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Spirit and Life:
A Journal of Contemporary Francisc
Volume 5

Refounding
in the
Franciscan Tradition

Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

$8.00 Paper 135 P

Anthony Carrozzo's essays tell the story of how "one Franciscan Provin with its dreams, visions, and plans in a complex and changing society developed gradually during a refounding process in a Province of almo faced with changing values, new self-understanding, and inevitable concomitant with aging members and numerically declining numb acknowledging that the challenges could easily have become "demoralizin Carrozzo's essays seek to demonstrate how grace can be found "amid harra In these reflections on the experience of one group, others are sure to find en guidance and the challenge to face similar concerns with new hope and a of what might yet be.

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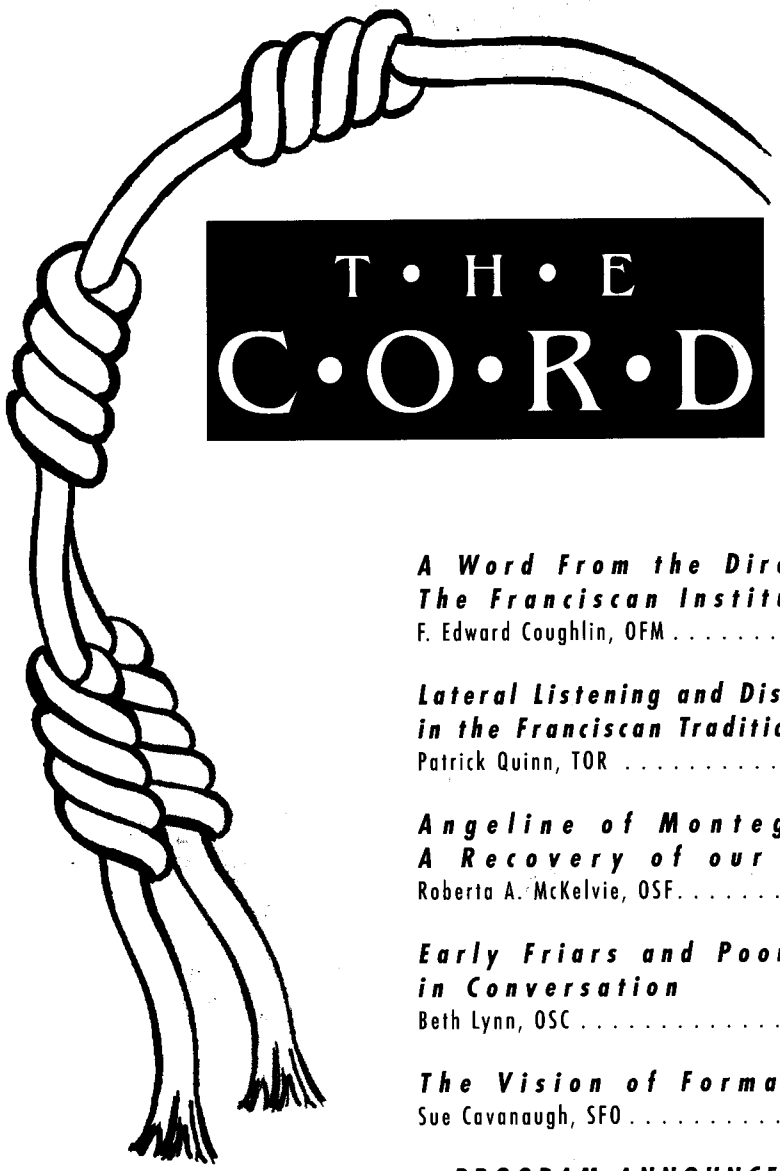
A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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THE CORD

A Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

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To save unnecessary delay and expense, contributors are asked to observe the following directives:

1. MSS should be submitted on disk or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced.
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
   Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
   (1Cor. 13:6).
   (RegNB 23:2).
   (2Cel 5:8).
   (4LAg 2:13).
   A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. The edition of the Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss.

