "the ought to be." Religious institutes are not acting like dying organizations.

The data detailing current and future deployment of religious personnel in various areas of ministry suggest the importance of proactive planning to ensure

presence of religious in ministries central to the mission of a given institute and compatible with its charism. The study also underscores the desirability of expanding and enhancing programs focusing on development of lay leadership.

While the data on sponsorship project good to excellent assessment of the ability to continue sponsored works, the next five years are a critical period for developing new sponsorship models and for building and strengthening infrastructures conducive to collaboration, mission effectiveness, and flexible response to emerging needs.

It seems to me that the challenges of the new religious life paradigm and the findings of the LCWR Ministry Study have a significant implication for all of us. Paradigm shifts are graced moments for raising questions, probing implications and converting vision to action. They are times for giving birth to images.

As a social scientist, I often reflect on the interconnectedness of the past, the present and the future. As we religious move into the future it is important for us to remember that the histories of our institutes are filled with examples of boundary crossing women and men who were willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the Gospel because they were impelled by love.

These men and women did not have all of the answers in their time. Why should we? What they had and what we need are faith, hope, enthusiasm, tenacity, freedom of spirit, hearts filled with love, courage to give birth to images and deep commitment to nurturing new shoots of life.

I can find no better words to close this presentation than those of Clare: "With swift pace, light step and unswerving feet . . . go forward securely, joyfully and swiftly on the path of prudent happiness" (*Second Letter of Clare to Blessed Agnes of Prague*).

ELEMENTS OF THE NEW PARADIGM OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Transformative Elements (LCWR/CMSM, 1989)	Components of a Future Vision (Religious Life Futures Project, 1990)	Elements of the Vision (Convergence, 1990)
Prophetic Witness	Living with Less	A Common Vision
Contemplative Attitude Toward Life	Commitment Focus	A Prophetic Mission
Poor & Marginalized Persons as the Focus for Ministry	Contemplative Attitude	A Contemplative Attitude
Spirituality of Wholeness & Global Interconnectedness	Conversion	An Intentional Covenant Community
Charism & Mission as Sources of Identity	Distributed Power	An Open, Inclusive Community
Change of the Locus of Power	Intentional Communities	A Non-Hierarchical, Participative Mode of Operation
Living with Less	"We Are Church"	An Enthusiastic & Passionate Spirit
Broad-Based, Inclusive Communities	Cultural Interdependence	
Understanding Ourselves as Church	Prophetic Witness	
Developing Interdependence Among People of Diverse Cultures	Charism	A. Munley, <i>Threads for the Loom</i> , 3
	Community Life	
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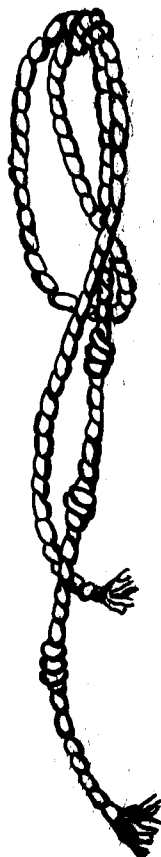
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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD**

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 the People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: 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

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).

Celebrating the Death of St. Francis

DANIEL P. SULMASY, O.F.M.

I

Few of us, I suspect, have ever seen anyone die; ever actually been there at someone's side as they have drawn their last breath. It is distinctly unAmerican to see people die. Most of us hope that we ourselves will die quickly, painlessly, and in our sleep, perhaps so that we can avoid thinking about death even at the moment when it happens. That is why tonight's celebration of the Transitus is so awkward for us. It somehow doesn't feel quite right to solemnly remember the death of a great man. Shouldn't we be celebrating his life and his accomplishments instead?

Yet we find ourselves here, tonight, gathered around the dying Francis in just the same way as the first Franciscans gathered around the dying Francis. Giotto, in his famous fresco of the death of St. Francis, painted first and foremost a realistic death. Giotto painted the premature death of a handsome young man who had been horribly sick for two years: a death not unlike the deaths from Hodgkins Disease or AIDS that we know today. And Giotto has painted all of us into his fresco as well. Like some of the friars Giotto painted, some of us may be sad that Francis, our Father in Christ, is no longer with us; no longer there with a clear voice and dramatic flair to inspire us when we seem lost and confused. Or, like some of the other friars in Giotto's fresco, some of us may feel drawn to kiss the bleeding hands and feet of St. Francis, stung in conscience, convicted from our own fingers down to our own toes by how little we resemble him, in our living or in our dying, and asking God to forgive us. Or perhaps some of us, clothed in magisterial red, feel compelled to investigate, to verify, to control, to stick our hands into the wounds and still not be sure, fearful of freeing our minds for the service of God's mystery. Or some of us, gathered here tonight, may be standing in the background of the fresco; perhaps here for the first time, or for the first time in a long time, drawn initially by curiosity, and now on the verge of genuine prayer. Yet all of us, tonight, if we

Brother Daniel is a Friar Minor of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. He resides in a friar community in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is a physician on the faculty of the Georgetown University School of Medicine and is completing doctoral studies in philosophy with a concentration in Bioethics, also at Georgetown. The following reflection was delivered during a Transitus celebration for Franciscans in the Washington D.C. area, held at St. Camillus Church, October 3, 1992.

can but open ourselves to the Word of God, proclaimed in the Church and in communion with the saints, might, like the lone friar at the head of the death-bed in the fresco, catch a glimpse of the soul of God's minstrel, Francis.

II

The life of the religious in the contemporary world, Daniel Berrigan once said, must be a kind of living question mark. The fact that there are sisters, friars, and monks among us ought to make all of us question our own way of being in the world. The fact that there are people in this world who profess evangelical poverty ought to make everyone else question the way they use or abuse the material goods of the world. The fact that there are people who profess evangelical chastity ought to make everyone else question the way they relate to each other, sexually or otherwise. The fact that there are people who profess evangelical obedience ought to make everyone else question from whom they are really taking orders in the conduct of their day to day living, and to wonder to whom, besides themselves, they are willing to listen.

Those of us who have professed these evangelical counsels have no cause for smugness. We must ask ourselves whether we lead lives that make these questions clear.

The death of Francis, in some respects, must strike us all as one very loud, clear, unwavering, unambiguous question. If we really understand the death of Francis, we will recognize the persistent question that insinuates itself between the fissures in our brains — erupts into our relationships: between husbands and wives; between parents and children; friends and enemies; worship and work; between our own conception and our own demise. The death of Francis is the death of a true religious — an alarming question if taken seriously. The death of Francis is a question we *need* to hear, even though we both want and do not want to hear it. We are so busy asking our own very important questions. What shall I wear? How do I look? What kind of impression did I make? Did I get the sale? Which party will be the most fun? What's the latest gossip? What decision will best advance my career? Will I need to miss my favorite TV show in order to help you?

To the extent that we organize our lives around such questions, we do so as a way both to avoid life and to ignore the reality of our own death. The death of Francis, then, comes as an awkward, disturbing question. This is not to suggest that the Gospel prescribes a morbid, psychologically sick fascination with death or some masochistic desire to suffer. Precisely the opposite, we are taught to avoid unnecessary suffering and commanded to help all those we find burdened with suffering. But what the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches, and

what the life and death of Francis of Assisi exemplify, is that the avoidance of suffering is not the point of life; that a life lived in flight from suffering is not a life, but an illusion. The Christian death of Francis teaches us that suffering must not be avoided when the choice before us is

either to love, or to avoid love and the suffering love entails;

either to act justly, or to avoid justice and the suffering justice entails; either to embrace life, or to shun life and the suffering life entails.

These are the landmarks of Jesus Christ, the landmarks that Francis bore in his own members. They are the landmarks that dispel our lingering romantic notions about Francis as the mere congenial friend of the birds. We prefer this romantic version, of course, because we want to think that it is possible to be happy without giving of ourselves; that it is possible to love without sacrificing anything. But the birds would not have paid any more attention to Francis than they do to you or me, if they had not recognized in Francis a man who had embraced the Cross of Christ. The landmarks imprinted in the flesh of Francis are signs to remind us that there is no salvation except in that Cross, and in the overwhelming mystery of the Resurrection which is its promise.

III

Bonaventure says that Francis was a man who had reached such a state of purity "that his body was in remarkable harmony with his spirit, and his spirit with God" (*LM* 5:9). It is in this ecology of *spirit* that the Franciscan spirit of ecology truly begins. Francis was a genuinely hylomorphic man — body and spirit, deed and word. The rest of us, enlightened as we might think ourselves, often tinker with our own dualism, bracketing off the world from our faith, people from our worship, action from our contemplation. That is why we are content to pollute our world. But Francis understood himself to be a creature. He understood his link to all other creatures. He knew himself as a creature of the love of God: the wild, exuberant, free love of God. It is because he understood this so well that he could call the sun his brother, and the moon his sister. He knew keenly that bodies, all bodies, are called into being only because of the love of God. He knew the power by which human bodies can participate in the love of God. It is that power that enabled him to kiss lepers and to preach peace to sultans.

But he also knew the limits of bodies, the horizon of the material. This is the knowledge of Franciscan humility. He bore none of our contemporary delusions about being self-made, and so he called the earth his mother. He bore no delusions about being all powerful, and so called Poverty his Lady. He bore no delusions about being immortal, and so he called death his sister. He truly lived in remarkable harmony: with himself, God, other people, and all

creation. This is the harmony that supported the melody of his joyous song. Francis, the minstrel of God, directed the chorus of creation in a cosmic symphony of praise. His death marked only the beginning of the second movement.

And if you are quiet tonight, on your way home, or on your way over from the Church to Holy Name College for cookies, or just before you go to bed, if you listen carefully, you just might hear the larks sing again tonight the opening measures of that second movement, the way they did this night in 1226. They will sing to remind you that Francis has shown that it is possible to live a Christian life. They will ask you whether you believe enough in the grace of God to realize that you too can be a Christian. God brought St. Francis of Assisi into this world for no less noble a purpose than you.

* * *



Giotto. Death of St. Francis (detail).

THE TRANSITUS: A RITE OF INTENSIFICATION

DANIEL GRIGASSY, O.F.M.

PART I

The "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" (1963) encouraged popular devotions among Catholics and recognized their special status proper to local churches. Popular devotions are to flow from the Eucharist and lead back to it "since, in fact, the liturgy, by its very nature far surpasses any of them."¹ Prior to the promulgation of the liturgy constitution, devotions with a particularly Franciscan flavor comprised the ordinary fare of common prayer and observance for followers of Francis: praying the fourteen Stations of the Cross and the seven joyful mysteries of the Franciscan Crown; reading the Rule at Friday's midday meal; singing the "Tota Pulchra" on Saturday evenings; reciting the "Adoramus Te" before and after common prayers; praying cross-prayers with arms extended in the form of a cross, to name only a few.

Readers of the CORD will welcome this insightful article on the cherished Transitus ceremony. Fr. Daniel Grigassy's detailed study of the history of the rite reveals important aspects of the Franciscan charism which condition the way we celebrate. Readers will recall Fr. Daniel's fine article "Attending to Ritual Attitudes" which appeared in the June CORD. PART II of this present article will appear in a future issue.

Readers who desire a copy of the lengthy and important endnotes, which do not appear here, are encouraged to write to

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A devotion familiar to all Franciscans which has survived the test of the last three decades is the *Transitus*. Each year on the third evening of October, we ritually remember the passing of Francis of Assisi from this life into God. In fact, the *Transitus* has become a significant and even a necessary annual event. To ritually revisit the story of Francis' passing is vital; without it something significant is missing. It specifies the living memory of Francis; it intensifies our commitment to follow Christ in the way of the poor man of Assisi. Since this rite of intensification has become an annual expectation for most friars, sisters, and seculars, a consideration of its origins and meanings seems worthwhile and timely. It is surprising that no historical study of the *Transitus* has been undertaken in the past three decades when so much ritual flux has been the order of the day. Questions begin to emerge when Franciscans with a living memory of the pre-conciliar era think critically about the *Transitus*. Who fills the roles of the various ministries in the rite? Who presides? Does it matter who presides? What does the presider wear? Does it matter what the presider wears? What do Franciscans in the assembly wear? Does it matter what they wear? Who reads the narrative text? Who cantors? What is the role of the assembly? What texts, sung or spoken, are included or not included in the rite? When is the rite celebrated? Where is the rite celebrated? How is the rite enacted? What are the gestures and postures taken by the ministry, by the assembly? What are the primary ritual objects? How do they interact with one another? Why do we even bother to enact the rite each year? In the asking of such questions, very telling meanings and values come to the fore which are tacitly operative in the rite. Non-verbals often yield more significant data in ritual analysis than the verbal elements. Ritual texts are important, but rituals are more than texts. Only within the lived context of the people who enact the rite do the ritual texts take on meanings which spill over the texts and into others forms of ritual expression. At times the non-verbals disclose more meanings than the verbals. In other words, the rite may say more than we wish to tell!

Perhaps the time has come to open the question of the *Transitus* as a significant (or insignificant) ritual moment for Franciscans. A rigorous ritual analysis of pre- and post-conciliar ritual samples would yield fascinating insights into a variety of Franciscan meanings functioning within the rite and expressed in its enactment. However, such an analysis would take us far afield. These initial steps in thematizing the *Transitus* as an object of ritual studies are best limited to the origins of the rite, its structure, and its core components. A sampling of rites from a variety of available sources which recall elements operative in pre-conciliar are exposed here in this first part of the article. The second part in a forthcoming number of *The CORD* will consider ritual samples drawn from the last three decades which show the expansion, retraction, and stabilization of the rite's form and shape. Its ritual structures remain supple

and pliable, resisting fixed forms, though recently, recurring patterns have contributed to stabilizing the rite. Commentary gathered through systematic interviews with participants generate questions which will conclude the piece.

These first steps in ritual exposition and analysis will help to open up discussion, either in the pages of this journal, in house chapters, or in informal conversations among Franciscan men and women. The present author encourages readers to enter into this study by saving liturgical aids published by your communities, by chronicling details of the rite, and even by videotaping the *Transitus* since ritual is not only written text but enacted text. The meanings and intentions which this uniquely Franciscan rite carries and annually fortifies for those who gather to remember the passing of their founder suggest important elements which need to be folded into the continuing reclamation of Franciscan identity in this age of confusion and conflict, of refounding and reformation.

The Origins of the Rite. The *Transitus* was not an early memorial ritual enacted by first, second, or third generation Franciscans but a phenomenon emerging much later. Attempts to answer questions of the rite's origin have met with limited success and successful frustrations. More than thirty sources have been assembled for the first part of this study. They include breviaries, sacramentaries, ceremonials, rituals, devotional prayer manuals, and histories of Franciscan devotion.² Only four references specify an approximate time and place of origins; however, none offers data to justify their claims. All the sources examined attest to the same origins in France and Flanders at the beginning of the eighteenth century and not before the end of the seventeenth century. The earliest testimony is from the 1926 *Officium ac Missa de Festo S.P.N. Francisci*.³ The *Cantuale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1951⁴ repeats those dates and origins. In a more recent work, *Liturgia di S. Francesco d'Assisi* of 1963,⁵ the same time and place of origin are noted. Twenty years later in 1983, the English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor approved *Franciscans at Prayer*⁶ for use in North America. The same dates are cited without data to justify the claim.⁷ Correspondence by mail with the late Fr. Ignatius C. Brady of the Collegio S. Bonaventura in Grottaferrata and with Fr. Octavian Schmucki of the Istituto Storico Cappuccini in Rome⁸ sought to establish the earliest claim of the 1926 *Officium ac Missa* on secure historical data, yet the exchange yielded no further insights into origin and dating. Since no direct access to the basis for the claim is readily available, the only choice is to proceed with the presupposition that the *Transitus* began at the start of the eighteenth century or perhaps at the end of the seventeenth century. Sheer curiosity led to an investigation of available office books, ceremonials, sacramentaries, and books of popular devotion with dates prior to the late seventeenth century, but none of these included a *Transitus* ritual or anything that remotely resembled one. Since eigh-

teenth century ritual books were almost impossible to find in accessible libraries,⁹ most of the pre-conciliar rituals reviewed as a basis for this study are composed in Latin and situated within the limits of Western Europe and North America within the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Post-conciliar rituals were collected over a period of twenty years. The majority, though not all, are English rituals from the United States; some are French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The majority, though not all, are from the eastern section of the United States; some are from the midwest and western regions. To expose and comment on all pre- and post-conciliar rituals would demand extensive appendices which are impossible to provide within the limits of these pages. Worthwhile for our purposes will be a summary of consistent elements and patterns in a sampling of rites and some commentary on possible reasons for apparent shifts, expansions, retractions, and stabilizations of ritual form and structure.

Pre-Conciliar Rites: Their Structure and Core Components. The earliest Franciscan liturgical books available for this inquiry date from the eighteenth century, three from the early part and one from the latter. Two editions of the *Officia Proprio Sanctorum* of Innocent XII, one of 1722,¹⁰ the other of 1724,¹¹ include the text for the Office of the Solemnity of St. Francis,¹² but no reference is made to the Transitus as such. In the same way, the same Innocent XII's *Hora Diurnae Propriae Sanctorum* of 1723,¹³ reflects no familiarity with the Transitus. The latter *Officia Sanctorum* of 1786¹⁴ does not include a Transitus ceremony. The only explicit reference to the Transitus to be found appears after a leap of a hundred and one years.

A small devotional book of 1887 by the Irish Franciscan Fr. Jarlath Prendergast, O.S.F., entitled *The Cord of St. Francis with Indulgences and Devotions*¹⁵ shows the bare bones of what came to be the commonly used ritual.¹⁶ This work simply includes a listing of the antiphon, "O sanctissima anima"/"O Most Holy Soul,"¹⁷ Psalm 142, "Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi"/"With a loud voice I cry to the Lord,"¹⁸ and a hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater."¹⁹ It is interesting to note that the hymn is included, at least in part, in the appendix of E. Chavin De Malan's work, *Histoire de Saint Francois d'Assise* of 1869²⁰ as the Magnificat antiphon for second Vespers on the Solemnity of Francis. The same text is cited in the *Analecta Franciscana* as part of the "Antiphonae ad Benedictus et Magnificat infra Octavam et pro Commemoratione S. Francisci"²¹ and is attributed to Thomas Capuano Cardinal S. Sabina, a contemporary of St. Francis.²² This first part of the antiphon works its way into the Transitus found in Prendergast's 1887 collection. Together with the second nocturn for Matins on the Solemnity of St. Francis²³ which tells of the death of the saint and which refers explicitly to "Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi," we begin to catch a glimpse of the Transitus, at least in seminal form.

Only six years after Prendergast suggests his three-part ritual, the French Friars Minor of the Province of St. Louis incorporate these three elements and amplify the ceremonial aspect of the rite by setting out precise directives on how the ritual is to be done. In the *Formulaire de Prières Cérémonies* of 1893,²⁴ rubrics or stage directions are offered to facilitate the movement of the rite. No specific date or time is assigned to the celebration. The opening statement in the *Formulaire* directs the community to gather at the chapel of St. Francis. When all the participants arrive, the chanters then intone the antiphon, "O sanctissima anima." Chant notation is provided for the antiphon as well as for Psalm 142. The italicized rubric prior to the psalm text contains an embellishment: "After the antiphon, Psalm 142, the 'Voce Mea,' is sung during which the organ plays..., but the last verse and the Gloria Patri must always be sung."²⁵ The last verse represents the actual moment of Francis' passing; special attention is given to it in the rite: Educ de custodia animam meam/ad confitendum nomini tuo:/me exspectant justi,/donec retribuas mihi./Bring my soul out of prison/that I may praise your name./The just wait for me / until you reward me. The singing of this final verse of the psalm and the Gloria Patri is followed by addition: five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glorys are recited together while kneeling and with arms outstretched in the form of a cross.²⁶ "Cross prayers" enter into the rite as an appropriate posture to recall the symbol of the cross out of which Francis lived his entire life. All are then directed to stand and sing the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater." Although present in Prendergast's Transitus but remaining unspecified, the verse and refrain at the end of the antiphon (Franciscus pauper et humilis...Hymnis coelestibus...) are directed to be sung in this French ritual by an unspecified "Officiant" or presider. Whereas the Irish version ends here, the French edition adds an oration: O God, on this day you granted the reward of blessed eternity to our blessed Father Francis; mercifully grant that we who celebrate with tender devotion the memory of his death may have the joy of sharing in his blessed reward. Through Jesus Christ Your Son our Lord....²⁷ All respond to this prayer with an "Amen." The presider then says "Dominus vobiscum" to which all respond "Et cum spiritu tuo." Similar to the closing of Vespers, the chanters sing "Benedicamus Domino" to which all respond "Deo gratias." The final rubric reads: "Then the presider blesses the people with the relic and venerates it, the organ plays and all the bells ring."²⁸ The relic of St. Francis emerges here as an important object in the rite. The blessing of the people with the relic points to the public character of the rite; the blessing was not only for the friars, but for all who gathered from the local church. A note of festivity at the end of the ritual shows itself in the playing of the organ and the ringing of the bells.²⁹

The next testimony to the Transitus is found in the 1895 edition of the *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum*³⁰ recommended for the use of all Franciscans

throughout the world. The simplicity of the 1893 French rite begins to disappear while complexity of ceremonial builds in the 1895 Roman rite. The clear-cut and well-defined ceremony is framed by the relic of the saint and embellished reverences toward it. The first directive of this Roman ritual stylizes the progression of events which serves to fix the rite into a defined pattern.³¹ The familiar "O sanctissima anima" is then said or sung, though neither is specified. After the antiphon, Psalm 142 finds its place. The psalm's last verse recalling the saint's moment of death is highlighted with instructions for organ accompaniment.³² After the Gloria Patri, all kneel to recite "five Paters, Aves, and Gloria Patris," but there is no specification for extending the arms.³³ All stand for the antiphon, "Salve, sancte Pater." After the antiphon and before the versicle and response, all kneel "except the Celebrant" who is later specified as the Superior. Proceeding in the same way as the 1893 French rite, the oration is prayed. Then the ceremony closes with the "Benedicamus Domino" and its response, "Deo gratias." The final directive reflects three significant items: the beginning of a distinction of roles within the ritual, the continued inclusion of non-Franciscans, and the festive character of the celebration.³⁴

Four years later in the Belgian Province of St. Joseph, the Friars Minor set out a ritual for the memorial of the passing of Francis in their *Usuale* of 1899.³⁵ Even more detail is offered here in the directives for the celebration. Although no chant notation is provided for the antiphon, psalm, or hymn, there is an increase in the number of directives which points to continuing growth in the ritualization of the Transitus. One only has to look at the progression from the 1887 Irish rite to this 1899 Belgian rite to see the proliferation of detailed instructions and heightened ritualization. It is significant that the verb "celebrate" shows itself here for the first time.³⁶ Modifying adverbs confirm that the ritual was celebrated "festively and solemnly." All candles on the altar are lit; the organ is playing. The "Superior" carries the relic of St. Francis in a procession with a vested deacon and sub deacon preceded by two acolytes, readers, and cantors. The ministry proceeds to the altar where the relic is enthroned. The "Sacerdos/Priest" then incenses the relic "ac duplici ductu." Detailed directions are given locating the standing positions ofthurifers, cantors, and readers. Then the "O sanctissima anima" is intoned.³⁷ Next, Psalm 142 is sung "in the fifth tone," a further specification in this ritual. No embellishment of the "Educ de custodia" is mentioned although an organ interlude is suggested to enhance the solemnity of the text.³⁸ After the psalm's conclusion with the Gloria Patri, all are directed to extend their arms and quietly pray five Paters, Aves, and Gloria Patris. When the "superior" is ready, the organ gives the tone to the cantors and readers for the intonation of the "Salve, sancte Pater." Then all kneel except the "celebrants" who sings the verse, "Franciscus pauper et humilis..." All respond with "Hymnis coelestibus..." after which the

celebrant sings the oration. Then the cantors and the readers, not the celebrant or superior, sing the "Benedicamus Domino" to which all respond "Deo gratias." No musical notation is provided for those parts, so familiarity with their melodies may be presumed.

What is striking about this entire Belgian rite is the complexification of ceremonial and heightened ritualization. The ritual was certainly on its way to becoming a solemnized devotional practice for Franciscans and for the people who regularly prayed with them. Consider the following instruction: "After this, the Superior, or a priest wearing a white cope, blesses the people with the relic of our Holy Father Saint Francis, and meanwhile the organ plays and the bells ring from the intonation of the first antiphon until the Benedicamus Domino inclusively."³⁹ The question of presidency emerges here. Was it the Superior, the coped priest, or the coped priest-Superior who presided? Whether this was an issue at all is difficult to determine from the text. This directive also explicitly cites that the tower bells ring throughout most of the rite from the first antiphon, that is, "O sanctissima anima," to the final "Benedicamus Domino." The next directive clearly suggests that the Transitus was not an intramural devotion but open to all in the local church. It also clearly notes a definite ordering of the assembly wherein the friars were first to venerate the relic while the faithful followed.⁴⁰ The ritual action of kissing the relic and a silent recessional without organ or bells is evident here. A final directive notes for the first time that Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follows the rite, thus associating the commemoration of the saint's death with Eucharistic devotion.⁴¹

The *Proprium Sanctorum*⁴² contains a commemoration of the death of Francis which includes all the familiar elements, although with minimal directives. Before the text of the opening antiphon, "O sanctissima anima," and the chant notation provided for it, a brief instruction is given.⁴³ The "O sanctissima anima" is followed immediately by the text of Psalm 142 without instruction preceding the text and without musical notation. The suggestion for organ accompaniment and the directive for singing the "Educ de custodia" has vanished. After the psalm text, the italics simply read: "After the Gloria Patri...all kneel and recite five Paters, Aves, and Gloria Patris, and then the 'Salve, sancte Pater' is sung."⁴⁴ The text of the oration is followed by the "Benedicamus Domino." The closing comment once again reflects the vested celebrant's role, the inclusion of the people in the ceremony, the simple blessing with, but not the kissing of, the relic, and the sounding of the organ and bells.⁴⁵

Only five years after the *Proprium Sanctorum*, the *Caeremoniale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1908⁴⁶ includes not even an allusion to the Transitus. However, it does find its way into the *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1910.⁴⁷ Like the earlier *Rituale* of 1895,⁴⁸ chant notation is not suggested for the anti-

phons, psalm, hymn, or responses. Unlike the *Rituale* of 1895, parenthetical instructions regarding incensations and positions of ministry are fully incorporated into the directives. The presider changes from a "Sacerdos" to a "Celebrant" throughout, and the cantors intone the antiphon.⁴⁹ A simple instruction is given for the singing of Psalm 142. Accenting the psalm's last verse is once again encouraged and, after the Gloria Patri, the "O sanctissima anima" antiphon is repeated. Then all kneel to recite five Paters, Aves, and Gloria Patris. Whether these were said aloud or silently, as cross prayers or not, cannot be determined from the instruction.⁵⁰ Next all stand and the cantors begin the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater." Then all kneel and two cantors sing: V. "Franciscus pauper et humilis..." R. "Hymnis coelestibus..." Whether one cantor sang the verse and the other responded, or both sang the verse and the assembly responded, cannot be known from the text. The "Celebrant" stands and prays the oration and closes with the "Benedicamus Domino." The final comment testifies to the celebrant's incensation of the relic and his blessing of the people with it. The friars are the first to kiss the relic; the people follow. Finally, more explicitly than ever, the statement appears: "...meanwhile the organ and the bells sound festively."⁵¹

The exact text of the 1910 *Rituale* is contained in the *Manuale Precum*,⁵² a devotional prayer book compiled in 1915 for the North American Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. One suspects that other provinces throughout the English-speaking world and beyond must have been using the same rite. The same text appears in the 1915 Capuchin *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum*⁵³ while the rubrics are significantly amplified to include minute detail of word, movement, and gesture. A formula for individual blessings with the relic is also provided.⁵⁴

Essentially similar and consistent with the texts contained in both the *Rituale* of 1895 and of 1910 but with some significant additions, the *Cantuale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1922⁵⁵ includes those elements which by this time have come to be regarded as essential to the ritual: the "O sanctissima anima," Psalm 142, the five Paters, Aves, and Glorias, the "Salve, sancte Pater," the oration, the closing "Benedicamus Domino," the incensation of the relic, and the blessing with it. The chant notation for the "O sanctissima anima" and the "Salve, sancte Pater" are significantly different from other texts which include musical notation.⁵⁶ Psalm 142 offers the same psalm tone here as in previous rituals while the notation for the "Benedicamus Domino" and its response is extremely florid. An extraordinary and significant addition in the 1922 *Cantuale* is its recommendation to sing an unspecified song in the vernacular to accompany the religious and laity's veneration of the relic. Meanwhile, the organ and bells are to sound festively.⁵⁷

A small devotional prayer book for members of the Third Order of St. Francis entitled *The Tertiaries Companion*⁵⁸ was published in 1923 and in-

cluded no reference to the Transitus. In 1926, the work of an American Franciscan historian, Fr. Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M., was published as *Glories of the Franciscan Order*.⁵⁹ It included a brief history of the Order, devotions popularized by the Order, and the Order's contribution to culture, society, mission countries, and education. In its second chapter, "The Order and Catholic Devotions," the Transitus is absent.⁶⁰ Thus, in the year of the septcentenary of Francis' death, a ritual recalling his passing was not considered significant enough to be included in such a collection. The annual devotion was not on a par with other daily, weekly, or monthly devotions.

In the *Officium ac Missa de Festo S.P.N. Francisci* of 1926,⁶¹ a Transitus ceremony is set out with little instruction. By this time the chant notation offered throughout the rite would have been familiar since it is the same as that contained in the *Proprium Sanctorum* of 1903.⁶² The instructional details regarding positions, incensations, and ordering of the assembly have vanished.⁶³ Without introduction or directions, the rite presents a familiar psalm tone for Psalm 142. The antiphon is repeated and then all kneel to pray the five Paters, Aves, and Glorias. No directive regarding cross prayers is given. All stand and sing the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater" and kneel to sing the versical and response. The text of the oration, which more often than not has been provided, is not given here, although familiarity with it seems presupposed. Before the "Benedicamus Domino," the italics simply read "Intoned after the oration."⁶⁴ There follows no reference to relic, people, organ, or bells. Perhaps there was either a silent exit or the final ritual action was left to local custom and discretion.

Another small devotional prayer book compiled in 1926 for the Dutch Province, *Promptuarium Seraphicum*,⁶⁵ reflects a verbatim copy of the *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1910. The same appears in its 1936 edition⁶⁶ and its 1948 edition.⁶⁷ The more complex directives appear in the earlier edition while the later two razor down the rubrics to terse phrases.⁶⁸ The *Caeremoniale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1927⁶⁹ includes no reference to the Transitus.

Of great significance is the Spanish prayer book, "*Vamos tras él...*," published in 1929.⁷⁰ It contains a simple Transitus, not in Latin but only in the vernacular. Three familiar elements make up the rite. The antiphon, "Oh, alma santísima," is followed simply by the versicle, "Francisco, pobre y humilde, entra rico en el cielo," and the response, "Con celestiales himnos es honrado," without the entire text of the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater." The familiar oration concludes the ritual. These three components are prefaced with a suggestion to include other prayers and litanies which are found within the same devotional book. This points to the fluidity and unfixed character of the rite in Spain and in other Spanish-speaking countries which used this prayer book.

The *Manuale Chori* or *Manual of Prayers* of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph in the United States⁷¹ includes "In Transitu S.P.N. Francisci (die 4 Octobris)" which is a copy of the rite from the *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1910 with embellished Latin directives and a brief English introduction which specifies the logistics of the rite.⁷² A curious addition concludes that introduction: "After the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament the relic is offered to the Friars and the faithful for veneration."⁷³ This practice of Benediction is reminiscent of the 1899 Belgian rite. However, it appears as only a suggestion in the Belgian rite⁷⁴ whereas it is clearly a directive and even presupposed in this 1933 North American rite.

The 1934 edition of the *Manuale Precum*⁷⁵ for the North American Holy Name Province of Friars Minor contains the same ritual as its 1915 edition which was a reproduction of the rite in the 1910 *Rituale*. Likewise, the 1953 edition of the same prayer book for the North American St. John the Baptist Province of Friars Minor replicates that rite.⁷⁶ Another Tertiary's prayer book of 1941, *Blessed Saint Francis: A Distinctive Tertiary Prayer Book*,⁷⁷ includes essentially the 1910 *Rituale* with an English translation. Unlike the early Tertiary's devotional book of 1923⁷⁸ which did not contain the Transitus, the 1941 prayer book values the ritual as part of the Secular Franciscans' spirituality. The 1942 publication of the *Franciscan Supplement to the Daily Missal* by St. Anthony Guild Press⁷⁹ shows no sign of the Transitus. However, it includes proper prayers for the Mass on October 3 to commemorate "The Transference of the Body of St. Clare."⁸⁰ The *Missale Romano-Seraphicum* of the same year⁸¹ makes no mention of the Transitus. The unique contribution of this missal is the Vigil Mass for October 3 with proper prayer in honor of St. Francis. It is curious that none of its elements resemble the Transitus or make allusions to the saint's passing.

In 1943 the *Piccolo Cerimoniale Romano-Serafico* II⁸² simply refers to a part of the Transitus under the heading "Alla benedizione colle Reliquie" without further specification of the rite itself. An aside in smaller print than the comment on the blessing with the relic testifies to the time of celebration (on the evening of the third of October), the place where it takes place (at the shrine or chapel of St. Francis), and the singing of Psalm 142. It is here, for the first time, that mention is made of individual candles carried by each of the friars.⁸³ Whether candles were carried by other participants is not mentioned; it may be presumed that only the friars held them.

*The Tertiary Ritual for Special Occasions*⁸⁴

The Capuchin *Caeremoniale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1944⁸⁵ witnesses to a highly liturgized rite with extensive specified detail regarding vesture, move-

ment, and procedure. No musical notation is offered. The "Sacerdos" with the ministers make the proper reverence upon entry, and then all kneel. The text of the "O sanctissima anima" and Psalm 142 are given. The final verse of the psalm, "Educ de custodia," appears in capital letters to heighten that moment when Francis experienced his transitus. After the psalm's Gloria Patri, the antiphon is repeated. All kneel and recite five Paters, Aves, and Glorias. No mention is made of the arms' position during these prayers. All then stand and sing the "Salve, sancte Pater" after which all kneel once again while two cantors sing the versicle and response followed by the celebrant's oration.⁸⁶

The closing rite in this 1944 Capuchin *Caeremoniale* is of special significance. Although the ritual was open to all in the local church, the ordering of the assembly is clearly specified, that is, during the veneration of the relic, the friars go to the altar and the faithful go to the communion rail or to the chapel or side altar. During the veneration the priest makes an intercessory prayer in prescribed words over each person,⁸⁷ the same formula as the 1915 Capuchin *Rituale*.⁸⁸ When all have venerated the saint's relic, the priest, carrying the relic of the saint, returns to the sacristy with the ministers.⁸⁹

The third edition of the *Cantuale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1951⁹⁰ follows the main lines of the ritual with familiar chant tones and possible alternations for all sung parts of the Transitus: the "O sanctissima anima," Psalm 142, the "Salve, sancte Pater," and the concluding versicles and responses. The few directives, though considerably simplified, are consistent with the previous rituals. No mention of the relic is made other than its incensation at the beginning of the ceremony.

Though not as detailed as the 1944 Capuchin *Caeremoniale*, the Franciscan *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum* of 1955⁹¹ offers some specifics in its rather lengthy introductory and concluding remarks. Regarding the time of the ceremony itself, an explicit distinction is made for the first time between the Vigil of the Solemnity and the Solemnity itself.⁹² The friars are then instructed to gather at the shrine or altar of St. Francis with candles lit.⁹³ Recall the aside in the *Piccolo Cerimoniale Romano-Serafica* of 1943 regarding the friars carrying lit candles. That directive finds its way into this 1955 *Rituale*. The friars are to come together "candelos ardetes gestantes." The "celebrant" dressed in a white cope imposes incense in the thurible and blesses it in the customary way. After a profound bow of the head, he then incenses the relic of Francis "duplici ductu cum duplici ictu." All stand around Francis' altar and the cantors begin the antiphon, "O sanctissima anima," followed immediately by the intonation of Psalm 142.⁹⁴

After the Gloria Patri, the antiphon is repeated and the candles extinguished. Five Paters, Aves, and Glorias are then recited. The standing assembly sings

the "Salve, sancte Pater." All kneel while two cantors sing the versicle and response. Then the celebrant stands to sing the oration. After the cantors chant the closing versicles and response, the celebrant again imposes incense and blesses it, makes a profound bow, stands, incenses the relic "duplici ductu cum duplici ictu" and blesses the people with it. The friars and then the people venerate it with a kiss.

The popular 1961 *Tertiary's Companion*⁹⁵ makes no mention of the Transitus. However, unlike the 1942 St. Anthony's Guild *Franciscan Supplement*⁹⁶ which gives no hint of familiarity with the Transitus, the *Franciscan Supplement* to Dom Gasper Lefebvre's *St. Andrew Daily Missal*, both the 1958 and the 1961 editions, include the familiar ceremony of the Transitus with the Latin text and its English translation.⁹⁷ The introductory remarks move away from the usual functional and procedural directives and more toward an historical contextualization and didactic instruction which fulfills the primary purpose of informing the assembly of what is to come. The time for the ceremony is fixed on the evening of October 3; the Johannine gospel is mentioned in the opening remarks; the sacrificial character of Francis' death is alluded to; the singing of the "Voce mea" and the saint's expiration is retained as the climactic moment.⁹⁸ The rite begins with the singing of Psalm 142; the "O sanctissima anima" follows only once after the psalm, unlike the previous practice of repeating it before and after the psalm. The five Paters, Aves, and Glorias are prayed while kneeling. This is followed with the singing of the "Salve, sancte Pater." Although the posture during the chanting of this antiphon is not made explicit, one presumes the assembly stood because the assembly is instructed to kneel before the antiphon's versicle and response which follows. The oration and the concluding versicles and responses close the ritual. The relic-action frames the rite and a sense of festivity returns. Closing instructions are put plainly and simply without ritual detail: "The celebrant now blesses the people with the relic which is afterwards venerated while the organ plays and the bells are rung."⁹⁹

Concluding Remarks.

The earliest available Transitus rituals reflect one of two tendencies: the citing of texts ("O sanctissima anima," Psalm 142, and "Salve, sancte Pater") without rubrical instructions or the citing of these same texts with detailed rubrical instructions, or with rubrics which seem detailed but remain vague in significant areas such as designated ministerial roles, changing body postures, and the ordering of the assembly. The building up of local custom evidently complexified an originally simple ritual of psalm singing and relic veneration. Simplicity turned to pluriformity. It was only a matter of time before a need for uniformity arose to fix texts and rubrics so that all Franciscans might observe

the same ritual word and action on the night before their founder's solemnity. Yet in the midst of this drive toward uniformity of expression, one must read through the vagueness of the rubrical instructions. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the early architects of the rite acknowledged consistent elements of the rite. They retained a familiar ritual structure. At the same time, they allowed freedom of interpretation and accommodation of local customs already in place.

To some readers, the exposition and analysis thus far may seem a painstaking and tedious exercise in delineating trivial ritual details. Nonetheless, important ritual patterns configure up to and including the era of the Second Vatican Council. The best way to address the issue of initial ritual development is to pose the question: What were the elements of the rite without which the Transitus would no longer be the Transitus? The data gathered from the sampling of available pre-conciliar rites helps us claim six consistent elements essential to the proper enactment of the rite: 1) the antiphon, "O sanctissima anima"; 2) Psalm 142, the "Voce mea"; 3) the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater" with its versicle and response; 4) the closing oration; 5) the blessing with and the veneration of the relic of St. Francis; and 6) the presence of non-Franciscans. Only a few of these elements survive as essential in post-conciliar rites. The data also discloses that Franciscans tended to stabilize their ritual books, but in no way were intent on rigidifying ritual praxis. To cite a few examples: some rites testify to excessive rubrics while others give little if any instruction on the enactment of the rite; the use of candles is specified in some rites but not in others; Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is recommended and even presumed in some rites while not included in others. What is important for our study is to admit of clear variations in approach while acknowledging definite ritual patterns which developed and somewhat stabilized as the Church approached the threshold of the Second Vatican Council.

For many Franciscans of more mature years, the very mention of the "O sanctissima anima," the "Voce mea," and the "Salve, sancte Pater" trigger melodies and movements which evoke memories of what once constituted a significant part of Franciscan identity, that once-a-year-day when we sang those beautiful chants and honored that relic as a manifestation of the abiding personal presence of Francis of Assisi among us. The present author remembers the profound effect one ritual gesture had on him as a high-school boy in the minor seminary. Before venerating the relic, all the friars unfastened their sandal straps, approached the relic barefoot while genuflecting three times before kneeling to kiss it. This ritual movement does not show itself explicitly in any of the rituals reviewed here. Thus it serves as a good example of ways in which local custom often became the unwritten norm as well as the annual expectation for the proper celebration of the rite. One would not think of not doing it this way!

When meanings change, rituals shift to create forms carrying a new world of meaning for a new generation of Franciscans.

But, of course, time changes meanings. When meanings change, rituals shift to create forms carrying a new world of meaning for a new generation of Franciscans. Before part two of this article reaches the light of day in a future issue of the *Cord*, most of the readers of this first part will have already celebrated their own community's annual commemoration of the passing of Francis. If the reader has not yet celebrated the Transitus, or if its recent celebration is still fresh in the reader's mind and heart, entertain the following questions in your own thought and prayer as a way to prepare for the reading of this article's second part: 1) What were your expectations of the Transitus this year?; 2) What helped you pray? What left you uncomfortable, uneasy?; 3) What do you think the rite is trying to say about Franciscans? about St. Francis?; 4) How is it that people come together every year to do this?; and 5) Did you feel like an observer or a participant in the rite?

To close this first part of the essay, an insight from the cultural anthropologist, Joseph Campbell, may motivate and mobilize our study and move our concerns forward. He reviews the key qualities of the life of the hero by looking to the critical moment of the hero's departure: "The last act in the biography of the hero is that of the death or departure. Here the whole sense of the life is epitomized. Needless to say, the hero would be no hero if death held for him any terror; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave."¹⁰⁰ The last act in the life of Francis tells of his final moments. Once reconciled with the grave, he embraces Sister Death and passes from life into Life. In the annual ritualization of his passing, his death story is retold. In the act of his dying, his entire life is summed up; its meaning for our Franciscan lives is intensified for another year of Christian living. His followers ritually revisit the story of the charismatic founder and specify its final moment. We intensify the memory of the ways his life initially inspired our own, however long ago. Once again we find new reasons to remain faithful to the same gospel task of conformity to Christ. Does our current use of the rite, however avant garde or traditional it may be, help us acknowledge these realities and accomplish these ends?¹⁰¹

The Death of St. Francis

Some would never have asked Brother Fire to be kind,
But would have watched the flame hypnotically afraid
To become the pyre consuming all they ever became:
Nor would they have apologized for Brother Ass's pain
Or sympathized with such intolerable suffering.

It is hard to contemplate this death as an offering
When the gun and bomb, and laser-sighted pin-point
Death screams that everything is freedom and peace.

Dear God, such emptiness, such hurt, such blood:
But what then — to hide under the hood of despair
Or be the love-pyre with the tortured dream intact?

I do not know, but some today let escape the scream
Hideous and primeval, mouth drawn, teeth stained red
Eyes blank and dead and condemn such a brute God.

What then Little man, what then and what more for brothers

And sisters shaking laser — mailed fists, rattling

The computerized sabers, congratulating precisioned
Impersonal death of sanded deserts where humanity is scorched
As the barren, brittle death dust on which the fight and die.

What then Little man and what more as birds gather
And sad faced friends sing good-bye with cracking hearts?
Your light departs as swiftly as yourself — but you had birds
With crested hoods and wings more naturally computerized
Than twisted heaps of metal and blackened mass of stones
That was both your bed and tomb. What more then, Francis,

With Christ's wounds still bleeding on this stigmatized
World and gaping holes in hands, hearts and races and places
Not even mapped: all this and nothing more?

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

"This Dark Mystery:" The Franciscan Vocation of Saint Clare of Assisi

DR. WILLIAM C. ZEHRINGER

"She was the princess of the poor, the duchess of the humble, the mistress of the chaste, the abbess of the penitent . . . Her very life was for others a school of instruction and doctrine."¹ That timeless tribute, drawn from the **Document of Canonization** of Saint Clare of Assisi (ca. 1194-1253), encapsulates in an admirable way the quality of the Franciscan vocation that was the guiding star of her long and uniquely edifying life.

The very existence of that vocation to evangelical poverty, the strongest and most fruitful offshoot of the saint's inspired friendship with Francis, gives reason to affirm that the religious aspirations of women found an honored place in the medieval world.

But the life-long struggle which Saint Clare of Assisi was forced to undertake, in order to win approval for the type of order that she wished to establish, is reason enough to qualify that judgment. As the great Viennese medievalist, Friedrich Heer, pointed out, "The Middle Ages had conspicuously failed to solve the problem of women's place in society; it was left as a heavy mortgage on the future."²

A gifted, sensitive child, Chiara ("light") was born, a decade after Francesco di Bernardone, into one of the great, noble families of Assisi, a town set in the midst of the lovely Umbrian landscape. There, to borrow words of Horace, "Continui montes, ni dissociantur opaca / valle, sed ut veniens dextrum latus adspiciat sol." ("A chain of mountains, with a vale divide, that opens to the sun on either side.")³ But Assisi, with its proud and turbulent history, was a community riven by conflict, between those with newly acquired wealth and the old

The author holds a doctorate in Middle English. He has published short stories and has delivered scholarly papers at regional conferences of medievalists. This fine essay will appear as a chapter in "Women of the Middle Ages: Saints and Mystics," a book he is writing for Edwin Mellen Press. Dr. Zehring is a writing instructor at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.

aristocracy, and between rich and poor. Perhaps Clare's "untiring defense of the charism of poverty," which Fathers Armstrong and Brady termed "her great contribution to the Franciscan tradition," was born in her great soul as she witnessed, early in life, those extremes of insensate greed and stark misery so evident in medieval society.⁴ In any event, her young life was marked by many visitations of grace, and an ardent desire to give herself over to the service of Christ's poor. The means to the achievement of that holy calling were close at hand.

The blessed friendships of Francis and Clare seems to be one of those fateful conjunctions that testify to the movement of Providence in the spiritual history of the race: One calls to mind Saints Augustine and Monica, Benedict and Scholastica, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal. Of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi, those two heralds of Divine Mercy, Paul Sabatier wrote: "But sometimes-more often than we think- there are souls so pure, so little earthly, that on their first meeting they enter the most holy place."⁵

In Giovanni di Paolo's splendid painting, "Francis accepts Clare into His Religious Community," the artist has immortalized the precise moment of Clare's entry into the Franciscan Order.⁶ There is a vivid contrast between the cloister and church viewed to the left of the picture, and the diminutive novice, her hair shortened, as she kneels before the altar and crucifix in a bare cell. She is already garbed in the Franciscan habit, while Francis and two companions hold items of her former clothing. And Francis himself is most heartily welcoming Clare into the (as yet) small company of servants of Lady Poverty.

From this and other examples of early Franciscan iconography, including the portrait of Saint Clare that emerges from the **Fioretti**, one may readily see the superlative value that the Poverello placed on her myriad contributions to the spiritual life of the Order.⁷ But to what sort of religious vocation was he leading her? What needs of the time and of his society did his unrelenting genius discern?

One of the most remarkable insights of the saint was his ability to judge, correctly, that a band of begging friars, praising God and ministering to the stricken poor in the lost corners of the world, could show his society the way out of the pride, selfishness and despair that were tearing at its very foundations.

Indeed it was so. For it was in those very Italian cities that have been made immortal by Francis's sojourns in and around them, that there first began to emerge, in his century, "the capitalist rational economy" that Octavio Paz has so brilliantly dissected: "At the same time that gold disappears from the dress of men and women and from altars and palaces, it becomes the invisible blood of mercantile society and circulates, odorless and colorless, in every country."⁸

And so, the divine calling to which Saint Francis directed not only Clare but also his first companions, had everything to do with opposing the headlong foolishness and largesse of all Lovers of the Living God to the spirit of calculation and profit that was to so seam the face of the modern world. And so they did, with singular panache and inspired song, down the roads of Europe and far beyond them.