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

F. Edward Coughlin, OFM

Dear sisters and brothers,

Forty-five years ago, in the inaugural edition of *The Cord*, Father Philotheus Boehner, OFM, wrote:

> For several years there has been felt among Franciscan religious in America the need of a periodical devoted specifically to traditional Franciscan spirituality.... We do not understand with sufficient clarity and penetration what it means to live and think and act in the spirit of our Seraphic Founder and Exemplar....
>
> The matter should not be dismissed lightly.... As Franciscans we are bound to live according to the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi. We are bound to this by a threefold obligation: to God, Who wills us to be not religious merely, but religious who follow the Franciscan way of life and no other; to the world, which looks hopefully to us for some feature of the radiant countenance of our Father, some flame of the all-embracing charity which he poured out upon the world; and to ourselves, for if our spiritual life bears no resemblance to that of our Father, we must fear to be cut off from the rich heritage promised to his true sons and daughters....
>
> The primary purpose of *The Cord* is to aid in effecting among us a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life.... It will restrict its material to Franciscan spirituality in its various forms and aspects and applications, and to such matters as are of particular concern and interest to the Franciscan family....
>
> For as the Franciscan cord is the symbol of that way of life which binds together all members of the Franciscan family,...it is our hope to make *The Cord* an instrument for promoting closer unity among us not merely in symbol but in fact, and greater perfection through mutual love and coordinated effort (1950, 1-3).

These words from the visionary founder of *The Cord* ring true within the hearts of those who have embraced the challenges of renewal in response to the mandates of Vatican II. They are words

which take on a special urgency in these days as many ask: What makes the Franciscan tradition so unique and important to the contemporary Church and world? And, while words like "bound" and "obligation" in Philotheus's statement might raise negative connotations in a post-Vatican II Church, the general tenor of his observations continues to challenge Franciscans to know and articulate their understanding of what it means to be called to a distinct way of living their Christian vocation.

Today, instead of using the term "traditional spirituality," we are inclined to speak of charisms, to which we are heirs in our particular way of life. In much the same way as Philotheus Boehner above, Sister Elizabeth McDonough, OP, more recently observed that "there are certain rather obvious theoretical presumptions" about charisms:

1. Either a religious community has a charism or it does not. If a community does not have a charism, it is not going to survive.
2. If a community has a charism, the members understand it or they do not. If...the members do not understand it, the community is not going to survive.
3. If a community has a charism and understands it, the members can either strive to live it or they can decline to do so. If...[they] decline to live it, then that community is not going to survive.

Sister McDonough goes on to say:

> Because charisms are gifts of the Spirit to and for the church, they are too precious to be left indefinitely in the trust of people who are heedless of a charism's inherent value or unmindful of their personal responsibility to embrace and live its practical consequences ("Beyond the Liberal Model: *Quo Vadis?" Review for Religious* [March-April, 1991] 650-51).

For 45 years *The Cord* has given its attention to reflecting on the meaning of the Franciscan charism in the life of the Church. The mission of this periodical, as reflected in the above statement of its first editor, "is to aid in effecting among us a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life."

Today, there is clearly an awakening interest in the Franciscan story, its roots and development, the persons who first responded to this Spirit movement in the 13th century and the persons who, over the centuries, allowed that same Spirit to operate in their own lives after the example of those first "Franciscans." The Franciscan Institute renews its own commitment to continue offering to a general readership books and periodicals which support and nurture "a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life."

With this issue, *The Cord* takes on a new look and a new format. With the sudden death last March of Father Joseph Doino, OFM, the editorship of the magazine became vacant. A great debt of gratitude is due this imaginative and exemplary friar for his faithful work of producing *The Cord* for almost eight years. In his own first editorial he placed before us the challenging words of Dante who claimed that the "God-given charge of the mendicant orders" was "to remind the Church of the exclusively spiritual character of its mission." Father Joe hoped that *The Cord* would "continue to be an instrument in bringing the 'luminous hour' [the *kairos* moment] to realization in 'word and deed.' That is, after all," he said, "the only criterion Francis accepted for the 'homecoming' of Gospel truth." (*Cord*, 1987, p. 2)

A debt of gratitude is due Robert Stewart, OFM, who edited *The Cord* with Joe the past four years and kept the journal on schedule after Joe's sudden death. Despite the demands of a heavy teaching schedule Bob continued the work of a brother he greatly admired and served the Franciscan family well.

I want to thank Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM who designed the new cover and made helpful suggestions about the new format.

A time of transition such as this confronts us with the need to reassess both the mission of the periodical as well as the resources of The Institute. After consulting with the Editorial Board and various individuals, I believe that the best way we can carry on the valuable purpose of *The Cord* is to offer it henceforth bi-monthly. Longer but fewer issues will allow the editors the time needed to prepare each issue and search for quality articles which will continue to support the members of the Franciscan family in a personal and corporate effort to deepen our knowledge and love of our way of life.

I am pleased to announce that Sr. Elise Saggau, OSF (Little Falls, MN) is the new editor of *The Cord*. Elise joined The Institute staff last September as director of Franciscan Resources Services. A 1993 graduate of The Institute, Elise has a strong background in education and administration. She also has graduate degrees in theology and religious studies. While working as a graduate assistant at The Institute she proved to be a capable editor. Elise will be working over the next few months to identify some associate editors and explore ways to encourage individuals to assist *The Cord's* readers in coming to a deeper appreciation of the Franciscan charism, its relevance in the contemporary Church and world as well as some of the ways Franciscans are making a difference in response to the movement of the Spirit.

I also want to challenge those who are inspired by the charism to embrace the discipline of writing for *The Cord*. While it is no easy task to prepare a manuscript that is theoretically sound and pastorally helpful, it is a great service to this and future generations of Franciscans.

We believe the symbol of the cord, chosen at the outset of this publication, remains meaningful as we continue to identify qualities which draw us together as Franciscan brothers and sisters. We need those unifying bonds which support the work of the Spirit in our lives and which make possible our collaborative efforts to make the Gospel way of life accessible to our contemporary society.

We offer to you, then, a "new" *Cord*, one which draws from the abundant treasury of our tradition "new things and old"; one which relies for its image on 45 years of faithful and loving service to the Franciscan family; one which continues to provide a forum for that continual reflection on the grace and blessing to ourselves, to our church, and to our world which is the Franciscan way of life. May it be an instrument through which the sisters and brothers are able to offer words of encouragement that will rouse others to follow Christ in the footprints of Francis, Clare and the crowd of witnesses who have gone before us.

The Cord, 45.1 (1995)

Lateral Listening and Discernment in the Franciscan Tradition

Patrick Quinn, TOR*

Addressing the relationship between pneumatology and contemporary ecclesial praxis, Yves Congar noted that the heightened awareness of the Holy Spirit as operative within all of the faithful has produced a curious fact. "When the Holy Spirit is referred to, the next step is to refer to power, which has often been used to justify the 'Establishment' and authority".[1] In the context of ministerial discernment within religious communities, this statement will clearly resonate with the experience of vowed religious whose lives span both the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Church. Formerly, when personal discernment conflicted with that of the religious superior there was no question that the latter was graced with greater faculties for listening to the voice of the divine Pneuma. The increased consciousness of the indwelling Spirit active in all the baptized and the consequent shift of focus to individual discernment has now placed community leadership into the powerlessness of accepting personal discernment as coming directly from the Holy Spirit. Congar proposes that the Church is in great need of rules for discernment.[2]

The tradition of the Church offers a plethora of material in this regard. Perhaps the best known rules of discernment derive from the Jesuit tradition. However, contrary to popular wisdom, St. Ignatius did not invent discernment, nor did he propose the definitive method for all time and for all people. The question can be raised as to

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what the Franciscan tradition offers in this regard. Although St. Francis did not delineate a systematic process of discernment, his desire to know the will of God and the means by which he sought to do so are by no means absent from his writings.[3]

The stories of the Poverello as they are recounted by his early followers provide a further valid source which can shed some light on the understanding of discernment within this rich tradition. The fact that the stories of Francis are not, strictly speaking, historical accounts, in no way renders them valueless. Utilizing the hermeneutical principle of narrative theology that "disciples' stories of their masters are interpretations of discipleship,"[4] an understanding of discernment within the Franciscan tradition emerges. The validity of this principle is attested to by the General Chapters of 1260 and 1266 when in the former, Bonaventure was commissioned to write the definitive and canonical *Life of Francis* and then in the latter, all other *legendae* were ordered to be destroyed.[5] This is a forceful testimony to the power of narratives in shaping one's understanding of the meaning of following in the footsteps of a founder. The stories of Francis can be thus understood as articulated interpretations of adhering to the spirit of the Poor Man of Assisi.

Thomas of Celano recounts a story about Francis at the beginning of his conversion wherein the saint is striving "to bend his will to the will of God" (1Cel 6). The episode begins by stating that Francis often withdrew "from the bustle and business of the world" in the company of a beloved and trusted friend "in order to establish Jesus Christ dwelling within himself." There was a certain grotto where Francis and his anonymous confidant would frequently go and the former would recount his spiritual experiences to the latter. The story continues:

> Francis would enter the grotto, while his companion would wait for him outside; and filled with a new and singular spirit, he would pray to his Father in secret. ...He prayed devoutly that the eternal and true God would direct his way and teach him to do his will (1Cel 6).