What is the key to the unrivaled success and astonishing influence of the first generation of Franciscans, something which is unique in the annals of religious history? How did they carry the many fruits of their personal conversions forward with such gusto, that they came very close to completely renewing the spiritual life of their professedly Christian society? Perhaps the source of their sleepless fervor was none other than what Evelyn Underhill signified, quite perceptively, when she remarked on "the peculiar concentration on the passion which unites all the Franciscan mystics."⁹ And that very imitation of the Crucified Lord would become, for Francis and those who followed him, the only doctrine they needed in order to bring the Love of God to the men and women of their time and place.

The early Franciscans, whose very vocations to prayer and evangelical poverty were a direct result of their founder's intuitions into the spiritual malaise of individuals, and his vision of a just human society, had uncanny insights into the psychology of acquisitiveness and its certain cure. But among the host of luminous Franciscan mystics, few had the sagacity of the founder of the Poor Clares, who most confidently affirmed, in one of her letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague, that "Contempt of the world has pleased you more than (its) honors, poverty more than earthly riches."¹⁰

What Saint Clare is setting out here is, of course, the story of her friend's conversion, the unmistakable signs of which are Agnes's unselfish spirit and the spiritualizing of her suffering, the blessed consequence of that inner conversion that should (but often does not) precede all attempts to preach salvation to an unrepentant humanity.

What salutary lessons might not have been garnered, from the devotion to the Cross of Franciscan saints such as Clare of Assisi, by the architects of modern revolutions. For their sorrowful careers of fanaticism showed, time and again, a tragic descent from youthful idealism to a brutal and naked will to power. Could that have come about, with so much bitter grief for the world, because, in the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar, they wanted to "live and rise again without dying"? "But Christ's love," he adds, "wishes to die, in order that, through death, it may rise again beyond death in God's form."¹¹

Franciscan mystics such as Clare were acutely aware of the trials to the flesh and spirit that were part of that call to holiness. In order to give examples

of apostolic life to their fellow-Christians, they resolved to imitate Christ even (and especially) to the point of sharing the pains of his Passion, and giving over all that they owned. And thus they lived, both before the world and in their hearts, the self-denial and fathomless charity that they preached in and out of season.

It may be that only poets of the first rank ever approach the mystery of such joining of souls to the oceanic Love of God. Jacopone da Todi wrote, in a meditation on the stigmata: "I have no words for this dark mystery; / How can I understand or explain / the superabundance of riches, / the disproportionate love of a heart on fire?"¹²

Very soon, Clare gathered other women around her, forming communities that chose "to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel."¹³ One of that august band of holy women who were also foundresses, the saint was soon to encounter very serious opposition to the type of life, including the absence of all ownership of property, that she sought for herself and her sisters. And, while she was forced to compromise and accept the directives issued for her order by Roman authority, she never ceased working for the embodiment of her ideal of radical and heroic poverty.

This was no trivial dispute. For Clare saw a growing threat to the pristine, initial vision of Francis that first brought the saint and his followers together, what John Holland Smith called "the simple quest for perfection of the early days."¹⁴ In her commitment to the purity of the saint's original inspiration, Clare demonstrated profound insight into the very *raison d'être* of that Company of Friars who had gone forth to change the world. But Cardinal Hugolino, who tried to establish a canonical structure for her order, may be credited with seeing that, without a set of firm and binding rules, inspiration may one day dwindle and die out, like a river in a desert.¹⁵ G.K. Chesterton aptly summed up the pertinacious pursuit by Saint Clare of her true vocation, when he noted that "She did most truly, in the modern jargon, live her own life."¹⁶

That life which, as has been seen, was the inspiration for the heroic sacrifices of the many other valiant women who followed her example, was above all a school of interior prayer, of holy living and holy dying. And Clare's incomparable Imitation of Christ, in her thoughts and her actions, is still enabling countless souls to open themselves to the movements of Divine Grace. In our own century, Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity placed in her notes a beautiful summation of the quest for eternal life: "You, my Poor Clares, work through interior acts, God alone sees them. That is the truest action; it is that which is, and which lasts through eternity."¹⁷

That life which, as has been seen, was the inspiration for the heroic sacrifices of the many other valiant women who followed her example, was above all a school of interior prayer, of holy living and holy dying.

Those words of the Poor Clare of Jerusalem are an excellent starting point for an examination of Saint Clare of Assisi's exemplary journey into the heart of the Mystery of Divine Love. What is most striking is Sister Mary's assertion that "interior acts" are "the truest action." When one calls to mind the manifold deeds of supernatural charity that grace the luminous pages of Franciscan history, from the Poverello's embracing of lepers, to the missions undertaken by the Order at the present time, it would seem, at first glance, that those who wear the habit of Francis are preeminent examples of Kipling's "sons of Martha." But the happily preserved writings of Clare and other Franciscan saints show that contemplation and interior prayer have always occupied the first place in their roster of sacred works.

From the pellucid fountain of Franciscan spirituality in the thirteenth century came, for example, Bonaventure's beautiful mingling of speculative philosophy and theology of prayer. The Seraphic Doctor could well have had the interior life of Francis and Clare in mind when he wrote:

"Sec, therefore, how close the soul is to God, and how, in their operations, the memory leads to eternity, the understanding to truth and the power of choice to the highest good."¹⁸

The spiritual theology of the Franciscan tradition is nowhere better shown forth than in that passage from *The Soul's Journey into God*. The faculties of human reason are there described in their perfected state. It is precisely the person whose soul has arrived at such a blessed juncture, and who has glimpsed for a moment "the dim battlements of eternity," who can most assuredly carry on the work of Christ's Church in a cold and unfeeling world.

Francis, who had the rare gift of discernment of spirits, paid the loftiest tribute of which he was capable to Clare and her sisters, recognizing their arduous pursuit of sanctity and their practice of the virtues attendant upon the service of Holy Poverty. "By divine inspiration," he told them, "you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the most high King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse."¹⁹

The authenticated writings of Clare of Assisi do not include the kinds of mystical treatises that have allowed a grateful posterity to trace the workings of

Divine Grace in the lives of Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, or Catherine of Siena. There is, from her hand, no record of the soul's journey that may be placed beside Hildegard's *Scivias*, Catherine's *Dialogue*, or Julian's *Showings*. And yet, there are imperishable works that bear witness to the Love that took her to the land of Eternal Bliss, even in this life. Her Letters, Rule, and Testament, full of seasoned wisdom, are like stars lighting the way to perfection; or at least that has been so for those who have made the effort to follow Clare of Assisi's bracing spiritual counsels. For one may find in her writings a wholly convincing portrait of a soul in the state of grace, "a heart on fire," that can only have emerged from one who had herself been raised to the heights of contemplation.

One can only surmise about the depth of mystical experience that gave that great Franciscan woman the supreme confidence to say, in her *Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges*:

"O dearest one, look up to heaven, which calls us on, and take up the Cross and follow Christ Who has gone on before us: for through Him we shall enter into His glory after many and diverse tribulations."²⁰

The fact of Clare's imparting such dulcet teaching in her correspondence more than testifies to the way in which she viewed her Franciscan vocation. She was aware that the manifold gifts of the Spirit, showered upon her since her youth, were not meant for her delight alone. Even the highest benediction of her life, the happy conversion that marked her soul forever, heralded a call to "behave in the pattern of Christ," and gather like-minded disciples around her.²¹

From Clare's exhortations to ascetic virtue and holy charity, a composite picture may be viewed, of what might be termed the man or woman who has been formed and guided by Franciscan ideals. How may such disciples of the Poverello and the Foundress of the Poor Clares be recognized, if not by the peace and joy of their countenances, and their compassion for created nature and humankind?²²

Now it is certainly true that those identifiably Franciscan qualities are the fruits of heroic self-denial, of a person's valiant attempt "to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour," in the words of Henry David Thoreau.²³ Yet no-one should be less likely than the Franciscan to allow the pains of that slow spiritual process, wherein a recalcitrant will is moved from the love of comfort to the embrace of heroic poverty, to be shown before the world.²⁴

It may well be wondered how that idea of self-effacement might comport with Clare's admonition to Agnes of Prague to make herself "contemptible in the world for Him"?²⁵ Once again, it must be remembered that it was the unparal-

leed mission of the early Franciscans to set their practices of self-denial over against nascent ideologies of wealth and power that were already producing a foul harvest of hatred between classes, and would one day lead to woeful strife among nations.

For what may be termed the exemplary Franciscan virtues of Holy Poverty and Holy Charity were not only models of the way to personal sanctity. The spiritual theology that went to form their communities was also available to the society at large, as is well attested by the saint's successful interdiction of conflicts between Italian city-states.

Another marked quality that flows out of the Franciscan way of looking at life and the universe is the composure and gentleness that are the true signs of its presence. From Clare's admonitions and her uplifting remarks to her sisters and companions, it is possible to see the way in which the followers of the Poor Man of Assisi have left their mark on all subsequent explorations of the way to inner peace.

In one of her **Sermons**, Clare's younger temporary, St. Umilta of Faenza, declared that "Whoever wishes to listen well to divine speech must enclose himself in great silence."²⁶ This, too, is a quality of Franciscan spirituality. Francis often fled to wild and solitary wastes, in order to lose himself wholly in prayer. That most congenial of saints knew the value of solitude, as did Clare, if only to undertake that periodic examination of motive and conscience that must be part of the regimen of all who preach the Gospel.

Finally, there emerges from Clare's instructions an arresting idea of the nature of obedience "through love, not duty," surely a positive rebuke to a demonic authority that seeks to crush, not heal.

One finds in Clare's life and her writings a continual set of petitions to her Dear Lord, for the grace to love Him all the more. And thus the great woman and mystic of Assisi must be counted a part of that company of saints throughout the ages, who have assuaged their hearts' deepest longing by immersing themselves in the Infinite Love of God.

Endnotes

¹ Quoted in Murray Bodo, **Clare: A Light in the Garden** (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1979) 33.

² **The Medieval World: Europe, 1100-1350**, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: A Mentor Book — The New American Library, 1961) 323.

³ "Epistulae 16," **Satires and Epistles**, ed., with Introduction and Notes, by Edward P. Morris (1939; Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968) 98.

The translation is taken from **The Complete Works of Horace**, ed., with an Introduction, by Casper J. Kraemer, Jr. (1936; New York: A Modern Library Book — Random House, Inc., 1963) 346.

⁴ This quotation from Clare of Assisi and all others that follow are taken from **Francis and Clare: The Complete Works**, trans. and Introduction Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, O.F.M., with a Preface by John Vaughn, O.F.M., *The Classics of Western Spirituality: A Library of the Great Spiritual Masters*, Kevin A. Lynch, C.S.P., President and Publisher (New York: the Paulist Press, 1982) 177, hereafter referred to as Armstrong and Brady.

⁵ **Life of St. Francis of Assisi**, trans. Louise Seymour Houghton (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894) 148.

⁶ The reproduction of the original painting in the Gallery of the State Museum, Berlin, is in **Saint Francis of Assisi**, photographs by Dennis Stock and text by Lawrence Cunningham (1981; San Francisco: A Scala Book — Harper and Row Publishers, 1989) 51.

⁷ "So he called Brother Masseo and said to him: 'Dear Brother, go to Sister Clare and tell her on my behalf to pray devoutly to God, with one of her purer and more spiritual companions, that he may design to show me what is best: either that I preach sometimes or that I devote myself only to prayers.'"

"How God revealed to St. Clare and Brother Silvester that St. Francis should go and preach," **The Little Flowers of St. Francis**, trans. Raphael Brown, 1st complete edition (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image Books — Doubleday, 1958) 74.

⁸ **Conjunctions and Disjunctions**, trans. Helen Lane (1982; New York: Arcade Publishing — Little, Brown and Company, 1990) 22.

There is still much power in Leo Tolstoy's' biting candid vignette, revealing the exploitation that inheres in the innocent comforts of daily life:

"We are all brothers, but every morning I must have a cigar, a sweetmeat, an ice, and such things, which my brothers and sisters have been wasting their health in manufacturing, and I enjoy these things and demand them. . . . We are all brothers, but I will not give the poor the benefit of my educational, medical, or literary labors except for money."

"Contradiction Between Our Life and Our Christian Conscience," **The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity Not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life**, trans. Constance Garnett (1895; Lincoln, Nebraska and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) 119.

⁹ **The Mystics of the Church** (New York: A Schocken Paperback — Schocken Books, 1964) 93.

¹⁰ Armstrong and Brady 192.

¹¹ **Love Alone**, trans. & ed. Alexander Dru (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969) 112.

¹² "Laud 61, 'St. Francis and the Seven Visions of the Cross,'" **The Lauds**, trans. Serge Hughes, *The Classics of Western Spirituality: A Library of the Great Spiritual Masters*, Kevin A. Lynch, C.S.P., President and Publisher (New York: The Paulist Press, 1982) 189.

¹³ "The Form of Life Given to Saint Clare and Her Sisters." Armstrong and Brady 45.

¹⁴ **Francis of Assisi** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) 114.

¹⁵ There is a startling parallel between the divergent perceptions of Saint Clare and Cardinal Hugolino and the distinction between principles and rules that was outlined by Richard Vernon over a decade ago:

"The life of a community is drawn from the paradigm or principle which guides it without instructing it, while doctrines or rules are instructions which the community formulates for itself in drawing upon its central inspiration."

"Politics as Metaphor: Cardinal Newman and Professor Kuhn," *The Review of Politics* 41 (1979); rpt. in *Paradigms and Revolutions: Appraisals and Applications of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*, ed. Gary Gutting (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980) 251.

¹⁶ *St. Francis of Assisi*, 1st ed. (1924; New York: Doubleday Image books — Doubleday, 1957) 112.

¹⁷ *The Spiritual Legacy of Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity, Poor Clare of Jerusalem (1901-1942)*, ed. Rev. Silvere van den Broek, O.F.M., trans. from the French (1950; Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1981) 171.

¹⁸ *The Soul's Journey into God — The Tree of Life — The Life of St. Francis*, trans. & Introduction Ewert Cousins, with a Preface by Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., the Classics of Western Spirituality (New York and Toronto: The Paulist Press, 1978) 84.

¹⁹ "The Rule of Saint Clare," Armstrong and Brady 218.

²⁰ Armstrong and Brady 208.

²¹ Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth-Century Discover the Individual?" *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, publications of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA 16, 1st ed. (1982; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 90.

²² Max Scheler could have been describing the first Franciscans when he wrote that "Love 'toward' God must always include . . . love of humanity even love of all creatures with God — an *amare mundum in deo*."

"Love and Knowledge," *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing: Selected Writings*, by Max Scheler, Part Two: Knowledge and Social Life, ed., with an Introduction, by Harold J. Bershady, the Heritage of Sociology, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 158.

²³ "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," *Walden*, in *Walden and Other Writings*, ed., with an Introduction, by Brooks Atkinson, Modern Library College Editions (1937; New York: Modern Library — Random House, Inc., 1950) 81.

²⁴ "For the poorer the house or cell, the more was he (Francis) pleased to live therein." *The Mirror of Perfection*, quoted in *A Sourcebook of Medieval History*, ed. Frederic A. Ogg (New York: American Book Company, 1907) 369.

²⁵ "The Second Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague," Armstrong and Brady 197.

²⁶ "Sermons," trans. Richard J. Pioli, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 247.

Book Reviews

Journey to the Light: Spirituality as We Mature, edited by Ann Finch. New Rochelle: New City Press, 1993. 144pp, inc. index of authors. Paper.

Reviewed by Sr. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.F., Pastoral Minister at St. Mary's Church in Baldwinsville, N.Y. Sister Frances, a member of the Editorial Board of the CORD, received an MA in Franciscan Studies at the Franciscan Institute.

"How can one get bored in life if the City of God is there to be built up? How can one suffer from desolation if one can live in communion with God? How can one feel oneself alone if in solitude above all one can converse with God? The Word demands silence." This is an excerpt from this book written by Igino Giordini who lived from 1894-1980. This is just a sample of the uplifting and soul searching quotations the author has taken from well-known writers as well as from the lesser-known writers and thinkers in the hope that these will act as catalysts to jog one's mind and heart.

The author considers this book to be a companion on the journey; or should it be that many companions on the journey are speaking through this book. Finch has divided the book into five parts which take the reader from the journey as pilgrims who encounter hindrances but reach the end by means of spiritual food. The author acknowledges that there is nothing new contained here but perhaps by these selected writings she may aid, challenge, encourage others on the way.

As the author herself says of her work, "...simply pick up the book and dip into it" (p. 12). Opening at random or selecting by section and/or theme is a prayerful approach

to the wisdom contained in this almost pocket edition. The size of the book is convenient for any purse or briefcase and it is, indeed, a very inspiring companion.

BOOKS CELEBRATING OUR SISTER, CLARE

The First Franciscan Woman by Margaret Carney OSF

The long awaited publication of Sister Margaret Carney's doctoral thesis of 1988 from the *Institute of Franciscan Spirituality* of the *Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum*, Rome, Italy arrived from the printer just in time for the *Clarefest*, June 3-6, 1993 at LaCrosse, WI. The thesis title is "The Rule of St. Clare and the Feminine Incarnation of Franciscan Evangelical Life." One chapter of this material was published in its original form in *Greyfriars Review* 3 (1989) under the title, "Francis and Clare: A Critical Examination of the Sources." In August 1989, Margaret presented a summary of her study at the Annual Federation Conference (AFC) in Louisville, KY. At that time, Margaret reflected: "Why have I chosen the Rule of St. Clare for such close scrutiny? Our own experience of the years of revising the *Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular* had much to tell us in answer to these questions. What we came to understand in those crucial years was that the Rule is a document that preserves and guarantees the genetic inheritance of the family. It must enshrine non-negotiables by which we understand, articulate and incarnate a charism. A Rule is not only a summary of personal insight and inspiration, but it stands as a normative foundation that will give rise to graced structures passing from generation to generation of a religious family. It is of critical importance to assess what is selected

and what is negated when a rule text is written. In Clare's case, these decisions were being made after a lifetime of experience. She was choosing that which was essential for the future life of her Franciscan sisters."

Introducing the book, *The First Franciscan Woman*, Margaret writes, "The unfolding of this work is offered as a step in a new conversation in the Franciscan family. Clearly, the time has come to grasp the meaning of Clare and the entire feminine dimension or the Franciscan evangelical life. Everywhere as Franciscans gather, whether for academic convocations, centennial celebrations, or the events by which we continue to nourish our individual lives, the question of Clare, her sisters, and their role in our formation rises to meet us. After decades of incredibly rich discoveries of materials and methods for reclaiming the reality of Francis of Assisi, we are embarking upon the recovery of the "anima" of our charismatic roots."

"I hand this exploration over to all who choose to share it with only one reservation. It is most important that we regard this as the first step in a journey that stretches out before us and which, for the moment holds "horizons that fade forever and forever when we move" (Tennyson's *Ulysses*). We need many other studies, hypotheses, and intuitive searchings. We must establish Clare in her rightful place as a threshold figure among medieval women of spirit. She was the first woman to write a Rule sanctioned with pontifical approval. She dared to synthesize the evangelical ideals of Francis, the new forms of urban female religiosity and the best wisdom of the monastic tradition to create a new and enduring Order in the Church. She testified to Francis not only by the humility of her faithfulness, but by the authority of her leadership and formative ministry. She stands

before us today still serving as *instruction and a lesson to others who learned the rule of living in this book of life* (Rev 21:27) [*Bull of Canonization*, 101]." Let us read this book.

Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study by Ingrid Peterson OSF

The foundation for Clare's life was established by her birth in a feudal society as a woman of the aristocracy. Born in 1193, her formation clearly began before Francis received oral approval of his Rule in 1209. It is incorrect to assume that nothing of significance happened in Clare's life until Francis' way of life was established. There is something to be said about her years before Francis. In 1212, when Clare consecrated herself to God before Francis, she was around eighteen years of age. Clare had been formed by her mother in a household of women who prayed together and gave alms and food to the poor and hungry of Assisi. The biographical material in this study is primarily based on Clare's writings and on what the people who knew Clare said about her in the events burned in their memories. The Poor Ladies who lived with Clare at San Damiano, some more than forty years, and others who knew her as a child in Assisi, recount their experience as evidence about Clare's sanctity. This is what the examiners asked them to relate in their testimonies about Saint Clare: her life, conversion, manner of life, and miracles. Their stories, recorded by a court reporter, are the earliest biographical material about Clare. To this date, four extant Letters written to Agnes of Prague provide autobiographical insight into Clare's spirituality.

The stories on which this biography is based were given as testimonial about how a life of sanctity was lived in the thirteenth century. We need neither agree with nor imitate such a perception of holiness. The

witnesses gave their reports because they believed they provided evidence that Clare was a saint. The evidence is their expression of what constituted sanctity and what gave meaning to their lives. More important, their stories reveal how they believed Clare of Assisi kept God as the hidden center of her life.

At this time in Franciscan studies, the historical facts are too meager to construct a reliable book-length biography of Clare. Because recent scholarship has begun to uncover the history of women of all times, much new information is available about cultures removed from our experience. The studies about medieval women broaden our background to understand what has been documented about the life of Clare. While Chapter One gives a brief narration of Clare's entire story, the remaining chapters tell the story behind the story. They present the primary evidence given by the witnesses at the proceedings for Saint Clare's canonization, without the interpretation of a

masculine hagiographer, placed against the context of the world of a medieval woman. Both books are now available from *Franciscan Press*, Quincy, IL 62301.

In the Footsteps of Saint Clare: The Sacred Places of Clare of Assisi by Ramona Miller, OSF

This book is a guide to the spirituality of Saint Clare of Assisi at the places where she lived and where her body lies. Each chapter gives Clare's life-experience at the place, the historical background, reflections, and suggestions for reading. Her courageous exit from her noble home to a life of poverty at San Damiano has a timeless message for Franciscans and for those who yearn, consciously or unconsciously, to discover God. Communing with Clare in the places where she lived in the thirteenth century opens us to a deeper understanding of her inner life. Order from *The Franciscan Institute*, Saint Bonaventure, NY 14778.

* * *

The Same Place

My brace of blackbirds have returned,
Taken up abode in the garden woodbine.

In May she keeps the frail eggs warm;
He serenades her night, noon and morn.

I can't imagine what makes blackbirds tick; not
Being in love, ask myself what does this prove?

Let there be no minor hurricanes this year,
Nothing to spoil the work of this romance.

The fruit of all this love tossed on the lawn,
Ending up a cat's breakfast? Perish the thought

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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 the People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: 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).

The Promise of Gospel Life

EMANUELA DE NUNZIO, SFO

TRANSLATED BY ROBERT M. STEWART, OFM

"The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi." [*SFO Rule*, 4] For many people this precept represents the alpha and omega of the Secular Franciscan life and exhausts its meaning, contents, and objectives. Consequently, they feel part of the Secular Franciscan Order without further obligation or formality. Certainly the Secular Franciscan Order is *essentially* this, is *above all* this, but it is not *only* this. The Secular Franciscan Order is the unity of all the faithful who "led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own Secular state... [and who] by their profession... pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church." [*SFO Rule*, 2]

The identifying elements of a Secular Franciscan center, therefore, on *Profession*, which the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order define as "the solemn ecclesial act by which the candidate, remembering the call received from Christ, renews the baptismal promises and publicly affirms his or her personal commitment to live the Gospel in the world according to the example of St. Francis and following the Rule of the SFO." [42.1] Thus, the line of demarcation between a friend of St. Francis (one fascinated by his message of joy, of peace, of poverty, of fraternity) and a member of the Secular Franciscan Order is indicated by *Profession*, or the *Promise of Gospel life*.

We might well dwell on this distinction in order to grasp, more than the formal and juridical, the essential and spiritual elements. The formal and juridical aspect is that of an "ecclesial act": public and solemn. The essential, spiritual aspects of Profession are the renewal of baptismal promises, the specific vocation to live the Gospel within a Franciscan spirituality, and the commitment to observe the Rule approved by the Church.