The account concludes speaking of Francis's struggle with his past sinfulness and the mercy of God, and upon leaving the grotto he appeared to his friend to be a different person from the one who had entered the cave.

This story highlights the essential nature of prayer as the

beginning of discernment. Francis personally struggles to make room both within his world and within himself for the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The struggle involves physically removing the self from the business of the world and encountering the Lord of Life in the light of one's past and present. It entails coming to know and accept the love of a merciful God by the sinful self. This prayerful struggle is one which must be undertaken personally and cannot be left solely to times of common prayer.

Although this story underscores the necessity of the individual to encounter the Spirit of God in the secret recesses of the heart, the communal dimension of this process is not neglected. The anonymous friend of Francis accompanies him in prayer outside of the grotto and together they discuss the experience of encountering God. The significance of the friend's presence in this story illustrates that while, on the one hand, there is an indispensable private and individual dimension in coming to know the will of the eternal and true God, on the other, this process is not totally an individual enterprise. Francis is accompanied in prayer and has someone with whom to share his experience, and thereby come to a greater understanding of it. Thus, the very foundation of discernment, the prayerful encounter with God, involves the duality of the singular self and the companionship of others.

Another *legenda* recounted by Thomas of Celano about Francis's striving to know the will of God takes place at the church of the Porziuncula, which would be the third chapel reconstructed by Francis in his effort to respond to the Crucified's command to rebuild his Church. Fatigued from his manual labor and still seeking to understand more fully the meaning of his personal calling, he participates in the eucharistic celebration at the aforementioned church. The story continues stating:

> When on a certain day the Gospel was read in that church, how the Lord sent his disciples out to preach, the holy man of God, assisting there, understood somewhat the words of the Gospel; after Mass he humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel to him more fully (1Cel 22).

This account illustrates the absolute importance of listening. Francis must first listen to the Word of God and then seek to grasp fully its meaning. Once again, this venture is not a solitary undertaking. Francis

listens to the Word in the context of a group, within the eucharistic assembly. Attempting to plumb further the depths of its meaning, he turns to the teaching Church to listen to the voice of his predecessors in the faith and their understanding of this life-giving Word which leads to God. Francis's quest to understand God's calling is deeply personal but is also inclusive of others.

This account mentions further that Francis "humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel more fully." This indicates the importance of humility as an ingredient in the process of grappling with the meaning of God's Word. This virtue first entails the facility to recognize the lacuna in one's knowledge and to admit that to another. Further, humility demands an openness to the voice of Tradition as it is mediated through teachers of the faith, allowing its voice to dialogue with the interior consciousness of the person.

The "official" narrative of the life of Francis composed by Bonaventure further portrays communal listening as rooted in the very foundation of what would become the Franciscan movement. Francis had just begun to realize that "others were moved by his example to live a life of penance"(LM 3:3), so he was faced anew with seeking to understand God's will. The story continues:

> When he was being joined by his first follower, he said, "We shall have to ask God's advice about this." In the morning they went to the church of St. Nicholas where they spent time in prayer. Then Francis opened the Gospel book three times in honor of the Blessed Trinity...(LM 3:3).

The narrative concludes by citing the three well-known Gospel passages referring to poverty and self-renunciation[6] and by Francis's declaration that this would be the rule of life for the burgeoning community.

The starting point of discernment once again is shown to be prayer. Prayer as a preparation for reading God's Word affords a heightened receptivity within the person, allowing the Word to speak more distinctly to the heart. This story further indicates that the foundation of every decision in the life of Francis is rooted in the Word. His greatest desire is to follow the will of God as it is revealed through the Word in his personal and communal context. This account illustrates anew that coming to know the will of God is not accomplished in isolation from others. The fact that he goes to the church with another and together they pray and listen to the Word is of great significance.

The parallel of this story in the *Legend of the Three Companions* portrays Francis as going to the church of St. Nicholas with both Bernard of Quintavalle and another man, Peter of Catania (L3S 28). Francis recognizes his relatedness to others who want to join him in his life of penance and he cannot ignore the fact that his discernment involves them as much as it involves him. Therefore his discernment is rooted in prayer, founded on the Gospel and undertaken in relation to others.

St. Bonaventure recounts yet another crucial moment in the life of St. Francis when he is struggling to know if God is calling him to devote all his time to prayer or to go out and preach. This story portrays Francis turning to the brothers who were closest to him, explaining his struggle and then asking their advice (LM 12:1). After discussing this problem with the friars over a number of days, listening to their concerns and recommendations, Francis still found no resolution. The account continues:

> He now chose two of the friars and sent them to Brother Silvester. Silvester...spent all his time in prayer on the mountain above Assisi. They were to tell him to ask God to solve his doubts and send him the answer in God's name. He sent the same message to St. Clare, telling her to pray with her sisters and find out God's will by means of the holiest and most simple of the sisters.... By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Brother Silvester and St. Clare both came to the same conclusion. It was God's will that Francis should go out and preach as a herald of Christ (LM 12:2).

This story clearly denotes the communal dimension in Francis's search to understand God's will.

After first having discussed his doubts with his own community, he goes beyond the immediate fraternity to those who both know him personally and are experienced in the ways of God. Not only does this story recognize Francis's awareness of the relational context of his discernment by first speaking with his own community, it also portrays his consciousness of the Holy Spirit dwelling in and speaking through others both within and without the immediate community.

The conclusion of this episode further illustrates the benefit of the involvement of others in personal discernment. When Francis heard the response of Clare and Silvester, "He left with such eagerness to

obey God's command and he travelled so quickly that the hand of God seemed to be upon him, giving him new strength from heaven" (LM 12:2). Francis now hears clearly what he had formerly heard only faintly. Through his own individual struggle to know God's calling he is able to recognize the response of his brother and sister in Christ as inspired by the Holy Spirit. This confirmation of personal discernment by his prayerful friends gives him new energy to respond to a calling which he finds more arduous than the contemplative vocation.[7]

While this brief examination of discernment narratives about St. Francis does not result in offering a set of strict rules for discernment, it does illustrate that the Franciscan tradition provides several broad guidelines to those who are seeking to know and follow God's saving will. The importance of first coming to recognize God's voice through prayer, both private and ecclesial, is seen to be foundational in this quest. It involves the personal interior struggle to overcome the obstacle of fear and then to embrace the gracious gift of a loving, filial relationship to God.

Also illustrated in these stories is the essential nature of listening to God's Word as it is mediated through the Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church and through the voices of other members of the *ecclesia*. The prelude to this listening is the quieting of the inner self through prayer and removing the interior clutter which obstructs the ability to hear the Word as it is mediated. The virtue of humility is further depicted as foundational to listening, recognizing the need to discover, learn and grow in insight.

Perhaps the most characteristic element which emerges from these narratives is the relational dimension of discernment. A prerequisite to the search to know God's loving will is the recognition of radical membership in the Body of Christ and the relatedness to all of creation. One does not make decisions in isolation. In these narratives, Francis is portrayed as being acutely aware of his interrelatedness with other members of the ecclesial community in his search to discover his personal vocation. Further, the involvement of others in the discernment process enables the individual to hear more distinctly the voice of God and respond to God's calling with new vigor.

As Congar intimates, true discernment is not a matter of power, but of rendering the self open and receptive to God. The importance of lateral listening is a recognition that indeed the Holy Spirit can and does speak through others. In the context of religious life, the tendency

to align the Holy Spirit with controlling power, be it on the part of community leadership or on the part of individual members, destroys discernment. True discernment holds no hostages. To the contrary, it involves relinquishing power and choosing vulnerability to the sometimes frightening voice of God. The narratives of St. Francis clearly demonstrate that discernment is above all a matter of listening, listening with the radical awareness of the self as a relational being and therefore listening together with others to the voice of God.

Endnotes

[1]Yves Congar, "Pneumatology Today," *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 167 (1973): 440.

[2]Ibid.

[3]For a thorough treatment of discernment in the thought of Francis, largely based upon the *Admonitions*, see Evaristo Acosta Maestre, "The Discernment of Spirits According to St. Francis," *Greyfriars Review* 2/1 (1988): 49-76.

[4]See John Navone and Thomas Cooper, *Tellers of the Word* (New York: Le Jaq Publishing, 1981): 51; and Patrick Quinn, "Narrative Theology as a Hermeneutic for the Further Understanding of the *Sacrum Commercium*," *Analecta TOR* XXI (1989): 16.

[5]Lazaro Iriarte, *Franciscan History*, trans. Patricia Ross (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 43-44.

[6]See Mt 19:21; Lk 9:3; and Mt 16:24.

[7]Earlier in this narrative, Francis identifies himself as "uneducated" and "inexperienced in speaking" and admits to having "received the gift of prayer." He then extols the benefits of the contemplative life and speaks of the difficulties of an itinerant preacher (LM 12:1).