Emanuela De Nunzio, an Italian by birth, made her profession in the Secular Franciscan Order in 1949. She served as a leader in the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Italy, and became involved, on an international level, in the preparatory work for the General Constitutions of the SFO, which were approved in September 1990 by the Holy See. In October 1990, Emanuela was elected Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order at the General Chapter held in Fatima, Portugal.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Baptismal promises are, in their content, a program for a whole new life: life in Christ. St. Paul constantly returns to the preciousness of the gift of Baptism. The steadfast promise of salvation which is tied to this gift is always accompanied by an exhortation to live our baptism and its grace, and not to squander this salvific event. In the Easter vigil liturgy we are reminded of the apostle's exhortation: "so we too might walk in newness of life." [Rm 6:4] Holiness is a journey, in simplicity amidst our normal daily life, from the *initial newness* of Baptism to a *definitive newness* of vision.

But we need acknowledge that most of us were baptized as infants and our baptismal promises were made for us by our godparents. Thus, the event of our own Baptism is not linked to a personal experience and as an existential event, it remains extraneous to us.

In a recent formation seminar I had asked: "Do you ever find yourself thinking about your baptism? What effects does it have in your own life?" The responses, or perhaps more the lack of responses, were significant. Someone did say, "I cannot imagine what my life would be like had I not been baptized"; but most were forced to defer to the Catechism.

This is why the post-conciliar teaching of the Magisterium continually insists upon the centrality of Baptism and calls us to a new baptismal awareness. It is also why some contemporary ecclesial movements dedicate particular attention to it: for Charismatics reborn in the Spirit a central place in the life of faith is given to this vitalization which one has in the so-called "Baptism in the Spirit," and the neo-catechumenates revive for those already baptized, the baptismal preparation which was practiced in the early Christian centuries.

The SFO Rule reminds Secular Franciscans of the centrality of Baptism: "Members of the Church through Baptism, and united more intimately with the Church by profession..." [Art. 6] "United more intimately" precisely because profession is first of all a renewal of baptismal promises, as affirmed in the Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order: "In such a way the inestimable gift of Baptism in them [Secular Franciscans] is manifested and, in an ever more full and fruitful way, realized. [Ritual, preliminary notes, n. 1]

Profession should, therefore, represent a growing awareness of having been baptized and, with the renewal of baptismal promises made in the context of this "public solemn ecclesial act," should express itself in a human and spiritual consciousness which the infant brought to the baptismal font could not have expressed. This also means that the time of formation (or novitiate) should represent an authentic catechumenate experience, a committed journey which does not end with profession, but which from Profession attains a renewed

appreciation of the preciousness of the gift received and a more profound gratitude in the awesome contemplation of the mystery.

Vocation

All Christians need to grow in an awareness of their own Baptism as a salvific event and as a personal experience. Connected to this awareness is the lay vocation, indiscriminately addressed to all those who, baptized and confirmed, are asked by the Lord to give a response, a complete response to the seeds that he has sown in their lives, in their history, in their time, for each one individually. Among these "seeds" can also be the call of the Spirit to a Christian life nourished by a specific spirituality. "In the field of a 'commonly shared' lay vocation, 'special' lay vocations flourish." [Christifideles Laici 56] That is, God's plan for an individual person might mean not only doing well all those things the laity are called to do, but also doing them according to a specific spiritual vision and within a specific ecclesial community. This particular call illumines, by characterizing and unifying, all the moments, events, and situations in the individual Christian layperson's life: personal, familial, professional, etc.

"The vocation to the SFO is a specific vocation" [GC 2.1]; with Profession, Secular Franciscans commit themselves "to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in their secular condition." [GC 8.1] In what does responding to a specific lay vocation consist today? First, there is a great need in the Church that Christians be "incarnated," that Christians be not faint or inconsistent but "authentic" as persons and in every situation of their lives. Christologically speaking, to become incarnate is essentially to draw near to the events and people within our own history.

There is also a need that lay people be "*cruce signati*" ["signed with the cross"] - not as the crusaders, but as people *sealed* with the cross. Taking the fact of being Christian seriously does not make them crusaders with banners unfurled, but people who have been branded in their life with a sign, the sign of the cross, which is undoubtedly heavy.

In the end, a specific lay vocation cannot prescind from a spirit of service in the sense of dying to self to rise again in service to others, and to respond to the expectations of the world today. This becoming incarnate, this entering into suffering, this placing oneself in service is not only through personal contact with the Lord but is in and through the way of community, the Church.

To Observe the Rule

As Profession, so too the Rule is a distinguishing element between a member of the Secular Franciscan Order and a lay person who simply loves St. Francis and is inspired by his spirituality.

Through time there has been a succession of four Rules of the Franciscan Third Order (today, the Secular Franciscan Order). The first, dating from 1221 and known as the *Memoriale propositi*, did not receive official approval by the Church. Having been recast and reorganized without substantial modification of its content, it was approved in 1289, becoming known as the Rule of Nicholas IV. In 1883, Leo XIII simplified and abbreviated the Rule that it could be followed by a greater number of Christians. Finally, in 1978 Paul VI approved the Rule presently in force.

The Pauline Rule contains as a Prologue the earlier version of Francis' *Letter to the Faithful* with the title "Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance." In reference to this text, Esser wrote: "What Francis and his brothers offer in this document constitutes the marrow of the Gospel, the kernel of a life according to the form of the holy Gospel"; and in 1912 Cuthbert had said that "it is precisely in this letter that one discovers the Third Order Rule."

Differing from the preceding, strictly prescriptive Rules, the new Rule has a predominantly inspirational character in the sense that it allows a lot of latitude for individual discernment in translating the Gospel and Franciscan spirit into act within the circumstances which present themselves in one's life. However, the Rule also has a normative character, which is evidenced by its use of the subjunctive in the Latin text. The Rule itself proposed that concrete application be made by the General Constitutions [art. 4], an instrument which more easily and quickly could be adjusted to variable or contingent situations. The General Constitutions, promulgated in 1990 following their approval by the Holy See, have fully responded to that goal: in 103 articles they apply the Rule to typical situations in the personal, familial, professional, social and ecclesial life of a contemporary lay Franciscan, deferring to the particular Statutes for greater adherence to specific national and local situations.

Thus, the Rule, the Constitutions, and the national and local Statutes represent a complex unity which the Secular Franciscan, with Profession, accepts and promises to observe, thereby becoming incorporated into the Secular Franciscan Order.

Pope John Paul II, in a discourse delivered on September 17, 1982 to members of the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order, said: "Love, learn and live the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order... it is an authentic treasure in your hands."

This invitation seems to me to be the most appropriate and meaningful conclusion to a reflection on the Promise of Gospel life, that must base itself upon the Secular Franciscans' trust in being guided and aided in their life by the Rule and by the Fraternity to which they belong. [*Ritual*, preliminary notes, n. 15].

The Pauline Rule - Fifteen Years After

CARL SCHAFFER, OFM

In the Apostolic Letter, *Seraphicus Patriarca*, dated 24 June 1978, Pope Paul VI wrote: "We approve and confirm with our apostolic authority and sanction the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, ... By this Letter and our apostolic authority, we abrogate the previous Rule of what was formerly called the Franciscan Third Order. Finally, we decree that this letter remain in effect now and in the future, regardless of anything contrary."

Fifteen years later, what have we done about the Rule of Paul VI? I asked the same question five years ago, but much has happened since then that has enabled us to understand the Rule better.

It was difficult to put the Rule into practice until we had the corresponding General Constitutions approved and in our hands. They were approved on 8 September 1990. The implications of the Rule with regard to spiritual Assistance were spelt out in the Statutes for the Spiritual and Pastoral Assistance to the Secular Franciscan Order, which came into effect on 17 September 1992.

With the appearance and putting into effect of the General Constitutions and the Statutes for Assistance, it became obvious that the 1978 Rule was a time-bomb in the hands of those who had not paid enough attention to it. Burning issues, such as the unity of the Secular Franciscan Order and its restructuring into Regional and National Fraternities, the nature of the secular vocation, both contemplative and apostolic, the requirements of belonging to the Order,

Father Carl Schaffer, an Australian, is a member of the OFM Province of the Holy Spirit. In 1983, Fr. Carl was appointed Vice General Assistant and Secretary of the Office for the SFO at the General Curia of the OFM in Rome. In July 1985, he was appointed General Assistant and has since then, amidst his travel and work with Secular Franciscans throughout the world, edited the "Letter to the Assistants" in four languages. After serving as Secretary to the General Chapter of the OFM, Fr. Carl was reconfirmed as General Assistant to the SFO in August 1991.

of formation and of "profession," the valid process of elections, the lay leadership of the Fraternity Councils, the collegial exercise of spiritual Assistance, the financial responsibilities of fraternities at all levels, are blowing up in our faces and demand immediate attention.

The approval of the Statutes of the International Fraternity SFO at the coming General Chapter in Mexico City, in October 1993, will bring to a head the official recognition of National Fraternities.

What has been done in fact about adopting the 1978 Rule? The pace of adoption has intensified in the past five years. Big efforts have been made, in those countries where it was necessary, to unify the Secular Franciscan Order, overcoming the divisions introduced by structuring the Order on the Provinces of the friars. Many National Fraternities have advanced a long way towards establishing Regional Fraternities. All Statutes are in the process of being rewritten, especially the National Statutes. The National Councils are identifying their particular problem and are seriously seeking the solution. The religious Ministers Provincial and the spiritual Assistants have generally welcomed the Statutes for Assistance and are trying to apply them.

It is obvious then, that in the light of the new General Constitutions, the Statutes for Assistance and other clarifying documents that have appeared in recent years, many Fraternities at all levels of the Secular Franciscan Order have adopted the new Rule with enthusiasm and that they want to go ahead with their secular Franciscan renewal.

I think it will still serve a good purpose to indicate some of the major differences between the 1883 Rule of the Franciscan Third Order Secular and the 1978 Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. It helps to understand where some of our most deeply-rooted ideas came from and why they are no longer viable. We will see more clearly what has been abrogated and what has been approved. We will also be able to measure to what extent we have adopted the Pauline Rule and have become no longer the Franciscan Third Order Secular but the Secular Franciscan Order. The Secular Franciscan Order is the direct and legitimate successor of the Franciscan Third Order Secular. It is the same - but different!

STRUCTURES: From Local ...

There are those who say that the Franciscan spirit is what matters and that we shouldn't waste our time replacing structures. These people are sick of hearing about Rule, Constitutions and Statutes. For them, the past fifteen years have been a sheer waste of time and effort - and money, in some cases. However, the spirit expresses itself in the structures that it builds. Structures embody a certain spirit: they either hinder the genuine spirit or they help it to express itself. Renewal of our spirit inevitably involves renewal of our structures.

The Leonine Rule of 1883 envisaged the Franciscan Third Order Secular only as local fraternities [I,3].

The Franciscan Third Order of Leo XIII was loosely a single Order insofar as his Rule was given to all the local fraternities, regardless of which Order of friars they were attached to. However, almost everywhere the local fraternities related little, if at all, to one another, even when they were directed by the same Order of friars. Rarely did they relate to other local fraternities directed by a different Order of friars, nor was it expected of them. In fact, the friars were rather possessive of "their" fraternities. In practice, the Franciscan Third Order was conducted in four separate branches, corresponding to the three branches of the First Order and to the Third Order Regular. The Leonine Rule did not legislate for T.O. provincial structures. The General Constitutions of 1957 stated that "regional, provincial, national, and general councils may be set up ... in accordance with the particular statutes of each Family" [Art. 121]. In those countries where the T.O. structures were developed above the local level, they were usually provincial structures based on the Provinces of the Orders of the friars who directed a number of local fraternities within their Provinces.

The friars entered the old Rule as Custodes (Provincials), Guardians and Visitors [III,2-3]. The Visitor had to investigate, at least once a year, whether the Rule was properly observed. The Visitors were to be chosen from the First Order or Third Order Regular, and were appointed by the provincial or local superiors when requested. Laymen could not hold the office of Visitor [III,3].

... To International

The Pauline Rule sees the Secular Franciscan Order as "an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world" [Art. 2] and "divided into fraternities of various levels - local, regional, national and international ... These various fraternities are coordinated and united ..." [Art. 20].

The Secular Franciscan Order of Paul VI is strictly a single Order with its own structures independent of the structures of the friars. The new Rule does not envisage an obediencial provincial structure for the SFO, but rather a regional fraternity comprising all the local fraternities in the territory, regardless of who assists them. This arrangement requires close cooperation between the various Orders and Provinces of the friars who assist the local fraternities in the territory. The collegial exercise of spiritual assistance has been codified in the Statutes for Assistance of 1992.

The friars enter the Pauline Rule as the Superiors of the four religious Franciscan Orders, also as pastoral Visitors and spiritual Assistants. The Rule envisages the fraternities on the various levels as assisted spiritually by "suit-

able and well prepared religious" who are requested from "the superiors of the four religious Franciscan families (sic)" [Art. 26]. The secular Minister asks also for the pastoral visit by the competent religious superiors, and for the fraternal visit from the Minister of the higher fraternity [Art. 26]. Here, the fraternal visitor is a lay person.

LEADERS: From Clerical ...

In the Rule of Leo XIII, the friar-priests appeared as the leaders of the Franciscan Third Order, although offices were to be conferred at a meeting of the secular members [III,1], and the monthly meetings were called by the secular Minister [II,11]. The confessor could judge whether a married woman might be received without her husband's consent [I,2]. The friar Visitor was charged with the supervision of the Order and summoned all the officers and members to a meeting [III,2]. He and the ordinary Superiors of the friars had full power to dispense a member from observing any provision of the Rule [III,6].

The former Rule did not mention the Spiritual Director and said only that the members would "duly make their profession" [I,4]. However, under that Rule, and according to the General Constitutions of 1957 [Art. 111-114], the friar-priest was the spiritual Director of the local fraternity who presided at the monthly meetings and at the sessions of the council, even when the fraternity had a secular Minister [II,11]. He often functioned also as Treasurer and Secretary, although there were supposed to be secular officers [III,1]. The Spiritual Director admitted postulants to the habit and novices to profession, in accord with the Ritual at the time.

... To Lay

In the Rule of Paul VI, "on the various levels, each fraternity is animated and guided by a Council and Minister (or President) who are elected by the professed ..." [Art. 21]. The Council of the local fraternity "decides upon the acceptance of new brothers and sisters" [Art. 23]. Members in difficulty "should discuss their problems with the Council in fraternal dialogue." Withdrawal or dismissal from the Order is "an act of the fraternity Council" [Art. 23]. "The Council should organize regular and frequent meetings" of the fraternity [Art. 24]. The Minister at each level of fraternity, with the consent of the Council, should ask for a regular pastoral visit and for a fraternal visit [Art. 26].

The new Rule has no place for a Spiritual Director. It stresses the co-responsibility of seculars and religious in the direction of the fraternities at all levels, so that the Councils "shall ask for suitable and well prepared religious for spiritual assistance" [Art. 26]. Under this Rule, and in accord with the 1984 Ritual, the Minister of the local fraternity admits new members and receives their profession, otherwise the profession is not valid.

MEMBERS: From Devotional ...

In the old Rule, the ideal Franciscan Tertiary was obedient and devout. Loyal submission to the Roman Church and to the Apostolic See was among the conditions for admission [I,1]. In their profession, they promised to obey the Church [I,4]. They were to "meekly accept the correction" of the Visitor, "and not refuse to perform the penance" [III,2]. Disobedient members, if they did not submit, were to be dismissed from the Order [III,4].

Half the Rule was given to prescribing the Tertiary's rule of life in devotional terms. The liturgy before the reforms of Vatican II allowed for public and active participation almost exclusively by the clergy. In that context, fasts and abstinence [II,4], monthly reception of the sacraments [II,5], daily recitation of a divine Office [II,6], attendance at daily Mass [II,11] and at funerals of deceased members [II,14], were mainly private exercises of piety on the part of the laity.

References to apostolic involvements were slight: in their family life, they were to lead others by good example and to promote good works [II,8]; they were to try to heal discord [II,9]; they were to aid their poorer members [II,12] and visit their sick members [II,13]. The Rule did not stretch their apostolic outreach beyond their own family and fraternity.

... To Apostolic

In the new Rule, the ideal Secular Franciscan is no less obedient and devout, but now Secular Franciscans are required to exercise more initiative in their obedience and to base their devotional life on the Scriptures and on actively participated liturgy.

The relationship of the Franciscan seculars to the friars is not one of submissive obedience but of "life-giving union with each other" [Art. 1]. They relate to the clergy by "living in full communion with the Pope, bishops and priests, fostering an open and trusting dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity" [Art. 6]. They relate to the Saviour by "uniting themselves to the redemptive obedience of Jesus, who placed his will into the Father's hands ..." [Art. 10]

Scriptural spirituality is the soul of their devotional life. "By their profession, they pledge themselves to live the Gospel..." [Art. 2]. Their rule and life is this: to observe the Gospel... They should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the Gospel... [Art. 4]. They should "seek to encounter the living and active person of Christ in their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity" [Art. 5].

They have been "buried and raised with Christ in baptism; they have been united more intimately with the Church by profession" [Art. 6]. They are to participate in the sacramental life of the Church through the sacrament of recon-

ciliation [Art. 7], of matrimony for the married members [Art. 17], and above all the Eucharist [Art. 8]. They are not merely to recite a divine Office but to "join in liturgical prayer ... reliving the mysteries of the life of Christ" [Art. 8].

Apostolic activity is presented in scriptural terms as building "a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively ... in the Christian spirit of service" [Art. 14]. The Secular Franciscans are to promote peace and joy [Art. 19], and justice, "especially in the field of public life" [Art. 15]. Their work is an apostolate of "sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community" [Art. 16]. Their family is an apostolic field for cultivating "peace, fidelity, and respect for life" [Art. 17]. Ecology is a special field of Secular Franciscan apostolate [Art. 18], where they refuse to exploit creation and establish universal kinship instead.

LANGUAGE: From Religious ...

The language that we use is a sure indication of our way of thinking, of our deepest beliefs and of the values that we hold most dear.

The Leonine Rule was addressed to the "Franciscan Third Order" [I,1] whose members it described as "Tertiaries," who spent a year in the "Novitiate" and were admitted to "Profession" [I,4]. They "recited" the divine Office daily [II,6].

Under that rule, terms were taken directly from religious life to describe novices and postulants, novice master and novice mistress, also T.O. Provinces, with Ministers Provincial.

Practices followed language. Tertiaries took a religious name at their profession and continued to wear a religious habit, even though the Leonine Rule replaced the habit with a small scapular and a cord [I,3]. They called one another Brother and Sister in secular life. Men and women were separated into distinct fraternities or on opposite sides of the church during meetings.

... To Secular

The Pauline Rule is addressed to the "Secular Franciscan Order" [Art. 2] whose members it describes as "secular Franciscans" [Art. 4], who spend "a time of initiation," and "a period of formation of at least one year," before making "profession" [Art. 23]. They "join in liturgical prayer" [Art. 8]. The Rule speaks of the "spiritual assistance" given by religious [Art. 26].

Under this Rule, the terms from religious life are translated into terms appropriate for secular people. The candidates are formed by the officers in charge of formation (the "formators"). The SFO has regional fraternities directed by regional Ministers and their councils.

Practices follow language. The members retain their baptismal names and address one another as they would address other lay people. They wear "a distinctive Franciscan sign" [Art. 23], such as a badge, on their ordinary clothes. A husband and wife can belong to the same fraternity and it would be normal for them to sit next to each other at meetings.

WHICH MODEL ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

Clearly, the model of lay Franciscan life prescribed by the Rule of Leo XIII is very different from the model described by the Rule of Paul VI. "Obedience" [I,1] and "piety" [II,8] are key ideals in the abrogated Rule. As ideals, they are not dropped in the new Rule, but they are renewed. "Dialogue," and "apostolic effectiveness and creativity" [Art. 6] are key ideals in the approved Rule.

Fifteen years after the approval of the Pauline Rule, do the local fraternities follow the *Third Order* model or the *Secular Franciscan Order* model? Do the regional fraternities identify with Provinces of one of the Orders of friars or do they coordinate all the local fraternities in their territory, independently of who assists the individual fraternities? Are the national fraternities bringing their National Statutes into line with the General Constitutions? The answer to these questions is not always a resounding yes, but the greater part of the Secular Franciscan Order is responding positively.

The unity of the Secular Franciscan Order and its restructuring into Regional and National Fraternities is well on the way to achievement.

It is difficult for some to grasp the nature of the secular vocation, and there are those who want to imitate the externals of religious life. On the other hand, others have particular problems with the requirements of belonging to an "Order" and of "profession," which smacks too much of religious life. Most have adopted a valid process of elections, once it has been explained to them.

The Assistants generally are adapting to the lay leadership of the Fraternity Councils, but lay leaders are often lacking. The Assistants are also trying to cope with the collegial exercise of spiritual Assistance.

Perhaps, the biggest unresolved problem is how to cope with the financial responsibilities of the fraternities at all levels. The solution to this problem lies in a massive shift in the way of thinking. The Tertiaries faced modest financial demands in their local Fraternities. In fact, often the friars covered all expenses. The Secular Franciscans, after 1978, face the responsibility of financing not only their local Fraternities but also the regional, national and international fraternity as well.

Great Expectations

RICHARD MORTON, SFO

The Secular Franciscans in the United States, as Secular Franciscans the world over, publicly profess a permanent commitment to "...observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis... [and] devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel." [SFO Rule 4] By virtue of their commitment, they participate in the evangelization of the world both as Franciscans and as individuals living in their own particular state of life.

The members of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) in this country are giving thoughtful consideration to their future. Questions are being asked, and a new enthusiasm is emerging. What are the aspirations of the members as the Order moves towards the year 2000? What preparations are being made for entry to the next century? How can it better meet the challenges it faces in trying to be a gospel leaven in contemporary society? To put the future in perspective, one needs to reflect on the heritage of the Order and review its present state.

Throughout the 800 years of its existence, the Secular Franciscan Order (formerly known as the Third Order of St. Francis) has been expected to have a pivotal impact on the society of the times. Popes have written extensively on the subject. Pope Leo XIII wrote:

The goal of the Third [Secular Franciscan] Order is to preserve society from worldly corruption by sanctifying the ordinary and smallest actions of human life with the true spirit of Jesus Christ.... it [the Rule of the Third Order Secular] intends to cure the evils of society by an exact imitation of the Gospel. [Theodore A. Zarembo OFM, *Franciscan Social Reform*, Pulaski: The Franciscan Printery 1947, 91.]

Richard Morton is the National Minister for the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States and has been a member of the Order for over twenty-three years. He is married and the father of five children with three grandchildren. Having retired from an engineering management position after 32 years of working in the industry, he now works part-time as a consultant in the manufacturing area.

History demonstrates that the early members of the Order, did indeed, profoundly influence their society. For example, it is generally agreed that the early lay followers of Francis were the prime instruments in bringing about the decline and fall of the feudal system. Throughout history, the sanctity of many of its members has been recognized by the Church through canonization. However, the great majority have been humble, anonymous, and pious individuals and couples, who have quietly, yet effectively, lived the gospel life in the secular world.

Today, in the more than 830 local fraternities in the United States, there are about twenty-two thousand Seculars who, in imitation of their predecessors, are leading holy lives and performing outstanding apostolic works. They are diligent in their service to the poor, the sick, the elderly, the imprisoned, and the otherwise disenfranchised. They are involved in the right-to-life movement, in faith formation, in peace and justice issues, and in a myriad of other activities. Every community where Secular Franciscans reside is a better place to live because of their presence. They are part of the fabric of society that has maintained and continually supported gospel values and perspectives.

The impact of Vatican II on the Secular Franciscan Order has been profound and has resulted in significant change. It has enabled and mandated the membership to mature in their Franciscan vocation. The Order, eager to attune itself to the spirit and directives of Vatican II, enthusiastically undertook the arduous task of revising its Rule and the associated governing documents. After much consideration and prayer, the Rule was revised to bring it into harmony with the post-Vatican II Church. The revision was presented to Pope Paul VI and approved in 1978. The Pauline Rule now gives the members of the Order the responsibility for their own administration and no longer burdens the friars with the entirety of the Order's destiny. This newly acquired responsibility is enabling fresh and inspired leadership to emerge.

The new Constitutions of the Order were approved in 1990 and are now in full effect. The National Statutes are in the initial stages of approval with full approval expected next year. As a result of these changes, the fraternal and evangelical life of the Order is at present almost entirely supported by contemporary governing documents.