The Cord, 45.1 (1995)

Angeline of Montegiove: A Recovery of our Past

Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF*

Angeline (in Italian, Angelina) of Montegiove, who until recently has been more widely referred to in Franciscan circles as Angelina of Marsciano, was the "foundress" or "reformer" of the "first congregation of Franciscan Sisters...to receive pontifical recognition" in Italy.[1] In receiving this recognition, she also became the first Minister General of a group of houses of women following the Rule of Nicholas IV (the Rule of 1289), the first officially approved Rule for Third Order Franciscans living a common life. For this, if for no other reason, her way of life deserves our attention. However, there are many threads of history and spirituality from Angeline that have had direct impact on Third Order Regular women's histories. It is my belief that, in addition to my own congregation (the Bernardine Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis), there are other congregations of TOR women in the United States today which can trace their spiritual lineage back to Angeline. It is also my belief that the more we know of her life and history, the more we will understand our past, especially the pre-Vatican II traditions which formed us, and the clearer vision we will have as we shape our futures.

Angeline was born in 1357 in a small place called Montegiove near Terni, between Perugia and Orvieto in Umbria. Her father, Count James of Montegiove, was from a branch of the family of the Counts of Marsciano. This is why we find her identified as Angelina of Marsciano in the hagiographic tradition. Modern scholarship, however, tends to refer to her as Angeline of Montegiove — her place of birth being the determining factor.

Her probable date of birth is 1357. The biographical material is not absolutely reliable. For a long, long time our primary source was Ludovici Jacobilli's *Vita della beata Angelina da Corbara*, published in Foligno in 1627, nearly two hundred years after her death. There are no records of a canonization process, either. The authority and veracity of Jacobilli's sources and the manner in which he used them are questionable. Jacobilli's accounts about Angeline have all too often been selected for particular hagiographic purposes without regard to historical accuracy. What is biographically reliable is a bit sketchy, but it has been possible to find material from papal bulls, archival materials at Foligno and other places, congregational constitutions, etc. Also, most of our information comes from material translated from Italian, the 1984 volume of *Analecta TOR*, not from anything available in English.

We know almost nothing of Angeline's early life. Recent research indicates that both her parents had died by the time she was six years of age; two brothers also died within a few years. Angeline and her sister Francesca were the lone survivors. Ancient tradition holds, although no historical record has been found, that she was married to Count John of Teramo in a union arranged by her family, probably for political purposes, although no historical record has been found. Her husband's home was in the Abruzzo region of the Kingdom of Naples. Jacobilli's biography says that Angeline had made a vow of virginity at the age of 12 and that her husband agreed to respect that vow. They lived in continence for two years; then she was widowed at the age of 28. Why the vow of virginity? We know that while young and living at home, she was part of a family very much involved in and influenced by the Franciscan penitential tradition; the vow may have been part of her private commitment to that tradition. Or it may have resulted from familial influence. According to Felice Rossetti:

> From infancy Angeline breathed an abundant Franciscan atmosphere, which characterized the family of the Counts of Montegiove.... Her insertion within the charism and the spirituality of the Poor Man of God was favored and

**Roberta A. McKelvie, a Bernardine Franciscan, is completing doctoral studies at Fordham University. Her research has led her to undertake the task of bringing some Italian sources on Angeline into English so the story of this remarkable woman might be accessible to American Franciscans.*

> encouraged by her family relationship with *Paolo Trinci*, also called Paoluccio...who entered "the Franciscan Order at about the age of fourteen, [and] distinguished himself through an austere practice of the Franciscan charism. After he joined the movement to reform the Order...he interpreted the Rule to the letter, 'without gloss.'"[2]

Surely the strand of Franciscanism experienced by the family of Angeline was that of the Spirituals. It is important to know that, in the fourteenth century, Franciscan life in Foligno, where Angeline finally settled, was "dominated by the figure of... *Paoluccio Trinci of Foligno*, with whom the Friars Minor will succeed in giving life to the movement of the *Observance*...."[3] Of course, there are no records of personal contact between Angeline and Paoluccio prior to 1385, and he died in 1391. But it is a fair probability that her early contact with Franciscanism came through her family ties to this austere kind of spirituality. Once widowed, Angeline was free to join the penitential Franciscan movement "officially." In his work on the history of Franciscan sisters, Raffaele Pazzelli writes that, after her husband's death, Angeline gave her riches to the poor and gathered about herself in her home a large group of young noblewomen.[4] Some think it was specifically for the purpose of giving those who wanted a life of virginity a place to stay, a kind of refuge. When the pool of marriageable young noblewomen decreased markedly, the young noblemen of the region complained to the King of Naples. Angeline was subsequently accused of sorcery and heresy. She was suspected of bewitching all the young women. Brought to the court for trial, she presented herself holding in the folds of her garments a burning coal which did not harm her. This miracle saved her life.[5] (Above the main altar in the chapel of Sacred Heart Convent, the oldest "home" of the Bernardines in the United States, there is a fresco of a number of important persons in Franciscan history. It includes the figure of a woman in a Clare-like habit; the **burning coal held at her hip** identifies her as Angeline.)

In spite of this miracle, Angeline was obliged to leave the region. Dates are uncertain, but it seems that she traveled to Assisi in July, 1395, to pray at the tomb of Francis. On the feast of the Portiuncola, August 2, Angeline received the inspiration to found a true and proper monastery of tertiary women.[6] For years this has

been thought to mean living three vows, but, again, historical research indicates that the members of Angeline's federation did not have a standard vow formula at the time she lived, nor for many decades afterward. Each member of the community made private vows or promises, each using a personal formula.[7]

Angeline went to the city of Foligno, where there were already a number of houses of women living as *bizzoche* and/or tertiaries. She met with the bishop, telling him of her inspiration. At some point she went to the monastery of St. Anna in that city. This monastery is said to have been founded by none other than her relative, Paolo Trinci. It is referred to in Italian as a *bizzocaggio*—a house for *bizzoche*. These were women who sometimes lived in common and sometimes in their own homes, had a shared spiritual life, but did not necessarily make the three vows we now associate with the life of religious women. They appear in medieval history as "beguines."

St. Anna may indeed have been an established house of *bizzoche* living under the Rule of 1289, or may have established the Rule's observance. In any event, Angeline became its reformer. Sources do not always agree on how soon she was present there. For example, Felice Rossetti writes that:

> ...at the beginning of the Monastery of St. Anna, there were at the same time Paoluccio and Angeline, connected both by family ties and by Franciscan spirituality, with the common intent to reform. The monastery came to be called with the double name of "the monastery of Paoluccio" and of "the monastery of Lady Angeline." If one wants to better comprehend the spirituality of Angeline and her actions as reformer, it is necessary to see her in the sphere of the spirituality and of the work of Paoluccio. . . .[8]

Just what kind of spirituality is involved here? According to Rossetti it involved, in broad terms, a "return to the original spirit of St. Francis, and in accordance with an active and contemplative life, was characterized by the poor and simple tenor of life, and by prayer."[9] In that very simple statement is hidden the essence of Angeline's reform: the combining of a life of contemplation with an

active life, with what we would today call ministry. But the words "poor and simple life" suggest the attitude of the Spiritual tradition, who by that time were becoming the Observants, especially with regard to poverty. Rossetti writes:

> Contemplation completely absorbed Angeline; for her contemplation was not stopped by activity, but was the source/support of the apostolate. As a young woman, as a wife, as a widow, Angeline had developed tireless educational activity; her consecration did not impede her in continuing her educational action for the benefit of young women, but oriented them toward God. The Franciscan spirituality, in the particular perception of Angeline, was lived so as to extend itself and to penetrate itself into a...sector of society.[10]

Related to this it is important to recognize one of the changes made at St. Anna. For the most part dormitory life was the norm for monasteries of Franciscan women, including Poor Clares. It seems to have been inserted into the Franciscan life as a result of institutionalizing the life and imposing at least some Benedictine traditions as part of that thirteenth-century institutionalization. A manuscript which is a copy of the oldest constitutional documents associated with the congregation of Angeline, however, contains a segment specifically on "the cell." Evidently, for those who followed Angeline's way of life in 1496, "in every convent, even masculine ones, tied to the Observance, there was no longer the primitive Franciscan dormitory, but individual narrow cells...." [11]

Part of our misunderstanding about the origins of Third Order Regular life is our interpretation of the word "contemplation." The better understanding is to see this form of life as a combination of an eremitic life and an active life. The cells, were, in effect, the personal hermitage of each sister. Life at St. Anna in the time of Angeline was an eremitical life set in the city. But it also was enriched by the spirit of *bizzoche* life, wherein each sister's individual prayer life was highly respected. It was a given that the life of prayer centered on the Passion of Jesus and on living a penitential life, *which then led to service of one's neighbor*. The life, then, combined seclusion and ministry. On the walls at the entrance to St. Anna there are two extraordinarily interesting frescoes which date from the 15th and

16th centuries and which reveal rather clearly the basic elements of life there. One is St. James of Alcala, Franciscan patron of care for the sick, and the second, facing him, is St. Peter Alcantara, patron of the contemplative religious life. Upstairs there are paintings of St. Jerome and the lion, an ancient symbol of the life of the desert; and of St. Francesco de Paola representing the eremitical Franciscan life. Also part of the iconography at St. Anna is a room-length fresco in the refectory portraying the Martha-Mary story of the Gospel, a perfect symbol of the active and contemplative life. Almost anywhere at St. Anna, there are representations of the eremitical and active life in close proximity to each other.