Another exciting development is the organizational regrouping of local fraternities through a process called regionalization. Previously, fraternities were grouped at the local level on the basis of friar provinces to which they were attached. The new organization is based primarily on geography and more effectively promotes the reality that the Secular Franciscan Order is *one* Order. The new arrangement provides several advantages: the effectiveness of intra-fraternity communications will be enhanced as the distances involved for

travel will be significantly reduced; human, financial and time resources will be more economically utilized; more effective apostolic action will be possible through the use of the diverse talents of the members of the many fraternities in any one area; increased cooperation with the local bishops will be possible; and new opportunities for collaboration with other members of the Franciscan family will surface.

In summary, the Order is supported both by an 800 year old heritage of outstanding virtue and action and by a modern infrastructure. It is well poised to meet the challenges ahead.

In the past, others have set expectations for the Order:

The Popes Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI consider the Third Order Secular of St. Francis... a very important agency of social reform... to accomplish that moral reformation of society which is an integral part of the complete papal program of social reform. [Zaremba, 374]

Mario von Galli, SJ comments:

My feeling is that the Third [Secular Franciscan] Order could... impact today as it did in the twelfth and thirteenth century. [*Living our Future: Francis of Assisi and the Church Tomorrow*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press 1972, 193.]

These "great expectations" remain the ideal towards which Secular Franciscans must consistently direct their efforts.

With fidelity to its Rule and Constitutions, the SFO in the United States has already begun the process of developing expectations for its role in rebuilding the Church and society. It now needs to articulate, in understandable and realistic terms, how it expects to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The process will take several years to complete.

Some may call this process goal setting, renewal, or revitalization. However, the term *refounding* would seem to be the most appropriate term for the task at hand.

The action of refounding is a co-operative effort in which prophetically imaginative and creative persons unite with... others to build a new, or to revitalize existing communities, under the inspiration and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit, through which Christ is brought anew to the world. [Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Change, Grief, and Renewal in the Church: A Spirituality for a New Era*, Westminster, MD: Christian Classics 1991, 6.]

Through this process of refounding, Secular Franciscans will become an ever increasingly-important catalyst in promoting change and will be called to focus their efforts more sharply on the poor and suffering. Mario von Galli writes:

My feeling is that the Third Order could continue to have as strong an impact today as it did in the twelfth and thirteenth century, if it

took the story of the wolf of Gubbio as the guiding principle of its activity. To be sure, it would also have to have its founder's feel for justice, his courage and spirit and faith-inspired imagination. Once upon a time it did have those qualities, and they enabled the Third Order [SFO] to become a world force in ways that astounded both rulers and ecclesiastical authorities.

He continues:

It seems to me they [the expectations] were not fulfilled because attention was focused all too exclusively on one's personal life and the moderate use of worldly goods, and all too little on concern for other people. By concern for other people, I mean concern to establish ties of solidarity with those who are oppressed and whose human dignity is being violated. I mean concern to appeal to the conscience of others by one's own example and one's candid criticism, even as Francis appealed to the conscience of the wolf.

Such conduct from a broad spectrum of lay people could represent a revolution today, even more than it did in the twelfth century.

Deeply imbedded in the Franciscan charism is the need for the followers of Francis to have empathy for, and to give service to, the under-class of society. The poor, the dispossessed, the disenfranchised, and all who are the "lepers" of this day await the response of Secular Franciscans to their Rule.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. [*SFO Rule 13*]

In conclusion, refounding is a faith journey. To pursue the journey is a must, for not to do so would be like the servant in Matthew's gospel who took his master's money and buried it instead of investing it.

On completion of the process of refounding and articulating a set of expectations, the SFO in the United States will reach a new state of maturity and self confidence, and it will be more fully prepared to carry the Franciscan charism to the market place, to the halls of justice, to the educational institutions, to the media, to the entertainment fields, and to anywhere else the message of peace, justice, and love are needed. Secular Franciscans are not of the world but are immersed in the world and are called to be instruments of great change.

For the Secular Franciscans, Francis' words, "Let us begin, for up to now we have done nothing," have as urgent a message today as they did for the followers of his time. United with the entire Franciscan family, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States will not fail in its efforts to live up to "great expectations."

Secular Franciscan Formation and the Pauline Rule: The Journey to Conversion

RON PIHOKKER, SFO

With the advent of the Pauline Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order which was promulgated in June of 1978, the Secular Franciscan Order has begun a process directed towards a paradigmatic shift of potentially enormous proportions in terms of its vision and its identity within the Church and the Franciscan family. In its earliest form the Secular Franciscan Order had been a means for lay people to respond to the preaching of St. Francis, and to embrace a radical lifestyle of detachment from material possessions, of on-going conversion, and of commitment to God and one another in the supportive environment of fraternity. Over time, through a revisioning brought about by its subsequent Rules, the "Third Order" evolved into a devotional sodality requiring minimal commitment and little in the way of outward-looking apostolic activity. The Vatican Council II, with its subsequent call to renewal of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis into the Secular Franciscan Order as it is understood through the vision of the Pauline Rule, has redefined the Order. Necessarily, the demands on the initial formation process as a result of this renewal are equally radical and unprecedented.

This is not to claim that the renewal envisioned in the 1978 Rule has been accomplished among all of the local fraternities in the United States or elsewhere in the world. But while the movement toward renewal has not been completely realized, great strides have been made and continue to develop in a steady and deliberate fashion. However, there still remain many "deciduous" fraternities which continue to operate out of the outmoded models of fraternity life made obsolete by the Pauline Rule and which indicate the need for continued effort to bring about a transformation to the paradigm advanced by the

Ronald Pihokker is Vice-Minister of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States, National Director of Formation, and Provincial Minister of the Secular Franciscans of Holy Name Province. Ron is a Pastoral Associate for Catechetics at Our Lady Mother of the Church Parish in Woodcliff Lake, NJ and Associate Director of Catechetics for the Archdiocese of Newark. Ron and his wife Jody, who is also a Secular Franciscan, have two children and reside in Clifton, NJ.

Rule of 1978 - something which the leadership of the Order is struggling to effect. If the renewal foreseen in the Rule is calling the Secular Franciscan Order to embrace a completely new model, then the means to that end must necessarily be the formation process, both initial and on-going.

Until only as few years ago (as indicated in the results of surveys conducted by the National Formation Commission of the National Fraternity as well as various Secular Franciscan Provinces including my own, Holy Name Province), this new model had not yet affected the formation process. There appeared to be nearly as many formation programs as there were local fraternities; they used all manner of formational materials, and they were heavily dependent on the Friars/Spiritual Assistants for direction and, in many cases, leadership and control of the process. If Seculars themselves were involved in the formation process, they more often were not formally prepared for the ministry. Adult-focused methodology reflecting an understanding of the intended audience was seldom employed. Rather, a pedagogical approach of lecture and reading was most often used in "classes" which were built around an academic model, preparing candidates in an exclusively intellectual fashion. Life experience, the apostolate, prayerful sharing and reflection on scripture, retreat experiences, personal interviews and discernment of vocation in spiritual direction - none of these were a part of the process. Indeed, initial formation most often was not a process but a program which took place in isolation from the rest of fraternity life and which most often was limited to the acquisition of information about St. Francis' life and charism in the context of devotional spiritual practices.

The paradigm shift brought about by the promulgation of the Pauline Rule, however, demands a rethinking of the meaning of Secular Franciscan lifestyle and ministry, a complete renewal and restructuring of fraternity life, and consequently, a reshaping and rethinking of the formation process. To encourage this radically new rethinking of the very meaning of the Secular Franciscan identity and to make the vision of the Rule a reality, the International Presidency issued a paper on initial formation in the SFO in November of 1983. A parallel document meant to make application of the international text, the *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States*, was developed and published by the National Formation Commission in 1986 (the Commission having been established by the National Fraternity for this purpose). Further, the Commission designed and has offered workshops throughout the country to train people in the implementation of these *Guidelines* and to assist participants in understanding the Pauline Rule for its implications for the formation process. The work of the Commission challenges Secular Franciscans to take a serious look at the way formation has been practiced, to

take up their responsibility as adult laity in the Church and in the Order, to look at their own skills and to survey their needs so they might more effectively minister as formators to their sisters and brothers entering the Order.

The recent promulgation of the International Constitutions has carried this renewal further. The General Constitutions, in the Chapter on "Life in Fraternity," deal specifically with the practice and process of formation. The Constitutions present a model of formation which is considerably more challenging and demanding. The General Constitutions reflect the fact that the SFO is, indeed, an Order of laity in the Church called to a specific living of the Franciscan charism in the context of their secular lives, their professions, their families, or in the words of *Lumen Gentium*, "in the very web of their existence." The process of formation has been envisioned as just that - a *process*, marked out by various stages. These include an *Orientation Phase* during which initial contact is made and the process of vocational discernment begins. The *Inquiry Phase*, the first formal phase of the process, serves as a more organized time of discernment and choice in the context of the local fraternity. The *Candidacy Phase* provides preparation for a lifetime commitment to the Rule. *On-Going Formation* serves to provide continuing nurture for professed Secular Franciscans. The entire process bears a strong resemblance to the insights and structure of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. In an analogous way, the initial formation process for Secular Franciscans is supported by prayer and ritual contained within the *Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order* which was likewise redesigned in the wake of the Rule of 1978. Specific rituals - the rites of Welcoming, Admission, and Commitment - act as "gateways" to the various formal phrases of the process. Finally, for the first time, an option for Temporary Commitment, which is renewable for a period of three years, allows for a truly adult process which is open-ended and recognizes the fact that the formation process cannot be neatly programmed, must take time and necessarily will be "messy," in respecting each candidate's unique spiritual journey and in ensuring a level of readiness.

The *Guidelines*, building on the vision of the Rule, demand a new context and a new direction; they invite a new understanding and a much broader perspective from which to advance. It is no longer adequate for the formation process to be reduced to a program of instruction with a clear beginning and end. The formative process in the Secular Franciscan Order is now understood as a journey - a complex and fragile pilgrimage through the experience of personal conversion, to the acquisition of a new identity - to become a unique co-bearer of the Franciscan Charism with the rest of the Franciscan Family in the manner of Gospel discipleship, but as a *secular* person living in the world and striving to permeate and to transform culture and society so to build the Kingdom of God.

The process of formation, if it is to accomplish these bold and challenging objectives, must draw from and build upon the candidates' life experience. It must involve the entire fraternity as an agent in the process - no longer content to allow the formative process to occur external to or disconnected from fraternity life. It must be Gospel-centered, which is the object of the SFO spirituality, and no longer be limited to devotional, privatistic practices. It must be directed toward developing a vision of Church which is both dynamic and conciliar taking as its principle paradigm the *People of God*, a communion of disciples who are a sacrament of the presence of Christ in the world. Formation must continue to move from a monastic spirituality to one which embraces the secular as the context of the vocation and ministry of the SFO. In all of this, it must remain uniquely and completely Franciscan, that is, it must promote and make possible a penitential lifestyle of on-going conversion, inspire its members to the ministry of reconciliation, and call them to witness to peace and justice. It needs to encourage outreach to the marginalized and disadvantaged of our society. It must arouse and stimulate cutting-edge concern and action in the pursuit of justice in the workplace, for the environment, and in behalf of the family. In all this, the method and means by which this vision is acquired is the practice of *dialogue*, calling forth a deep sharing of personal insights and experiences of God's activity in the lives of those in formation, dialogue born of mutual respect, a listening heart, and a desire to experience the Truth of the Spirit present and active in each person.

Within the last year, the International Presidency issued a new set of *Guidelines for Formation* which are still being studied by the National leadership in the United States. Moving the formation process a step further, these new guidelines emphasize human development and reflect upon the various stages of the formation process relative to personal and spiritual growth; they present formation as a graced time of encounter with oneself and with others, a graced time of encountering and acquiring a new Franciscan identity. The guidelines reflect once again on the various agents involved in the formation process, marking out a special place for the Spiritual Assistant as brother, teacher and guide, and calling both the candidate and the fraternity to take up their respective roles in the process. The new guidelines suggest a model of the fraternity as a school of life and friendship where members may experience intimacy, experience church, and be offered an opportunity for dynamic missionary activity.

A metamorphosis in the formation process among local fraternities demands that the question of competence be addressed. More opportunities need to be made available for formation personnel to become adequately trained to accompany and to support candidates along their journey, as well as to minister

to the professed membership through on-going formation efforts. Presently, the National Formation Commission strives to address these needs by offering workshops throughout the country, a retreat experience on Franciscan Visionary Leadership, and by acting as a publications resource for formational materials as well as a formation newsletter which reaches every fraternity in the country. The Commission's current projects include involvement in a cooperative venture under the auspices of St. Francis College to develop a series of correspondence courses leading to a certificate in Franciscan Studies which it is hoped will enable Secular Franciscans engaged in the ministry of formation to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge so to bring both confidence and competence to their efforts.

As a result of the Pauline Rule, the process of formation has moved from a cursory pedagogical program of instruction in the life and ideas of St. Francis to a process intended to support the on-going conversion of the individual - a process which involves many ministries, which is prayerful and open-ended, which is tailored to meet the needs of each unique person. Formation demands competence on the part of its practitioners and is directed toward a new self-understanding of the Secular Franciscan, one which liberates and calls the adult Catholic Christian to a meaningful and challenging lifestyle of Gospel discipleship in the Franciscan tradition.

* * *

NIGHT PSALM

Inside out you have gathered up the grains of me.
The arid lifeless sands of longing,
the smooth crystal remnants of my sufferings,
Worn faceless, transparent as tears.
You have showered upon your face
the shapeless silken droplets of my soul.
Finding me sweet like fruit plucked from the vine,
You have drunk of me.
Tasting, you have imbibed in my love
And then, taking the dregs of me, you have spilled them out,
Washing my feet to show me just how sweet you find me.
Raise me to your lips again O Lord,
Ebullient with kisses meant for only me.
Seize me now! Your passion drenching all of me that is not whole.
In rivulets seep down into the ashen desert of my bones
and quench me with your mercy.
That born again, my face will run with tears of living water,
my lips thus moistened, praise your Holy Name.
For you have cracked the tomb around my heart, O God,
And raising it like sweet bread broken,
Have found it to be true.

Mary Zablocki, SFO

A Call To Apostolic Action

MARY K. MAZOTTI, SFO

They shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. [SFO Rule 18]

"So, just what do you do as a Secular Franciscan?" Catholics and others ask quizzically. Most Seculars, I suspect, have often been asked this question. Braggarts we're not, but recent years of Fraternity Annual Reports show a wide array of apostolic works being accomplished, works never dreamed of fifteen years ago.

Within the past eight years, and formerly as Provincial Minister, I have seen apostolic activity accelerate to the point of making even the ordinarily-humble Secular Franciscan proud of being a follower of St. Francis. Through better understanding of the revised Rule approved by Pope Paul VI, especially the Apostolic Commissions, and with the encouragement of Fraternity Spiritual Assistants, we have consciously moved closer to becoming Servants of the Lord in the world.

For those of us professed under the Rule of Pope Leo XIII, it was the norm to live, almost solely, a devotional way of life; and we sincerely felt that this was sufficient to assure our sanctification. The Rule contained little reference to apostolic outreach, such as witnessing to social justice. Vatican II had not, as yet, burst upon the entire Church to direct us to serve heroically as other Christs in the social milieu. When it did, we learned that we were called to look critically at ourselves in the mirror of Christ's teachings to see how we measured up to them. As a result, like Abraham and Jacob of the Old Testament, we were given a new, spiritually significant name. It was deliberately changed from Franciscan Third Order (Secular) to Secular Franciscan Order.

Mary Mazotti, an active member of the Sacred Heart Fraternity in San Jose, CA, has seven children and eleven grandchildren, and has been a Secular Franciscan for 36 years. Mary, a member of the National Regionalization Committee, is serving her second term as First National Vice Minister. In that office, as Representative to the National Apostolic Commissions, she acts as a liaison between the Commission Chairs and the National Executive Council.

Secular Franciscans, together with all peoples of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. [SFO Rule 14]

For a long while, fraternity leaders gingerly held the revised Rule at bay. It seemed loose in writing style compared to the old prescriptive Rule with its exactness for daily living. Yes, the apostolic commissions were in the new Rule, but the *what, where, when* and *how* needed more elaboration before we would feel confident enough to be "at the forefront." All around us were the social injustices of poverty, housing discrimination, nuclear testings, abortions, farm labor abuses, and other serious abuses. Slowly, fraternities took to studying and discussing the Rule paragraph by paragraph. Few of us ventured outside our parish to march peacefully with members of other churches concerning social injustices.

The SFO National Executive Council exerted its leadership wisely and established four National Apostolic Commission Chairs to help give direction, vision, and support to the National Formation Commission in the area of apostolic formation. The Apostolic Commissions were considered so important a part of the Rule that a National Vice Minister was appointed to act as representative to them, and assist them in coordinating efforts.

Then came the writing of National Mission Statements and Goals for each Commission, substantiating their prophetic roots in the Scriptures and the Rule. The National Chairs were to encourage and challenge, to disseminate information about programs and projects, to compile and update resource materials, and to affirm and support all levels of fraternity. Copies of the Mission Statements and Goals were sent to all Ministers. Job descriptions were written for each Commission Chair, and the establishment of regional and local fraternity chairs was recommended. Impetus for living the commissions has been given at National Congresses. Dedicated, committed people who were experienced in the work and ministry relative to various social issues were invited to speak. Weeks of Community and Days of Recollection allowed time for reflection and insight. Provincial and Regional newsletters wrote about, and promoted, the Commissions. Follow-up guidance and encouragement now comes through the National Newsletter, National Formation Commission Bulletin (with Apostolic Commission inserts), and quarterly-mailed National Commissions Newsletters. Responses and input to the Chairs from Seculars are appreciated.

In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ. [SFO Rule 17]

The most fruitful of the Apostolic Commissions, until now, has been the Family Commission. National Family Commission reports show an amazing range of apostolic ministries to the needy and poor, battered women, prison inmates, nursing homes, poverello houses, Francis houses, soup kitchens, Aids patients, unwed mother layettes... the list is endless. The National Chairman sent out 500 copies of the United States Bishops document on *Putting Children and Families First* together with a request that the documents be copied and distributed to all members of the local fraternities. Letter-writing to elected representatives has become a strong ministry for some. Others write constructive criticism to companies whose ads pay for violent and offensive TV programs.

I recall the joy of making Fraternity Visitations as Provincial Minister. It was on these visits I learned how caring Secular Franciscans are. It was not uncommon to find fraternities serving five to ten apostolates. Sometimes, it was only after gentle prodding that members revealed individual ministries for our records. These ministries had become such a habitual part of their lives, living "from gospel to life and life to gospel," that they had forgotten to list them.

Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. [SFO Rule 15]

For the more highly-spirited Secular Franciscans, age has been no barrier in championing needs for the helpless. An 82-year-old woman had the "gumption" and "initiative" to petition her city's Planning Commission to approve a city bus line to an isolated area of retired citizens. Needless to say, she succeeded. Another, closer to 90 years, was arrested several times for peacefully praying and picketing at the gates of a large chemical laboratory known for its Star Wars basic research and other military experimentation. Some have been jostled during peace vigils at nuclear testing sites, and during Right-to-Life marches. The National Peace and Justice Chair has kept Seculars informed on social justice issues, including health care. Lists of ecclesial resource materials have been sent in quarterly mailings. Recently, the Chair collaborated with Friars in a peace and justice concern in an area of Mexican poor. Further collaborations are desired by the Chairs.

Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High," and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship. [SFO Rule 18]

The Ecology Commission is gaining in enthusiasm among Seculars. Simple ecological efforts can take place right in one's home, backyard and neighborhood. Use of styrofoam cups has been on its way out at Fraternity gatherings.

The National Ecology Chair informs Seculars on the dangers of toxic waste, earth pollution, and other environmental exploitation through his award-winning videos and national newsletter. The National Executive Council has stepped to the forefront to begin using unbleached (non-chlorinated) 100% recycled paper for its letterhead stationery and newsletter; this, coupled with the use of ecologically correct soy ink, approved by the American Soybean Association. The Ecology Commission Chair, through its newsletter, *The Guardian*, informs Seculars on harmful products to avoid purchasing and using; how to care for, beautify, and show reverence for all creation. Some Regions have begun setting ecological goals for their areas.

Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community. [SFO Rule 18]

Finally, in the arena of the workplace, lists of recommended readings on work have been sent to Seculars which include: Papal Encyclicals, Bishops' Letters, and other pertinent resources. The National Work Commission Chair is now promoting a pilot project in his community to seek out local professional people who can privately coach the jobless and make known to them job openings. His quarterly newsletter gives advice and encouragement to those who work at home and outside the home. To spiritualize one's daily work in partnership with God's on-going creation is emphasized.

It is perceptible, to me, that apostolic action combined with prayer life is bringing new vigor to the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States. For this, we give praise and thanks to God! We have just begun to fathom the depths of our apostolic calling. Prayer life bordering the mystical should be encouraged to strengthen our backbone and heighten our oneness with Christ in our chosen calling. Yes, there are still Secular Franciscans who are lagging behind in apostolic challenge, who prefer living the less active, more devotional old Rule. It is unlikely that they will change, and we should not feel discouraged. The Church recognizes that Kingdom of God is still in the process of being built and, "*build* is an action word!"

Given leaders of vision at the forefront and efforts at world-wide coordination, over one million Secular Franciscans united in purpose can act as a potent movement for building up the Kingdom. Who but the Spirit knows, if in our running this particular spiritual race, we, as an Order, have not *already* become an instrument through which God plans, once again, to build up the Church and the world. As I see it, our Rule, ever old, ever new... ever prayerful, ever apostolic... has pointed the Secular Franciscan Order towards its prophetic destiny. Ever old, we have heard the call, "Go, rebuild my Church..."; we have begun. Ever new, let us again hear that call, "Go, rebuild my Church..."; let us begin again...

Reflections on Spiritual Assistance

MATTHEW L. GASKIN, OFM

The relationship between the Secular Franciscans and the friars of the First Order is like a very old marriage. For almost eight hundred years the two have shared a bond that has known "good times and bad, sickness and health." Espoused to each other by the same charism they have shared a reciprocity that has remained faithful to each other throughout the centuries.

However, as happens with many spouses in marriage the reciprocity has not always been balanced. More often than not, the friars exercised a dominance over the Seculars failing to foster in them adulthood and autonomy. Instead the union was mainly symbiotic creating in the Seculars an over-reliance upon and a deference toward the friars.

An example of this situation can be found in the Constitutions of the Third Order of St. Francis approved in August, 1957. The Constitutions reenforced the friars' domination over the Seculars with this legislation: "The government of the Third Order is of a double kind, in conformity with its particular nature: external, which is exercised by the Church and by the four Regular Franciscan Families; and internal, which common law leaves in the hands of the tertiaries themselves." The external government subjected the tertiaries to the superiors of the three Families of the First Order and the Third Order Regular in all matters of spiritual direction and internal discipline.

In addition the friars were to receive and profess new members, and to preside at the monthly meetings of the fraternity and all sessions of the council. They were to act as directors of the fraternities and were admonished to be "...continually conscious that the well being of the fraternity depended principally on them."

Only five years after the promulgation of the 1957 Constitutions, Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council. The Council's most endur-

Father Matthew Gaskin is the Provincial Spiritual Assistant of Holy Name Province of the Secular Franciscan Order and is a member of the SFO National Formation Commission. Fr. Matt was recently appointed National Spiritual Assistant of the SFO by the English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor.

ing contributions to the life of the Church were four companion constitutions, namely, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, and the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. These teachings of the Council were destined to affect profoundly the Church's understanding of itself as the People of God, a People "... reborn from an imperishable seed through the Word of the living God (*I Pt* 1:23) not from the flesh but from water and the Holy Spirit (*Jn* 3:5-6) and finally established as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people... who in times past were not a people, but, are now the People of God (*I Pt* 2:9-10)."

Slowly but steadily many Secular Franciscans joined other lay persons in the Church in appropriating the Council's teachings on Baptism and Confirmation. They began to experience a new sense of identity, empowerment and responsibility flowing from these foundational sacraments of Christian life and ministry.

More and more they began to understand their Franciscan vocation in the light of the Council Bishops' call for universal holiness: "... all the faithful of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of their Christian life and the perfection of love. By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in secular society." [*Constitution on the Church*]

American Secular Franciscans heard their own bishops saying: "It is characteristic that lay men and women hear the call to holiness in the very web of their existence, in and through the events of the world, the pluralism of modern living, the complex decisions and conflicting values they must struggle with, the richness and fragility of sexual relationships, the delicate balance between activity and stillness, presence and privacy, love and loss." [*Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity*]

On their part the international leaders of the Secular Franciscan Order initiated a process of renewal and refoundation of the Order which gave birth to a new name, a new Rule, a new Ritual and new Constitutions. At long last the Seculars themselves were given responsibility for the "guidance, coordination and animation" of their own Order. [*Constitutions*, 86.2]

No longer are the friars seen as directors. Instead they serve as fraternal collaborators who share with their secular sisters and brothers an interdependent bond which the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* [303] terms the "altius moderamen." This bond is meant "to guarantee the fidelity of the Secular Franciscan Order to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church and union with the Franciscan Family, values which represent a vital commitment for the Secular Franciscans." [*Constitutions*, 85.2]

In June 1979, the Conference of National Spiritual Assistants described the role of the spiritual assistant in four dimensions, namely, fraternal, pastoral, canonical, and ecumenical.

Fraternally the spiritual assistant acts as one among brothers and sisters and as a sign of unity with the First Order.

Pastorally the assistant is expected to foster the spiritual growth of the members of the fraternity, and to collaborate in their initial and on-going formation programs. His goal is the development of a Christo-centric spirituality in the hearts and lives of his brothers and sisters based on the Gospel and the example of St. Francis.

Canonically the assistant acts as an official witness of the Church at receptions and professions since these are public ecclesial acts. It is also the task of the assistant to establish new fraternities.

Ecumenically the assistant strives to build up "a more fraternal and evangelical world" [*SFO Rule* 14] by initiating and promoting dialogue between the Secular Franciscans and other groups akin to the Secular Franciscan Order or who share a desire to build a better world.

To these four dimensions of the role of the spiritual assistant, I would add a fifth which I consider the most important of all, namely, the prophetic dimension.

The heart of the Rule and spirituality of the Secular Franciscans is contained in one simple sentence: "The Secular Franciscans should devote themselves to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel." [Art. 4] But what the Rule doesn't say is how the Seculars are to do this in their everyday lives. Certainly this is easier said than done.

Who is to show them the way? Who is to help them understand in the light of the Word of God the meaning of the past for the present, what it is that the Lord now calls for, how the present situation fits into God's overall plan and will for them?

This is the purpose of the ministry of the Spiritual Assistant, namely, to communicate to the members of the fraternity the meaning of God's Revelation and its relevance within their own lives. For this task the assistant must be, as the Rule states "suitable and well prepared." [Art. 26] The assistant himself must have first reflected upon the Word intelligently and prayerfully so that he is able to articulate it in understandable language. Moreover he needs to have confronted the human situation in its fullest dimension, analyzed its difficulties and demands, and be able to carry out his charismatic mission within the fraternity, breaking in upon the minds and hearts of the fraternal community by breaking open the bread of the Word and offering it for their nourishment and growth.

To say that the assistant communicates the meaning of Gospel Revelation is to say that he challenges the members to be prophets themselves just as he is prophet. As we know, in the Old Testament a prophet was not one who merely predicted events to come, nor who simply witnessed to abstract truth. He was also one who bore personal witness to the truth here and now. With word and work he assured the Jewish people that God was living and working among them.

In our day we too must deal with the problems of our existence, and, within the horizon of our experience, bear witness to the meaning of God's revelation in our lives. To do this we must become filled with the Word of God in order to interpret the signs of the time.

Franciscans need both Word and reality, so that the truth will become a living, revealing insight into contemporary culture and human affairs. Their specific vocation is to engage today's world as people filled with the living experience-grounded Word that is Christ in order both to grapple with and contribute to their confrontation with the dilemmas of modern existence, and from within that situation, to articulate and proclaim the meaning of the mystery of Christ in today's world. They must be present to the world - from within, not from outside. This is the meaning of the American Bishops' words quoted above.

The Seculars are not to escape from or avoid the turmoil of the times. Rather they have need for a penetrating knowledge of the values, catalysts and forces that exercise a dynamic role in molding contemporary society. They need to know what turns people on, what shapes the horizon of their existence, what speaks to them on a level of value and importance.

The spiritual assistant needs to be the voice of conscience among the Seculars constantly reminding them that the Rule calls them to "build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively." [Art. 14-19] He encourages them to take "courageous initiatives" in the realm of justice, to esteem working in the world, to respect all creatures and avoid exploitation of creation, to live their family lives as "a sign of a world already renewed in Christ," and, as "bearers of peace" to "seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue."

Only if the assistant has a prophetic imagination and a deep sensitivity to the needs of our age will he be able to show his Franciscan brothers and sisters how to be prophets themselves and how to meet each new day with the Scriptures in one hand and the New York Times in the other. Only then will he be the kind of prophet Flannery O'Connor describes as: "One who puts Christ into focus."

Finding Identity as a Secular Franciscan

EDWARD M. ZABLOCKI, SFO

The operative phrase which keeps me focused as a Secular Franciscan is "conversion." I have come to understand that conversion represents the alpha and omega of my life as a Secular. Recent works by Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR and Robert Stewart, OFM have made it clear to me that *conversion* means today what *penance* meant at the time of Francis. So I feel connected in a very real way with the Seraphic Father's first lay followers, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Article 7 of the Rule now takes on special meaning:

United by their vocation as "brothers and sisters of penance," and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls "conversion."

Conversion is also my future. I now understand my vocation as a Secular Franciscan as a call to on-going conversion in all aspects of my life. The new General Constitutions confirm this understanding: "Secular Franciscans... propose to live in a spirit of continual conversion." [Art. 13] It is a daily struggle: being converted to a more Christ-centered prayer life, to a more gospel-oriented lifestyle, to a more Francis-inspired apostolate by faithfulness in living out the Rule as a way of life. It is a daily struggle: being personally converted affectively, intellectually, morally, socio-politically, and religiously (to image conversion as suggested by Bernard Lonergan, SJ). But article 7 does go on to say that "human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily."

Since I've come to this understanding of the Rule, I've shared with others my concern about its implications. "We ought to tell people what they are getting into if they take the Rule seriously," I would say, "This is powerful stuff." It reminds me of a section in Nikos Kazantzakis' *Saint Francis*:

"Never Enough," Francis shouted. "It is not enough, Brother Leo.

That is what God has shouted at me during these three days and nights -

Edward Zablocki is Vice Minister of Holy Name Province of the Secular Franciscan Order and an administrator at the State University of New York at Buffalo where he is also working toward a doctorate in higher education. His wife Mary, who is also a Secular Franciscan and whose poetry appears elsewhere in this issue, is a registered nurse and freelance writer. They live in Buffalo, NY with their two sons, Francis and Paul.

'Never enough.' A poor man is made of clay and protests, 'I cannot take any more,' and God replies, 'You can.' And the man sighs, 'I am going to burst.' God replies, 'Burst'." [p. 119]

Of all the areas of my life in need of conversion, the most important for me personally at this time is conversion to a "secular spirituality." I believe it holds the key to helping us fully live out the Secular Franciscan way of life intended by the Rule. It is the key to living the kind of committed Christian life which the Church is imploring us to embrace as post-Vatican II lay Catholics.

What is a secular spirituality? It is the appreciation and incarnation of the reality that lay Catholics fulfill both their vocation and their mission (apostolate) *in and through their participation in the world.*

The vocation of the layperson is the same as that of other members of the Body of Christ — a call to grow in holiness, to become "fully mature with the fullness of Christ." [Eph 4:13] The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* states that "All in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness." [n. 36] Pope John Paul II in his post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [*Christifideles Laici*] on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, says that the "world [is] the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation." [n. 36]

Where do I grow in holiness? In the world! By what means do I grow in holiness? Through participation in the world!

But we cannot speak about the secular orientation of the laity's vocation without also speaking about the laity's mission (=apostolate); the laity's vocation and mission are inseparably intertwined. As the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* states: "In fact, the Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well." [*Apostolicum Actuositatem*, 2] And both lead to deepening engagement with the world:

The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their *involvement in temporal affairs* and in their *participation in earthly activities*.... At the same time the vocation to holiness is intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world.... Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these [lay people] are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.... 'Upon all the lay faithful, then, rests the exalted duty of working to assure that each day the divine plan of salvation is further extended to every person, of every era, in every part of the earth.' [*Christifideles Laici*, 17]

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* stresses that lay people "ought to

take on themselves as their distinctive task this renewal of the temporal order." [*Apostolicum Actuositatem*, 7]

Efforts to develop a new Rule for Secular Franciscans attempted, from the beginning, to be faithful to the secular spirituality enunciated by the Second Vatican Council (the first ground breaking efforts in the history of the Church formally to address the question of the distinctive spirituality of persons in the lay state). In his book, "*De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam*" *The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation*, Fr. Robert M. Stewart, OFM provides the fascinating account of the 12 year process resulting in the 1978 Rule. What is striking about this process is the expressed desire from the then-Third Order members the world over to give the new Rule a secular orientation.

But explicit references to the secular vocation and mission are notably absent from the 1978 Rule. (While, a secular spirituality is captured, to a degree, in the 1990 General Constitutions, Secular Franciscans are still becoming acquainted with this new document.)

As a consequence, there is resistance to embracing aspects of the 1978 Rule which are grounded in a secular spirituality, for example, the apostolates. On one hand, we have the apostolic ideal as described by Fr. John Vaughan, OFM while he was serving as Minister General:

What a contrast between your previous Third Order spirituality and the modern Church's expectations of you as Secular Franciscans! You are now expected to find God in modern culture, politics and economics, and to delight in his presence there. You have been thrust into the front line as leaders in public life and transformers of secular culture. [Letter to Holy Name SFO Province on the occasion of its 1986 Congress with the theme "Secular Franciscans: Evangelizers of the Culture"]

But on the other hand, we are at times confronted with a reality which differs from this ideal, as conveyed by Fr. Carl Schaefer, OFM Spiritual Assistant to the International SFO:

I find that it is difficult to guide many Secular Franciscans into an active apostolic way of life. They want prayer, even active participation in the liturgy; they want spiritual assistance of the friars. But to convince them that living the Gospel necessarily involves being sent out to the world, and to form them to be publicly apostolic has been my most difficult task. [Letter to SFO Holy Name Province on the occasion of their 1986 Congress with the theme "Secular Franciscans: Evangelizers of the Culture."]

We are called by the Church to find a spirituality in a place where, in our hearts, we doubt that God can be found. If we knew and believed what the Church teaches — that we can meet the living God in places like politics, then

we might more readily accept and carry out the Church's intended mission for us: to be salt, light and leaven for the world.

What would St. Francis do under these circumstances? He found God immanent in everything. Perhaps he would compose a Canticle of the Culture, helping us to see the good and Godly in Brother Boeing and Sister IBM, Brother Republican and Sister Democrat, Brother Michael and Sister Madonna. It's enough to make one want to burst. But wouldn't it be wonderful (and eminently Franciscan) to start finding God in every aspect of our lives in the world and to stop being spiritual schizophrenics.

Secular Franciscans must grow in an understanding of the secular spirituality articulated in the documents of Vatican II and intended but implicit in the SFO Rule. We need to be converted to the vision of the Church which has been telling us that we will grow in holiness by participating in that discordant, untidy, unpredictable place we call the "world"; that it is a primary school of holiness and arena for evangelical action. Certainly we know this already to an extent. We find the Lord active in our family life which is certainly a big part of our world. Seculars also find God's immanent presence deeply imprinted in nature. And we care for society's victims in countless ways, coming through this service to a deeper understanding of Christ's presence in the poor.

Once we more fully understand and learn to accept our proper vocation and mission — callings which are intensified and focused for us as Franciscans, Seculars can become leaders among the laity and for the Church in the world, "taking an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church in this great moment in history." [Christefidelis Laici, 2] We will come to en flesh the ideal described by Secular Franciscan Fr. John Bertolucci:

You and I as disciples have a very special mission to be men and women of influence. God wants us to exert influence not only in our churches but also in our society and in our government; in the marketplace and the schools; in our place of employment and recreation; in medicine and law and other important professions. Wherever we happen to be as disciples of the Lord, we are to have influence.

We are not supposed to be men and women who are letting history happen to us. We are supposed to be happening to history. God wants to equip us and lead us forth in mighty ways that will actually *make* history happen.... We are to be aggressive, outgoing, and assertive in desiring to change things in accord with the principles we have learned in the Word of God. [The Disciplines of a Disciple, 120]

So burst!

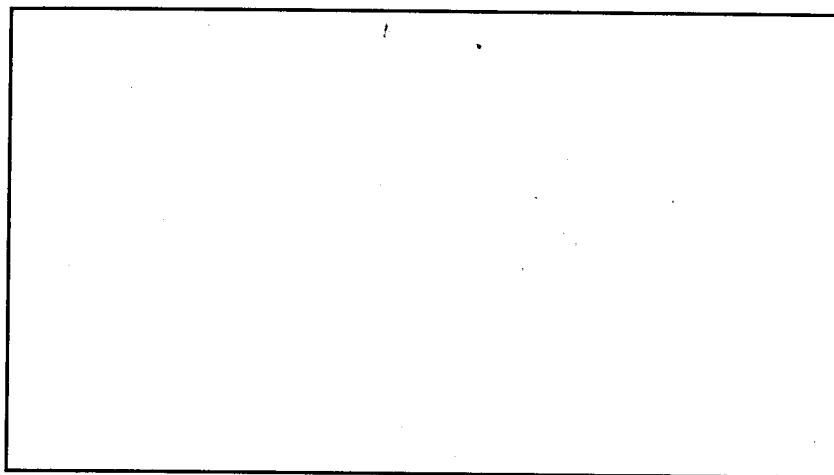


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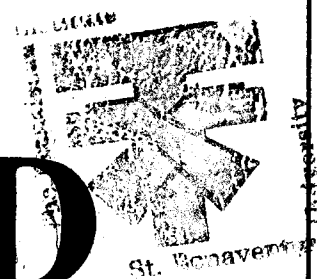
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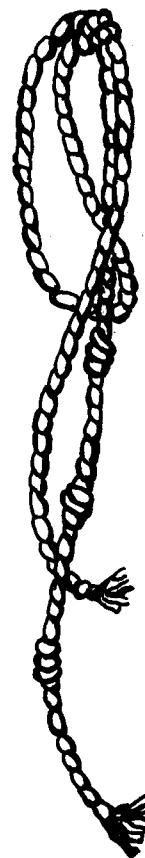
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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

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 the People

ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

Form Viv: 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).

A Reflection

+ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," the opening sentence of St. John's Gospel. John distinguishes between God and the Word yet both are equally God. He is preaching of the Father and the Son. And when we recall that Jesus was the carpenter of Nazareth, it comes as a little surprise to hear him called the Word. On analysis this proves to be one of the most fitting names that could have been found. It had been used by philosophers before St. John but it was always impersonal. In St. John's Gospel the Word is personal and that makes its use of it entirely unique.

The Old Testament is keenly aware of the power of God's Word. Jahweh, God's name in the Old Testament is creative and effective in his Word: "by his Word all things were made" says the Old Testament. Indeed Jahweh's Word is a presence of Jahweh himself. But even this pales before John's use. The Word for him is personally distinct from God the Father.

The Jews experienced Jahweh as a God of Dialogue: He spoke to his people and he listened to them. The first followers of Jesus, during his earthly life, realized that he was in continual dialogue with the One he called his Father. The times he spent in solitary prayer were the highpoints of the dialogue. After he had risen from the dead, his disciples understood there had been a dialogue of truth and love inside God forever and ever. God was not a lone power but an eternal dialogue and so they were able to say that Jesus was the Word made Flesh. That is a true human being dwelling in their midst. God had shared his dialogue with us.

The Word didn't leave God when he became Flesh as though a gap appeared; the Word came to us in a different form. Just as when we speak a word, it leaves us as a sound with meaning, but stays in our mind as an idea. For example if someone says the word "window", it goes forth as the sound of a

The late Eric Doyle, O.F.M., delivered a series of daily meditations over BBC Radio. We have some of these unpublished manuscripts in our possession and have chosen this particular reflection as most appropriate to the approaching Christmas feast. Father Eric enjoyed international fame as a writer, lecturer and preacher. He taught at St. Bonaventure University for several summers.

voice but it does not leave the speaker's mind. It is real and present in two quite distinct ways. In Jesus we have amongst us the truth and love of God-spoken for our sake. In Jesus God gave us his Word. With total integrity he said to us exactly what He is in Himself, Truth and Love and He remains unswervingly faithful to that Word.

Because it was a human being, Jesus of Nazareth, in whom God spoke his personal Word, that says volumes about the dignity of every human being. The Word enlightens everyone in the world and through that enlightenment each of us is made a word of God. Each person tells us something new about God. That is why it is so important to listen with attention and concern to what people say. And we have to ensure that we speak the truth in love and strive for that integrity whereby what comes from our lips is one with what we have in our heart.

* * *

A Christmas Prayer From All At The CORD For All Of You

May you find the most blessed Child
by seeking Him

with simplicity of heart,
with tranquillity of heart,
with joyfulness of heart.

St. Bonaventure, Sermon XXVII
For The Feast of the Nativity

Clare of Assisi



CIARAN MCINALLY, O.F.M., CONV.
JOSEPH WOOD, O.F.M., CONV.

During this 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Clare, 1993, we would be remiss if we did not delve into the saint's life by using as many of the original sources as possible, even as few as they are. Many of those original sources, we may be surprised to discover, are in the form of *painted literature*.

One such original source, the medieval oil panel presented in the following pages is one of the most famous images of Saint Clare in Western art. In Italian, such a representation of a saint surrounded by several biographical episodes, would be called a *tavola*, a painting on a wooden board. And although there would be various other technical terms in different languages, when describing this particular painted panel, however, we prefer to settle on the more comprehensible word *icon*, as derived from the richness of our Eastern spiritual heritage. We use this term not only because the iconographic style of art was very popular in the West during the time of Francis and Clare, but mainly because, as we will discover, this particular painting of Clare is not merely the retelling of biographical events, but rather, it is the presentation of the life vision and spirituality of the *Poverella*, the poor lady of Assisi, in the richest expressions of Christian symbolism.

The only knowledge we have regarding the origins of this work is that it dates shortly after Clare's death (1253), sometime in the late thirteenth century. The artist is known as the *Master of Saint Clare*. That we do not have other facts about this piece of art is not a surprise. It was rather common in the Middle Ages for artists not to sign their work. Artists were not mere employees of the Church, they were highly valued craftsmen, theologians in fact, mediators of God, highly skilled teachers of the faith, presenting a depth of theology through imagination and brush. For any artist to attach his name to such an image would have sterilized its transcendent intent.

The authors of this article are members of the community at the Sacro Convento in Assisi. Brother Joseph is well known to participants in the "Franciscan Pilgrimage." His co-author is a native of Scotland.



In the lower left hand corner of this particular icon, the artist-theologian begins Clare's life with the annual reception of an olive branch from the Bishop of Assisi. It is Palm Sunday in the year 1212. Clare is a young woman of eighteen. Having heard Francis preach in the Cathedral of San Rufino, her parish church, and having heard wonderful stories of the friars' life together from her cousin, Rufino, who had recently joined the community, Clare is so moved that she also decides to leave her family and follow him.

The next scene above, the second, depicts Clare at the Porziuncola after having left her family. The Porziuncola was that small chapel in the valley below Assisi where Francis' new community had established itself two years earlier. Clare is seeking advice regarding her vocation.

In the third scene, a continuation of the same event in the Porziuncola, Clare allows her hair to be cut by Francis, the visible sign of worldly renunciation, a further deepening of her commitment.

The fourth scene in the upper left hand corner is the violent attempt by Clare's uncle, the Lord Monaldo, to return Clare to her family. We believe Clare's father had died when she was a child, probably during the many great civil up-risings in Assisi. Her uncle is claiming his right as head of the fatherless family to intervene in what he would consider the foolish vocational decision of his niece.

In the fifth episode, the scene in the upper right hand corner, the younger sister of Clare, Agnes, is depicted being attacked by the same uncle when she too runs away to join the convent. The Lord Monaldo attacks Agnes with a viciousness of which the biographies only attest as being most cruel and hateful. Mysteriously, however, the sixteen year old Agnes becomes so weighed down that she cannot be moved. And even when her uncle tries to strike her he is prevented from doing so by an invisible force, an angel of light, which frightens everyone away. This fifth panel is what is called a double scene. In the upper half of the same panel (after the departure of her uncle), we see Clare embracing her sister's hands as Agnes seeks renunciation by allowing Francis to cut her hair as well.

The sixth scene is the miraculous event of the multiplication of loaves. It is the year 1238. Discovering that they do not have enough bread from the daily begging efforts of the friars, Clare encourages her Sisters not to worry. She then instructs them to gather all the scraps they can find and set them before her. She blesses the meager remnants which miraculously multiply by the time the baskets are placed on the refectory tables.

The seventh episode, another double scene, is the death bed of Clare 1253. The Blessed Virgin appears in the upper scene surrounded by her court of angels. She appears again in the lower scene carrying the burial shroud for the dying Clare.

The concluding panel, the eighth, in the lower right hand corner, we witness the funeral of the Abbess Clare. Pope Innocent IV is personally present surrounded by a number of bishops. He is incensing the body and formally announcing that Clare's life is an example for all.

Thus, with this initial, cursory retelling of chronological events it would seem that we have reviewed a life of sixty years with an almost inconsiderate haste. The first five episodes happen within a period of a couple of months, from March to April, 1212. The sixth episode occurs twenty-six years later, in 1238. The seventh and eighth episodes occur fifteen years after that, in 1253, within a couple of days of each other.

Needless to say, at first glance, an entire life made up of such few episodes seems quite uneventful. However, the life of a saint, as represented in *painted literature*, affords us an appreciation of another level of communication which the twentieth century may have forgotten. Beyond the level of chronology we need to step into the imaginative minds of our ancient teachers.

The painted image of Clare, which is depicted here, is a communication with the Divine, a theological window into profound simplicity. The theological art of the Middle Ages permitted an ordinary man or woman to be transformed into an Alice who could wander with wonder into fair Wonderland on their own. It was a time when theology was poetry; when theologians were not theoreticians of universities, but peasants, farmers and shop keepers; when the genius of a faithful soul united to a talented, artistic hand encouraged facile communication with mystery itself. For the people of Clare's time, brush and canvas, hammer and chisel were the doorways for the senses in a way that an "artfully" constructed academic syllogism of a few years later, could never be.

Therefore, when "reading" this icon again with a new attentiveness, we first realize that the story does not begin in the usual upper left hand corner, continuing to the right, but rather, it begins in the lower left hand corner and moves upward. This unusual movement of "reading" may allow us to recall the playful Christian concept of paradoxes, or reversals. As the world would judge, religious life, a life of sacrifice for others, is a reversal of values and vision quite incomprehensible by those so much possessed by the vanity and selfishness of external appearances. In fact, this Christian concept of reversal was made quite concrete in the Middle Ages. The invention of the soaring pointed arches of the great gothic vaulting were symbolically understood by the con-

gregation to be the hull of a ship. The congregation felt themselves sailing toward God but in a ship that was upside down. The very word, *nave*, which we still use for the center section of any church, derives from Latin which actually means a "ship." Both of the basilicas of Francis and Clare in Assisi are in this gothic style.

The life of Saint Clare, then, as we are about to read it from the encircling eight episodes, has become a call to begin our faith journey with a new vision, even within a new dimension. Dare we say, that these eight scenes are eight doors to a new perception? But not just a new perception into the life of one woman, but into our shared Christian life of faith. To be a Christian in the world is to be a witness to a whole different way of thinking and acting. Moving upward from the lower left hand corner we ascend toward God, immersing ourselves in our own earthly Passion (scene four), which for us is our dying to self. Once embraced, peace is born as the fruit of acceptance. One descends, then, in freedom through complete consummation (scenes five through eight), to eventual physical death itself. And here too, in the paradoxical reversal of the Christian message, death is not really an end but a doorway into a deeper relationship with He from whom the original call issued.

These eight vertical episodes are also enriched by a horizontal level of meaning. The underlying theme of each chronological event is fulfilled by its complement story on the opposite side. Thus, the first episode corresponds to the eighth, the second corresponds to the seventh, and so on.

To return, then, to the first episode portrayed in the lower left hand corner, we recognize that the story does not begin with Clare's natural birth or her Baptism. Rather, it begins with her free decision to pursue a life within the Passion itself. It is Palm Sunday, the memorial of the day when Christ triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem. The scripture lesson is the welcoming of a king paradoxically juxtaposed with his crucifixion as a criminal.

The first scene, the beginning of Clare's life, also reminds us of the unabashed Biblical infatuation with the romantic imagery of nuptials. At eighteen years of age any young woman, especially one of noble origin, as was the Lady Clare, should have been poised for an advantageous marriage. And indeed, in this opening portrayal Clare is actually shown at her own mystical marriage ceremony. The offering of the olive branch by the Bishop of Assisi on Palm Sunday is a reminder of the promises made by God to Noah after the great flood, the first covenant. (In Italy, olive branches, not palms, are always used on Palm Sunday.) The Old Testament notion of a covenant bond was a contract between two people, usually one more powerful than the other. This unequal bond teaches us of the trust which both Francis and Clare held in things uncertain, in those things which *ear has not heard and eye has not seen*. This initial

contractual bond, however, is only a stage in the marriage commitment. As the relationship with the bride, Israel, deepened, God expected greater proof of fidelity. We recall that there were several covenants made between God and his bride, Israel: the placing of the rainbow with Noah, a sign in the sky; the circumcision with Abraham, a sign on the flesh; and the offering of the Ten Commandments with Moses, a sign written in our hearts. As a royal bride, Clare's first "yes" to the proposal of marriage is accepted in silence, because Bishop Guido of Assisi is merely the vicar, the proxy, the visible representative of her Divine Royal Spouse, Christ, who echoed his silent "yes" centuries earlier as the Lamb led to slaughter. The continued proofs of love, her further sign of covenant with the Beloved, will be fulfilled in scenes three and four.

In the first horizontal complement story, the unity between episodes one and eight, we again remind ourselves of Clare's covenant of choice. Clare did not merely listen to the Passion being read on Palm Sunday, but rather, she freely chose to enter the Passion commitment with her Beloved Spouse. Although, because of her health, Clare physically suffered a great deal, her choice to enter the Passion was intended to inculcate a compassion for the world around her. She entered the cloister not to leave the world but to embrace its suffering. This is obviously depicted by the multitude of buildings making up the backdrop of all eight episodes. A life for the Beloved is a life in community and for the community.

In the second episode we find Clare intently speaking to Francis, the second official representative (next to the Bishop), of her Spouse-made-visible. In this scene, Clare is doing the talking and Francis is shown patiently listening. Clare is not depicted as a subservient listener, she is questioning the movement of her heart. Clare reminds us of the ten wise virgins of the Gospels, brides anxiously prepared to meet their groom. They were women who "waited" but they were women who also consciously prepared themselves for that unexpected hour. Clare is a woman who has taken action for her life directions.

In the second horizontal complement story, the seventh episode, we again have a double scene. The upper scene has the Virgin Mother appearing in the convent surrounded by her angels. But if we make a closer inspection, the angels of the Virgin Mother's court look very much like the nuns who are sneaking a peek at her from the left. Clare was not a woman who believed in ethereal images of the Divine. Like Francis, she personified her beliefs. Her theology of communion with God or Eucharist, was incarnated in daily communal relationships. Clare saw the Blessed Virgin in each one of her Sisters within the convent. In this way the Virgin Mother is not entering the convent as a stranger. She was there with the nuns all the time.

In this double scene, the Virgin Mary herself demonstrates that she is not a woman desirous of being venerated or gazed upon. She is portrayed in movement. She presents herself as an example. Because of Clare's illness, the Blessed Virgin moves from the upper into the lower part of the double scene to nurse Clare herself, as she would hope anyone of the other nuns would do themselves. Yet the Virgin Mary enters the scene not only as the final nurse but as the Divine Bridesmaid. Mary, the Queen of Heaven, is adorning another royal bride to meet her King in the heavenly Jerusalem. The Heavenly Bridesmaid carries a large drapery, which in the traditional language, was understood as the habit of the Order, the burial shroud transformed into the eternal wedding garment.

By laying still and allowing Mary, or any other Sister to wait on her, Clare is also reflecting a depth of insight into the feminine psyche as understood from the many ancient and culturally diverse folkloric traditions. The woman is the long sufferer, the one who can endure pain over long periods of time. In folkloric tradition, the man goes off on an adventure, he conquers the foe and eventually wins the hand of the princess. But adventure for the male is quickly accomplished. The woman, on the other hand, waits. She waits to be rescued. She is refined in the waiting, perfected in the waiting. Religious life for the contemplative is the life of the womb, she is the tiller of the soil, the expectant mother of new birth. The contemplative nun becomes "waiting personified," or we could even say, in harmony with chivalrous Franciscan imagery, the Lady Clare has become "Lady Advent." The wait will be rewarded.

Following the above folkloric metaphors, this dying episode can be understood as the ultimate act of matrimonial legality, the consummation of the two members of the covenant. Clare is in bed, attended by many ladies, being adorned for her ultimate sacred night of sleep, union with the Beloved. But for Clare, unlike the folkloric traditions, instead of her prince entering the chamber to claim her as his own, it is another woman. The Virgin Mary appears before Clare as the representative of Christ. In fact, as stated before, Christ had always been present in the convent, personified in each Sister living together for so many years in community. The artist-theologian teaches that the Woman embodies the Son. There is no lack of Christ's presence in the midst of a convent of women.

The next two episodes which cut across the mid section of the large central figure of Clare, the third and sixth, form the basis of her life as *kerygma*, her life commitment of sharing in the cross of her Divine Spouse. These two episodes reach for each other across the enlarged central figure of Clare at the gut level. The Medievals believed, as many do today, that the mid section of a person or the *solar plexus* was where all depth of feeling originated. The mid section is also the place of the womb, the place of new birth or rebirth into new

life. In the third episode, when Clare made her commitment to God by allowing her hair to be cut, she was alone at the altar in the Porziuncola, surrounded by men, the friars, who made her life fertile through the seed of their Gospel preaching. But in the complement episode on the right, the sixth scene, we see a multiplication, not only of bread, but of Sisters. Clare has given birth to multitudes of women who also chose to follow the Beloved.

Again, the folkloric representations of feminine metaphors, as embodied in Clare, and as mentioned in episode seven, also speaks to us of the woman's cycle of sacred fertility. As with any agrarian society in any generation, the Medieval world view was based on the natural rhythms of the seasons which depended on regular patterns of human labor: tilling, planting, tending, harvesting, and regular patterns of atmospheric conditions, a balance of rain and warmth. Therefore, the Franciscan story is naturally a message of masculine-feminine complementarity. This masculine-feminine symbolism of fertility reminds the celibate that the life of the friars and Sisters is meant to be a life of continued multiplication. Celibate fruitfulness is made possible through a common life of mind and heart represented by the cord bearing the three knots tied around the waist of the enlarged central figure of Clare. For members of the Franciscan community, the wedding ring, instead of being on the finger, is around the waist, the gut, the depth of emotion and commitment, the place of fertility. The three knots on the cord representing the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, act as a constant, visible reminder of promises made to God and to each other.

In episode six, the multiplication of the loaves, we can also see that God is not far removed from our midst. God's presence is made real in the community of the Sisters around the table. The table of the altar in the Porziuncola in episode three, where Clare made her profession of vows, has now broadened into the table of sorority. Our daily nourishment is equally found at the communal table of the refectory, partaking of and eating with a God — represented in each other — who desired to become our food, our *viaticum*, our companion for the journey.

In order to understand a further unity between these two complement episodes, we must remember the Medieval artistic custom of playing with geometrical angles. Further themes were expressed by the direction in which eyes, hands or angles of buildings were pointing. The uniting geometrical gestures of these two complement episodes can first be seen by the right hand of the large central figure of Clare motioning toward the cross. This cross is easily understood as her crozier, the symbol of governance for an Abbess. In this case, however, Clare is shown not only as a shepherdess of her convent flock but she also resembles a royal personage holding a scepter. This scepter, as ornate as it is, could further remind us of a blooming lily of purity, a royal bridal bouquet.

As the consort of the Prince of Peace, Clare represents the highest ideal of royalty, a governance in charity rather than prestige. It is not through external glory by which one is honored and emulated but through interior majesty.

As an Abbess, Clare also reversed many things in the traditional understanding of hierarchical leadership (as her Divine Spouse also tried to do so many years before her). One such example of hierarchal reversal is best understood from her notion of daily service. As the superior of the convent, instead of being served, Clare chose to serve her Sisters in any way possible. In fact, her place at table in the convent of San Damiano was in front of the food passage window. It was the corner of the room rather than what had become the traditional place for the superior, the center.

Returning to the scepter-cross symbolism we note that the cross is tilted toward the sixth episode, the multiplication of bread scene, a clear recognition of a community gathered around the Eucharist. These women of the cloister are priests by their Baptism. Christ for them is not in the tabernacle alone under the form of bread and wine, but, as referred to in episode seven, within their midst in each other. When Christ told us "I am there whenever two or three are gathered in my name," he did not mean that he would not be present if someone also needed to be alone. He intended a deeper truth. We are social beings. It is good for us to be together. The spirit and power of Christ is not lacking no matter one's gender.

At this point it may be important to note, regarding this masculine-feminine complementarity, that Francis himself was probably the first founder of a female community who believed that women should govern themselves. In Chapter Eleven of his Rule for his friars (1223) he warns them against "entering the convents of nuns." This was not a cautious warning against impropriety, but rather, a clear statement of non-interference in the governing of women's communities. Another revolutionary decision for the times and a reversal of tradition.

In the fourth scene, the upper left hand corner we return to Clare's uncle Monaldo attacking her in a monastery. He is attempting to drag her away even though she seeks "right of sanctuary" by clinging to the altar, thereby placing herself under the protection of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This episode, however, is intending a deeper understanding for the viewer. This scene is not only a struggle between a furious uncle and an idealistic niece, but what we are witnessing is an act of martyrdom. This image of martyrdom reminds us of the great spiritual men and women of the early Christian centuries who sought the arena of the desert as the proving ground for their sharing in the Passion. After Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 315 A.D., Christians became somewhat comfortable no longer needing to prove their faith by witnessing to the ulti-

mate sacrifice. Yet, there were those, however, who still wished greater union by an intense and concentrated witness. To seek martyrdom was still considered the highest form of union with the Divine. But without civil death as the act of union, consummation with the Divine was achieved through a martyrdom-in-the-desert, a martyrdom-through-sacred-routine rather than a martyrdom of momentary ecstasy. To go into the desert, as the spiritual Mothers and Fathers believed, was to enter into warfare, to personify the cosmic drama between good and evil. This is also the reason the large central figure of Clare is robed in a cape reminiscent of the crusaders of the time. The large Jerusalem styled cross would be over the heart of the warrior. So too, in this instance, Clare is a crusader, a warrior fighting against a greater enemy, sin. But although depicted as a woman of strength, Clare is not a lone soldier. She is supported by a garrison of armored warriors, her habited Sisters in their castle-monastery. Their most powerful weapon against evil being the routine of daily prayer and good works.

In this fourth episode, the nun immediately behind the center of the altar is looking away from the violent scene between Monaldo and Clare. She looks away, not really because she is disturbed by what is happening at the present moment but because she is leading our vision across the painting into the fifth scene, the upper right hand corner, the sharing of the Passion between two blood sisters. The two scenes are actually one. If we look closely, the eyes of the enlarged central figure of Clare also unites these two complement episodes. The left eye of Clare is looking at episode five, the "martyrdom" of Agnes, whereas the other eye, her right, is looking at us, a constant reminder to keep our attention on the suffering of others as followers of Christ.

This fifth complement scene is the second time the pride of Lord Monaldo has been wounded. It is not too difficult to presume that this uncle, although saying that he is looking after the family of his deceased brother, is in fact looking after his own interests. He is upset that these two nieces refuse to accept advantageous marriages thereby adding no new land, power or prestige to the family. Although appearing like a warrior, he shows himself interiorly weak by attacking a defenseless girl with a cohort of armed men. For the viewer, Lord Monaldo has become the personification of evil, the devil himself, in cosmic battle with these new age martyrs-of-the-desert/cloister. These two complement episodes are also tragic expressions of familial misunderstanding. Those who are closest to us are the ones who hurt us the most. Fortunately, in the case of Clare and Agnes, their personal victories eventually strengthen their own mother, the Lady Ortolana, to enter the community with them. In the case of Clare, the family bond is preserved and elevated.

These eight short *individual* episodes in the life of Saint Clare remind us that our lives too are lived in "moments" only, special moments which fulfill our *fundamental option*, that personal choice of values which carry us through every daily event of every year of our own lives.

The over all message of this icon of Saint Clare is also embodied in the eight episodes *as a whole*. Knowing that the genius of the Church as a teaching institution never composed a painted instruction in a haphazard fashion, allows us one last holistic approach regarding the reason for the specific enumeration of episodes.

Returning to the roots of our faith, the great act of salvation for the Hebrew people was their being freed from slavery in Egypt. As a slave people, the Hebrews were a disconnected community. Without at least one day free from maintenance labor, without a regular routine of rest, there could be no culture, no development of music, art, literature, laws, philosophy. Once freed and living in their own land the leaders of the Twelve Tribes chose the number seven as the basic unit of time dividing the cycle of work and rest in God's creation. The people of Biblical times knew that such a division was practically intended as a day of rest for themselves more so than for an all powerful God. It was the sacred day of rest which bound together the former nomadic tribes through their communal creations.

In what would appear as six sets of seven diamond shaped jewels encircling the frame of the icon, we are again reminded of the bride being adorned for fulfillment in a future union of promise. Joachim of Fiore, an Abbot of the thirteenth century, prophesied the coming of an "age of new heavens and a new earth." Even in their own day, Francis and Clare were considered fulfillments of the prophecy. We can then understand that the six set of seven encircling jewels were intended to lead us from the Old Law into the fulfillment of the New Testament promises. Because Christ rose from the dead on the day after the seventh day, the traditional Hebrew day of rest, the Sabbath, Christians came to call the commemoration of the Resurrection, *the eighth day*, the fulfillment of being freed from the slavery of sin. Thus, if seven was a perfect ordering of society for the Old Testament, with the advent of the Christian era we go one number further. In the new age a perfect ordering of sacred time would be eight. Major feast days in the Christian Church are celebrated in an *octave*, eight days of festivities. Thus, surrounded by eight episodes, the central figure of Clare is also completely immersed in the eighth day, the Day of the Lord. Her whole life, from episode one, where she receives the marriage proposal from the Bishop of Assisi, to episode eight, where the Bishop of Rome confirms her commitment, Clare's is depicted as a perfect witness of Spousal fidelity.

In this 800th anniversary year of the birth of Saint Clare — the often forgotten Franciscan complement — we pray that the Church may be renewed by

the rediscovery of her life vision and commitment. May her heavenly glory radiate for the Pilgrim Church in our own expectant resurrections.

* * *

For Genesis House: The Last Christmas Retreat

Once you were home to a bishop, rambling house
Set back from the seminary, now a center
For alcoholics, as you're meant to be
After the dozen years under the kind
And holy counseling of friends of Christ.
You've been the rest of pilgrims, where they've found
A place of origins, of new beginnings,
An oasis. That season nears its end.

Still, come October, they will fade as usual,
Your yellow leafage harvested by wind,
After the winter, flowers will shine again,
Wild carrot, interspersed with snowy daisies.
The woodpeckers in scarlet caps will drill
Above white scarves of dogwood and with June
From the Poustinia's green solitude
A ghost will watch the James' silver flow.

But this is future. Till December dies,
A Christmas joy will flicker as before,
The chunks of wood hum in the Franklin stove,
Peace rises from green and tawny coffee mugs;
The random pillows knitted out of love
Will bloom against the neutral davenport;
The glass-topped table gleam, as Eucharist
Makes of each day a quiet jubilee.

Your former guests, on deserts, out at sea,
Will think of you on New Year's, you of them.
"Whatever is begotten, born or dies. . ."
So much for time. Now, for eternity!

Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.

The Transitus: A Rite of Intensification:

PART II

DANIEL GRIGASSY, O.F.M.

Each Transitus ritual considered in the first part of this article¹ displays consistent elements: the antiphon, "O sanctissima anima"; the psalm, "Voce mea"; the hymn, "Salve, sancte Pater"; and a blessing with the relic of St. Francis. These items constitute key ritual units within a progressive structure. However, more often than not, the movements, postures, and gestures which serve as transitions connecting these units were left to the custom of local churches. In the days prior to Vatican II with talk of liturgical reform flying high in ecclesial circles, the ritual was recrafted. It was only a matter of time before an increase in ritual texts yielded a more didactic rite. The practice of ritually proclaiming narrative texts and enacting select portions of those texts tended to become the norm and still governs current practice.

After the promulgation of the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" in 1963 and the "Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life" in 1965, we Franciscans stumbled through the adolescence of liturgical experimentation. At the same time we wrestled with the council's admonition to return to the original inspiration, the peculiar spirit and mission of the founder.² One way to rediscover the original spirit of Francis was to return to foundational texts, the original sources of his life, his conversion, his prayer, and his mission. As the popularity of observing uniquely Franciscan devotions waned in the post-conciliar years, many thought there was no better way to sustain and intensify Franciscan identity than to fold into the Transitus elements of the abandoned devotions along with bits and pieces of other characteristically Franciscan prayers. Herein lies the core issue for the concern of the second part of this article. Was the simple rite of Transitus able to bear the weight of post-conciliar expectations? Have we sacrificed a variety of ritual opportunities to specify and intensify our identities as Franciscans by collapsing parts of former ritual forms into one event while running the risk of evacuating texts, objects, gestures, and movements of their ritual power? After almost three decades of experi-

Part One of this article appeared in the October CORD. We are grateful to the readers of this periodical who informed us of their appreciation of Father Daniel Grigassy's presentation. His contribution to our understanding of the significance of the Transitus for our Franciscan spirituality deserves the gratitude and admiration of all. Part III of his in-depth study will appear in a future issue.

mentation, are Franciscans maturing liturgically in such a way that they discretely razor out ritual fat so that the essential core of Francis' way of dying may transform our way of living-into-death?

In an effort to stimulate dialogue among Franciscans regarding these important questions, the following pages first survey samples of rites used during the conciliar and post-conciliar years, and then examine responses to some questions posed to participant-observers in one *Transitus* ritual. General concluding remarks seek not to set an agenda for the future of the rite but rather to pitch the importance of ritual expression in our ongoing Franciscan maturing as we constitute ourselves in reality as what we claim to be in ritual and symbol.

Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Rituals: A Sampling of Rites.

Liturgia di S. Francesco d'Assisi was published the same year the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" was promulgated.³ A *Transitus* is included in the collection which is simply a reproduction of the Latin ritual in the 1910 *Rituale* with an Italian translation. An inter-page Latin-Italian ritual suggests that it was celebrated in Latin with the vernacular available to enhance the active participation of all the faithful. Lack of clarity regarding the time of the rite still shows itself. The ceremony took place either on the evening before the actual solemnity or on the evening of the solemnity itself.⁴

The first printed post-conciliar rite available for this study is a small pamphlet compiled and edited by Luciano Canonici entitled *Celebrazioni della "Parola di Dio"* with the subtitle added in the fourth edition, *Nello Spirito del Vaticano II*.⁵ Although the booklet itself does not give a date of publication, the *Bibliographica Franciscana* assigns it the date 1965.⁶ The rite is entirely in Italian with no Latin counterpart. The definite date of October third is assigned to the ceremony, "pomeriggio 3 ottobre." Roles are well-defined: Sacerdote, Lettore, Assemblea, Commentatore. All traditional and familiar elements in the rite are retained. The "O sanctissima anima," Psalm 142, the "Salve, sancte Pater," and the priest's final oration are all present. However, they do not stand on their own, unrelated to one another. They are threaded together with commentary from Francis' biographers. These texts are read by the Sacerdote, Lettore, and the Commentatore. Two scriptural readings are incorporated into the ceremony: the consoling words of 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 and John 13:1-15 as cited in the biographies of Francis. Therefore, biblical and non-biblical sources are incorporated into the ritual action. These additions effect the liturgical flow of the ceremony and give it a new spin. The mode of expression has become clearly educative and informative. From the text of this

earliest available post-conciliar rite, no hints of relic, incensations, cross prayers, or Eucharistic devotions are suggested.

During the time immediately after the council, our attention was distracted because of the slow but steady publication of revised rites in the new ritual books coming from the liturgical consilium in Rome. While most communities at that time mimeographed or dittoed revised *Transitus* rituals for their own use, few were formally published. A commemoration of Francis' passing was contained in a devotional prayer book for the use of Third Order members entitled *New Ritual for Public Functions*⁷ which set out the familiar movement within the pre-conciliar rite but with few functional directives and several didactic additions. At first glance the rite appears weighty, verbose, and cognitive. The time of the celebration remains undetermined. "On the eve of October 4 (or on the feast itself or the Sunday within the octave) the fraternity gathers."⁸ However, the vesture, the relic-action, the candle-action, and the choreography are all clearly specified. "Francis died about sunset on Saturday, October 3, 1226. He recited the 141st Psalm (sic), and at the closing words, 'Lead my soul out of prison that I may give praise to your name,' his blessed soul passed from earth to Heaven. This event is solemnly recalled every year in the churches of the Franciscan Order and where fraternities of the Third Order are established. . . This observance can serve as the close of a novena or triduum in honor of St. Francis. A relic of St. Francis is placed on the altar for public veneration. Some members of the fraternity may accompany the priest, holding lighted candles, and form a semi-circle in front of the altar. The priest, vested in surplice and white stole and cope, first incenses the relic of St. Francis."⁹

The introductory comments from the 1961 St. Andrew's *Franciscan Supplement*¹⁰ find their way into the opening text of the rite in Fonck's *New Ritual*. An account of Francis' death from the *Vita Prima* of Thomas of Celano¹¹ is then read. The lector or lectors are not specified. The rather lengthy reading is followed by the singing or recitation of the antiphon, "O most holy soul." The directives continue: "The priest or chanters then sing or recite Psalm 141 (sic) alternately with the choir or with the people." After the closing of the psalm, the antiphon is repeated and the candles extinguished. The kneeling assembly prays in silence for a moment and then recites five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glories "in honor of the five wounds of our father St. Francis."¹³ It is difficult to determine whether this addition is an attempt at establishing a new symbolic relationship between the five prayers and the five wounds, or whether it is simply making explicit for a forgetful community what was always presumed in the early days of its practice.

The priest or chanter then intones the "Hail, holy Father." All genuflect and the chanters sing or say: "Poor and humble Francis enters Heaven laden with riches." The priest then stands and sings the oration. The response to the

verse, "Franciscus pauper et humilis," that is, "Hymnis coelestibus," has been dropped. After the oration the priest continues with "The Lord be with you" and the appropriate response is returned. The chanters then intone: "Let us bless the Lord." All respond, "Thanks be to God." The incensation of the saint's relic is suggested followed by the blessing of the people with it. With or without a relic, the words of the blessing of St. Francis from the Book of Numbers (6:24-26) are offered as appropriate for the final blessing.¹⁴

The most extensive and exhaustive post-conciliar attempt in English to set out the *Transitus* is found in **Franciscans at Prayer**, an adaptation of the **Rituale Romano-Seraphicum Ordinis Fratrum Minorum** (1955) for use by English-speaking friars who desired a book of devotional prayers which fostered traditional piety while remaining faithful to the spirit of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The Committee for Franciscan Liturgical Research prepared the collection. The English-Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor approved it for use in North America, and the Franciscan Publishers in Pulaski, Wisconsin, published it in 1983. The rite bears the title, "The Memorial of the Passing of St. Francis, The *Transitus* (October 3)."¹⁵ Those who assembled the rite were obviously aware of its history and development. For the first time in an approved liturgical book, boundaries are set for what had become a free-wheeling rite. However, the boundaries or limits are not rigid or unbending. By way of suggesting a "Model Rite" with ample option (nn. 259-266), the members of the Franciscan Committee for Liturgical Research retained the value of adaptation to the needs and customs of local communities. They succeed in recapturing the spirit of earlier rites while bringing a new sense of balance, coherence, and aesthetics to what had previously appeared to be a random selection of ritual units spun together with no apparent root metaphor. Life, death, resurrection, and mission come to the fore as the focus and thrust of the rite.

An introduction establishes the origin of the rite "at least since the eighteenth or perhaps seventeenth century" without grounding that claim, consistent with earlier testimonies of the same. The rite pivots around four moments: 1) The antiphon, "O sanctissima anima"; 2) Psalm 142; 3) The antiphon, "Salve, sancte Pater"; and 4) Prayer. The goal of the rite is specified: "The *Transitus* is an attempt to celebrate our Franciscan identity by rooting ourselves both in the scriptures and the historical foundations of our brotherhood" (N. 257). The narrative texts taken from the biographies of Thomas of Celano, St. Bonaventure, and the so-called **Legend of Perugia** yield ritual units which do not replace but add to the original rite: "1) the death of Francis in the context of praise: the singing of the **Canticle of Brother Sun**; 2) a motif of leave-taking: Francis has that part of the thirteenth chapter of John's gospel where Jesus washes the

apostles' feet (vv. 1-17) read to him; bread is shared; 3) the singing of Psalm 142; and 4) the exhortation and blessing of the brothers" (n. 258).

The Model Rite presents these four elements enhanced by the use of light, candles, bread, and incense. First, the rubric of the Introductory Rite (n. 259) states that "the friars may hold lighted candles." It also suggests the singing of the antiphon, "Salve, Sancte Pater," and offers two musical renditions, one in both Latin and English (n. 267) and the other only in English (n.268). Another attempt to connect the rite with original ritual objects shows itself in the mention of the saint's relic placed on the altar and revered with incense and song. The rubric then reads: "The minister invites all to pray in these or similar words: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. — Amen. The Lord give you peace and good. — Amen." The sign of the cross provides an appropriate opening for any form of public prayer; the greeting is appropriately Franciscan recalling Francis' salutation, "Pace e bene." Who the "minister" is, what the "minister" wears, who the "minister" is with, or how the "minister" gets from point A to point B is not specified but left to the imagination of the local community.

Secondly, without mention of an opening or gathering prayer, a composite text is offered which tells the story of Francis' passing from Celano's **First and Second Life** and of Bonaventure's **Major Life**. The rubric suggests a single reader for the entire text (n. 260). Alternative texts are given, one from Celano's **Second Life** followed directly by another paragraph from Bonaventure's **Major Life** (n. 269), the other from the encyclical letter of Brother Elias (n. 270).

Thirdly, an unspecified "minister" proclaims John 13:1-17. Options are suggested as a response: a homily, a time of silent prayer, or a personal witness to the continuing influence of St. Francis. The person who preaches or gives witness remains unspecified. Fourthly, all sing Psalm 142. The antiphon, "O sanctissima anima," may be used. The familiar chant melody with Latin and English texts is offered (n. 271) along with current composition of antiphon and psalm (n. 272). After the psalm's final verse (Bring me out of prison. . .) and before the doxology (Glory to the Father. . .), the rubric reads: "The candles may be extinguished." Fifthly, intercessory prayers follow (n. 263) and alternative texts are given (n. 273). The Our Father closes the intercessory prayers and leads to the final oration. Two options are given (nn. 264 and 274). Neither resembles the Latin text which consistently appeared in pre-conciliar rites. No doubt they are original? English compositions. Sixthly and finally, the Concluding Rite begins with the usual greeting of "The Lord be with you" and its response. The invitation to "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing" is followed by the familiar words of blessing from the Book of Numbers divided into a three-fold prayer with "Amen" responses after each entry, and concluded with the usual Trinitarian form of blessing. The dismissal, "Let us go in peace,"

invites the response, "Thanks be to God." The final rubric suggests the singing of the Cantic of Brother Sun or another appropriate hymn. The text provided for the Cantic (n. 929) is the familiar seven-versed hymn, "All Creatures of Our God and King." A sign of peace is suggested as an appropriate conclusion to the rite (n. 266). The *Transitus in Franciscans at Prayer* is significant because boundaries were set for the first time in the post-conciliar rite. While those boundaries or limits were intended to remain pliable and supple, English-speaking Franciscans have been moving freely within them.

A novel and creative approach in restructuring the *Transitus* was devised by the friars minor of the Cologne province in Germany. Number 146 in *Gebete der Gemeinschaft* is entitled "Vesper und *Transitus*. Elements of the *Transitus* are woven through the ritual structure of vespers. After a silent entrance procession of the assembly and a greeting, presumably by the presider who remains unspecified, two hymn texts are given with musical notation. The psalmody is framed with familiar antiphons. Psalm 112 is followed by Psalm 147:12-20 which could be interchanged with a musical version of the Beatitudes. A short reading from an unidentified biographical source prefaces the singing of Psalm 142 which constitutes the third psalm of vespers. Then another short reading (Romans 8:10-11) follows. Its appended responsory is reminiscent of the exchange: "Franciscus pauper et humilis"/"Hymnis coelestibus" of the former Latin ritual. Another reading follows introducing the singing of the Cantic of Brother Sun. The first text of the narrative tells of Francis' passing; a period of silence follows. Then all stand for the Magnificat. Intercessory prayers, the Our Father, and an oration close the vespers service. Mention is made of the use of the Blessing of St. Francis and the possible inclusion of the blessing with the saint's relic.

No doubt, other rites of *Transitus* in a variety of languages have been published since the council and are regarded with a certain degree of official ritual status. The only published post-Vatican II rituals available for this study which bear the weight of ritual authority are Canonici's "Transito di San Francesco," Fonck's "Transitus" in his *New Ritual*, and "The Memorial of the Passing of St. Francis, The *Transitus*" (October 3) in *Franciscans at Prayer*, and "Vesper und *Transitus*" in *Gebete der Gemeinschaft*. Ten unofficial and nonauthoritative *Transitus* ceremonies available at the time of gathering data for this study were collected from various Franciscan communities in North America. The flow of each ritual reflects the creativity and imagination of the ritual architects. To add texture to our study, an inspection of these unofficial and homespun rites is necessary.

Few of those elements considered essential to the rite in pre-conciliar days survive. More often than not, the "O sanctissima anima" antiphon is lost or

presented as an option; the five Our Fathers, hail Marys, and Glories are dropped; the "Salve, sancte Pater" and the use of relic as symbol disappear and then reappear later as an option. The focus of attention is not so much on one object or action, but more on the word proclaimed and received. Since an exposition and analysis of each of the ten rites would be impossible, a summary of various tendencies and trends which show themselves consistently in post-conciliar rites will be presented here as well as some peculiar inconsistencies which were tried once or twice and then abandoned.

Key ritual elements will be examined under the following eleven headings: 1) Presider; 2) Introductory Rite; 3) Narrative of the Saint's Death; 4) Distribution of Bread; 5) Reading of John 13:1-17; 6) Singing of Psalm 142; 7) Addition of Popular Franciscan Prayers and Hymns; 8) Homily or Reflection; 9) Reading of Excerpts from the Rule or Testament of St. Francis; 10) Blessing by the Presider/Guardian; and 11) Closing Rite.

1) **Presider.** In most rites the Guardian, in all cases a priest, presides. In one instance, the Vicar, neither a priest nor a deacon, presides.

2) **Introductory Rite.** This part of the rite is comprised of various elements: assembling, a procession including some but not all, the bearing of candles by certain individuals or by all, movement from one place to another, a song, a prayer. The form of introduction imitates that of Mass. In one instance the crossbearer, after the presider's greeting, leads the entire community of religious and laity from the courtyard to the church; all carry small lit white candles. The Guardian carrying a larger white candle follows the assembly while all sing the christocentric chant, "Jesus is Lord." After placing the candle on the altar, he returns to the presider's chair.

At this juncture it must be noted that the liturgical aid provided for each participant is not always a dependable source for ritual analysis. The actual enactment and experience of the rite often tells another story. This writer was present for a *Transitus* at which the Provincial Minister presided. A procession of several friars began from the church lobby down the main aisle into a congested and dimly lit church. Although not explicitly specified, all the friars minor carried lit candles while the faithful in the pews stood in darkness. Two by two the friars processed down the aisle, bowed to the altar, and moved into the reserved front pews. Covering this movement was the friars' chanting the "Tota Pulchra Es, Maria" which dramatically marked their entry into the darkened church gradually rinsed with the light they bore. However beautiful the chant may have been, one must raise the question of the appropriateness of singing a Marian hymn to initiate the ritual action of the *Transitus*. How does the singing of this particular hymn at this particular point in the rite help draw in lines of attention and participation? The desire of those who prepared the rite needs to be questioned. Of course, no malice or manipulation motivated them to choose this piece of chant. However, what affect did it have in the

performance of the entrance rite? — to chill the faithful to the bone because of the friars' apparent austerity or to ingratiate them in the eyes of those who gathered? This transitional moment in the rite, moving from one place to another, an apparently innocent and insignificant moment, communicates a storehouse of value and meaning established at the onset of the rite. Here is a good example of a fading Franciscan custom, namely, the singing of the "Tota Pulchra," folded into the *Transitus* solely because "some of us miss doing it and it's a piece all the friars know, so why not do it tonight as we process in?" Its inappropriateness is apparent; its role in the rite need reevaluation.

Another rite testifies to the Guardian holding a large brown candle symbolizing St. Francis. The presider follows the friars, each carrying a small lit white candle, into an almost dark church. Psalm 23 ("The Lord is My Shepherd") is intoned as the friars enter and the Guardian places the large brown candle on the altar. The entrance rite ends here when the Guardian and friars are seated. Then the narration begins after a brief silence. In yet another sample, only the ministry bear lit candles as they process into the chapel while the organ plays softly in the background. The Guardian carries a large candle whose color is not specified, and places it on the altar. When the ministry is seated, the Guardian offers a greeting and a prayer which defines the assembly's purpose and locates their attention. Then all sing the Gaelic hymn, "Spirit Seeking Light and Beauty" from the *Pius X Hymnal*. Though this selection is more appropriate than a Marian hymn, one wonders why it was chosen. Perhaps it was for no other reason than one or more on the planning team liked it and had not heard it sung in assembly for quite some time.

More recent rites reflect an interesting shift in the introductory rite. No longer is there a procession or song. The presider enters silently and alone. He carries a candle signifying Francis and, after placing it, not on the altar, but on a small table or in a candle holder, he spontaneously greets those assembled and calls them to attentive listening. At that point the introductory rite ends and the narration begins.

3) Narrative of the Saint's Death. The most significant shift from the pre- to post-conciliar rite is this addition of narration which resembles the passion narratives of Holy Week. The presider is given the part of St. Francis, and one or two other readers tell of the actual events in the words of the saint's early biographers. The narration provides a context for almost all the elements operative in the rite. The narrator recreates the scene of Francis' final moments in the words of Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure. Most rituals available implement this technique. In addition to the actual storytelling itself, a narrative style spills over into the opening and closing orations. Familiar metaphors

from the narrative texts or from the words of Francis exhorting his brothers to conversion are echoed in the orations which the presider prays aloud. In a sense these prayers retain a narrative character insofar as his is the voice of Francis urging the brothers along the way.

Some rites testify to the narrative threaded through the entire rite and creating its context; others do not. In all instances, the actual text was not provided. Therein lies an implicit urge to listen and be attentive not only to the spoken word but also to silence, action, and rest.

4) Distribution of Bread. Since the death accounts record Francis' distributing bread to the brothers, those responsible for designing a contemporary *Transitus* simply decided to enact the scene. The Guardian blesses pita bread or home-baked table bread with a suggested prayer or a dialogic prayer between himself and the assembly, or simply with a silent gesture. In some rites the bread is passed throughout the assembly for immediate consumption; in others it is administered by designated people at preassigned points to which the assembly processed. The singing of "Peace, My Friends" accompanies the bread-action in one rite; a simple organ solo covers the action of distribution in another. One rite situates the "Breaking of Bread" both during the singing of Psalm 142 and the reading of John 13 thus deflating the significance of the saint's moment of expiration at the final verse of the psalm which in earlier rites has been held in such high relief. In some rites the distribution of bread is eliminated most likely due to exceptionally large crowds. One rite couples the distribution of bread with the sign of peace. The bread is not passed around, but all are invited to come forward while singing a eucharistic hymn to receive a piece of the blessed bread from designated ministers. When all return to their places, a sign of peace is exchanged.

5) Reading of John 13:1-17. This Johannine text, cited in the biographers' farewell discourses of Francis, is incorporated into the ritual as a scriptural basis for the call to service. The *mandatum* was Jesus' prophetic word-action alerting the apostles to discipleship, service, and mission. The text grasped Francis and embodied his brand of Christianity. The actual proclamation of the text works its way into most of the rituals, but one must be cautious about arriving at absolute conclusions based on the evidence of these locally tailored rites. In other words, the gospel text may have been read; it may not have been read. Since its proclamation has been popular and customary for close to twenty years, it is legitimate to suspect strongly that the gospel story of Jesus' washing of his apostles' feet was read even in rituals where it is not cited explicitly.

6) Singing of Psalm 142. The survival of this traditional element in the rite is significant. In most instances the tension of the rite reaches a resolution at the closing of the psalm. It is regarded the climactic moment in the rite. The

release of ritual tension is accompanied in some rites by the symbolic extinguishing of candles at the last verse of the psalm, "Lead me forth from prison. . .," whereas in other instances the narrator continues after the final verse of the psalm with a summary comment from his text: "And all these events being accomplished in him, Francis was finally set free and absorbed into the presence of the Lord where he rests now and for all ages." Only then is a directive to extinguish the candles given parenthetically in the leaflet or simply by way of imitating the presider's action.

One booklet actually introduces the text of the psalm with "The Transitus," thus closely associating the moment of passage with the praying of the psalm. Before the final verse ("Lead me forth from prison. . ."), a directive interrupts the text of the psalm: At this point, the Guardian extinguishes his candle and lights the pascal candle, the symbol of the risen Lord, as a sign of Francis passing to everlasting life." Then a few moments of silent meditation is recommended to follow that ritual action.

In a similar way, another rite highlights the climactic passing of St. Francis under a separate heading. Immediately after the notation for the refrain of Psalm 142 which reads "Solemn Commemoration of Francis' Death," the directive clarifies the solemnity of the moment: "At the conclusion of the psalm, only the candle representing Francis will be extinguished. Please kneel for a moment of silent prayer." The following year's rite at the same location shifts the candles' symbolic interpretation with this instruction: "At the conclusion of the psalm, the celebrant extinguishes the candle symbolizing Francis. **Our candles remain lit** symbolizing the spirit which Francis has imparted to the world." Another rite positions the psalm at a peculiar point in the narrative. For a long while after the death-psalm is sung, Francis does a fair amount of living. This placement flattens out any sense of climax or resolution in the rite. No blowing out of candles accompanies the psalm. Again, a brief silence follows.

In sum, Psalm 142 is the one element which has survived the flow of additions and recensions in the rite. The psalm and candle symbolism are intimately connected so much so that the bearing of candles, the time for lighting them and extinguishing them, is somewhat presupposed by the ritual architects. Of late, however, some confusion has arisen regarding the place of candles in the rite, their symbolic referent, and the significance of the flame's extinction. The purpose and function of the lit candle remains unclear.

7) Addition of Popular Franciscan Prayers and Hymns. Now and then, popular Franciscan prayers appear in these post-conciliar rites. The "Canticle of Brother Sun," the "Peace Prayer of St. Francis," the "Te Deum," the "Tota

Pulchra," and the "Blessing of St. Francis" show up inconsistently in some form. None of these prayers appeared in pre-conciliar rites.

First, the Canticle emerges in various forms. One ritual cites it during the "Imposition of Hands" which probably reflects the style of the Guardian's blessing. The Canticle, sung by cantors, forms an audial backdrop to the assembly's movement to the Guardian for the blessing. Who is included or excluded in the blessing is not specified. One presumes that all present, Franciscans and non-Franciscans, received the Guardian's blessing. The "Canticle of the Sun" shows itself in some rites not in the actual words of Francis' poem but in the traditional hymn, "All Creatures of our God and King." The "Peace Prayer of St. Francis" popularly attributed to him is prayed in sung or spoken form in a few early rituals. The "Te Deum" appears in a single ritual. The "Blessing of St. Francis" from the Book of Numbers shows itself in various forms. It is sung as background to the ritual action of the Guardian's blessing or the presider speaks out the blessing after the distribution of bread and the rite of peace. Franciscan devotional prayers make their way in and out of post-conciliar rites.

8) Homily or Reflection. Some rites testify to a homily after the reading of the death account; others refer to it as a reflection. The distinction in terms does not appear to indicate that a friar-priest preached a homily and a non-clerical friar offered a reflection. Where there is no homily or reflection, the architects of the rite most likely perceived the rite as self-explanatory and dispensed with extended commentary on it.

Recall that the Transitus rituals which appear during and soon after the council tended to be instructive. With the passage of time, the Transitus often becomes less didactic and more evocative and affective. However, the necessary inclusion of a homily or reflection within most post-conciliar rites may suggest that the rite without a homiletic element may no longer speak for itself. Or the paucity of opportunities to reflect on our unfolding identity may prompt and even necessitate a homily or reflection on the night before the solemnity to prime the pump for celebration. On the other hand, there are rites which testify to no homily or reflection at all. It is indeed curious to speculate on motivation for including or excluding a homily or reflection.

9) Excerpts from the Rule or Testament of St. Francis. The reading of the entire Testament of St. Francis is noted in several rites while select readings from the Rule are included in only a few. The Testament of St. Francis, a final letter from Francis to his friars appended to the Rule to safeguard it from the tamperings of loose interpreters and an impassioned plea to safeguard his desires, appears in early post-conciliar rites and then curiously fades from use.

10) The Blessing by the Presider/Guardian. The narrative portrays Francis inviting each friar for a final blessing. The reenactment of this moment has become significant in current rites. One rite calls it the "Imposition of

Hands." Another calls it the "Blessing of the Brothers" in which the Guardian embraces each friar or signs the cross over the friar's head or on his forehead. The practice of individual blessings for all present, whether Franciscans or non-Franciscans, fades in some rites. More recently it has been revived. For those who prepare the rites, important questions have become "Who blesses?" and "Who is blessed?" Answers to these questions uncover unspoken assumptions concerning ritual relationships. Current rites show the Guardian joined by representative members of local Franciscan communities of men and women extending a blessing to all who approach them. Imposition of hands often replaces the cruciform blessing; words or silence accompany the blessing. Other current rites replace individual blessings with a communal sign of peace after the bread rite. Some others witness to the Guardian's final blessing of all present in the words of the Blessing of St. Francis from the Book of Numbers.

11) **Closing Rite.** The final action varies significantly. One rite maintains a rather somber ending with the Guardian praying the "Prayer of the Companions" attributed to St. Francis. The recessional is silent, dark, and austere. Other ceremonies end in a festive tone with songs of celebration and praise including a variety of musical styles from "Brother Sun and Sister Moon," the title song from Franco Zeffirelli's film, to the traditional "Blessed Francis, Holy Father" or "All Creatures of our God and King," to name only a few.

These eleven elements disclose dominant trends within the rite throughout the last three decades. The only point of continuity which recent rituals share with the pre-conciliar rituals is Psalm 142, the most primitive unit in the rite. All other elements in the reformed rites show a clear discontinuity with those prior to the Second Vatican Council. The post-conciliar rites give witness to the testing of various components within the rite, the retention of some successful elements, and the abandonment of those with little promise. Franciscans continue to wrestle with the Transitus; the Transitus continues to wrestle with Franciscans.

Endnotes: Part II

¹ Cord 43 (1993), 261-274.

² **Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents**, gen. ed., Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1981), 612, n. 2b.

³ *Testi latini liturgici*; versione di Fausta Casolini, T.O.F. (Santuario della Verna, Arezzo: Edizioni "La Verna," 1963).

⁴ The heading of the rite states: "Die 3 (vel 4) octobris, circa solis occasum" while the rest of the ritual continues in familiar progressions. See *Liturgia di S. Francesco d'Assisi*, 152-157.

⁵ (Rome: Edizioni "Fiamma Nova," 4th ed., [1965]), 7-11.

⁶ See *Bibliographia Franciscana* 13 (1964-1973): 207.

⁷ Benet A. Fonck, O.F.M., ed. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 75-79.

⁸ Ibid., 75.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gasper Lefebvre, O.S.B., ed. (Bruges: Liturgical Publications, 1961), 242.

¹¹ Fonck, *New Ritual*, 75-77.

¹² Ibid., 77.

¹³ Ibid., 78.

¹⁴ Ibid., 95.

¹⁵ See *Franciscan at Prayer*, nn. 257-274.

¹⁶ (Cologne: ***, 198*), 103-113.

* * *



Book Reviews

Escape From God. By Dean Turner, Pasadena, Ca: Hope Publishing House, 1991. 268 Pp. \$17.95 (Cloth)

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M., assistant professor of theology, St. Bonaventure University.

Dean Turner's text can evoke a full spectrum of emotions. His main thesis can excite; the details of scholarship frustrate and depress. The text offers a very readable overview of popular positions in modern philosophy, psychology and theology. As an overview it serves well as an introduction to the issues. It would be mistaken to take Turner's conclusions as a final position.

The overriding criticism of modern culture proposed by Turner is that modern thought encourages escape from responsibility. This is the part of the text which excites. One cannot deny that contemporary culture encourages a focus on one's personal happiness without seriously considering a greater common good. Should disappointment or failure come the culture encourages one to blame society, one's family, the system or just the way that life is. About the only choice one has is which escape to choose.

Spotting the failures of the contemporary mindset Dr. Turner calls the believing Christian to take responsibility for one's life. Facing a culture often intoxicated with immediate pleasure Turner finds the power to accept authentic responsibility for one's life

in the message of Jesus. The acceptance of this responsibility demands sacrifice and suffering, unpopular themes in the modern world. Though an unpopular position Turner correctly sees that there is no other choice.

Excitement can be had in Turner's chapter "On Life's Primordial Conditions." He writes, "Philosophers and Psychologists often come up with wrong answers because they don't ask the right questions. Likewise, we arrive at superficial and simplistic ideas because we ask the kind of questions that will afford us the comfort of careless answers" (p. 45). He notes how easy it is to settle for simplistic answers. The fundamental question ignored by modern philosophy and psychology is the question of God. Turner develops the theme "God is Care." Here is the fundamental truth of life's primordial condition.

To develop this theme Turner proposes that caring is made possible by five things: (1) need, (2) risk, (3) freedom, (4) challenge, and (5) responsibility (p. 47). With this list one has the key to the book's thesis and its development. The God of Jesus is the God of longing, a God longing to care. Whitehead and Hartshorne are the philosopher theologians who ground the thesis.

For identifying the shape of the present crisis of culture the author is to be praised. For bringing the insight of Process Thought to bear on the crisis, and for doing so in an understand-

able way, the author is to be praised. But, there are glaring difficulties.

Most annoying, in this reviewer's opinion, is the cavalier way in which Dr. Turner dismissed major World Religions, the questions of agnosticism and atheism, existentialism, New Age thought and Christendom. Certainly there are negative dimensions to each of these positions which can evoke a shirking of human responsibility. But, one can also find very responsible, authentic people who live their lives in the context of the positions so quickly rejected by the author.

Frustration builds as one moves through the text. In the final chapter "On Gautama Buddha and Jesus" the reader finds Turner railing against the Japanese and communists. One has to wonder about his agenda.

Suspicion about Turner's agenda can arise much earlier. The chapter "On Hinduism, Islam and Confucianism" offers nothing more than a superficial dismissal of these great religions. Turner contends that because Allah is not the Christian God of care, Muslims are invited to abandon responsi-

bility for their acts. He argues that they avoid any serious conversion of character. His critiques of Hinduism and Confucianism are superficial. In the author's later consideration of Judaism he fails to develop the rich heritage of beliefs in modern Judaism. His line of thought senses a stronger connection to the despair of Sartre than the heroic faith of biblical Judaism.

When one checks the endnotes one sees that Turner relies almost exclusively on secondary sources. And, these secondary sources are not the best in the field. One suspects, however, that they fit Turner's agenda.

One could argue that Turner intends to offer an introduction and an overview. However, even an introduction in contemporary religious studies must show the possibility of dialogue. For Turner there seems to be no possibility of dialogue, no reasonable position other than his basic Christian conviction. A text with conviction has value, but ultimately its true value would seem to rest on another good. Can the text enable people of conviction to live with genuine care in a world of people with different convictions?



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