Another way of looking at the spirit or tenor of life at Angeline's house which substantiates the presence of *bizzoche*-beguine values, concerns the area of work in their life together. The Constitutions of 1496 read:

> After None, they must gather together in the room designated for working and there must read for an hour some devout book and while reading they must keep silence. Afterwards they may speak together, always speaking edifying words in praise of their Spouse and useful to their neighbor. And so it should be until Vespers.[12]

The room cited above is "designated for working" — probably handwork of some kind. Similar to the beguine/*bizzoche* tradition, income from their work was used for the good of the group. This is part of the developing tradition of common life for Third Order women.

According to Marco Bartoli, there were seven elements which reveal the tenor of life of Angeline's houses: the choir, manual labor, the refectory, the cell, the "seculars," the cloister, the common life. What do we know of the details of these aspects of Angeline's life? The same 1496 constitution dedicates chapter three to the prayer of the Church or the Divine Office, while chapter four is dedicated to community prayer. The Constitutions recommend punctuality, exactness, modesty and recollection. In chapter four, the Constitutions proclaim above all the necessity of prayer according to the command of the Lord to pray always and never fail:

> Take care, therefore, always to spend your time either in prayer or in reading or in good meditation, or in working or other service for the monastery, since whoever does not cease praying does not cease doing good.

The prayer must be "humble," "secret," "unworthy," [contrite] "just," "devout," "frequent," "done with tears," "determined," "eschatological," and "turned toward the heavenly Father."[13]

By 1428 there were at least six houses of women in Italy "federated" with St. Anna. The evidence is contained in a papal bull, *Sacrae Religionis*, which granted permission for each house to elect a local *ministra* and for the group to elect a general *ministra*. The impact of this document bears our close attention. What is not stated is that, up until this time, the election of local ministers was an ordinary practice (especially in the beguine tradition), though not a legal reality. The election of a General Minister was very unusual, since all Third Order women, as all Second Order women, were subject to the authority of the Minister General of the Friars Minor and, again like the Clares, each house was autonomous. So the First Order lost some authority by the implications of this document. It must be remembered that, historically, the relationship between Friars Minor and members of the Third Order did not always run smoothly. It is also important to place the election of a Minister General by women over against the historical reality of the problems of the First Order regarding the influence of the so-called Conventuals and so-called Observants. Angeline's family background tended toward the Observant branch of Franciscan life, and St. Anna's had been a house of *bizzoche*, of secular tertiaries. Friars Minor frequently caused tertiaries to enter either the First Order of St. Francis or the Second Order of Clares. So the papal bull granting the privilege of elections of ministers to the houses connected to Angeline had major consequences. There is a rather complex historical reality that follows. For several years after the issuance of the 1428 papal bull, there was some conflict and much discussion over exactly what the extent of the relationship of the sisters to the Friars Minor was or should be. For a time, due to the insistence of Angeline and her sisters, their desire to be ministered to by the Brothers of Penance, the TOR men, was acknowledged and honored; thus, for a time, the

relationship to the First Order was altered. It is possible that this change occurred because by the 1430's the spirituality of the Brothers of Penance — what some have called an off-shoot of the Observant tradition — was closer to the spirituality of the women. It is an enticing thought, but it requires a good deal more historical investigation.

This mixture of history and spirituality is not totally removed from our current way of life as Franciscans. Some questions that follow, then, are: "Have we lost the eremitical side of our life as Third Order women?" "Has ministry in education, health care, child care, taken us away from that part of our charism?" "If yes, then what?" Increasingly, Franciscan women and men seek the grace of a more deeply contemplative life, whether in prayer experience or in a general stance toward life and ministry. In the continuing return to our roots, we seek information on the historical past, on who we were at the time of foundation, who we have become in America and who we are called to be in the future.

The story of Angeline is much richer than has been outlined here, but it is time to bring her into our consciousness, to learn more and more about her and the way of life that spread across Europe and eventually to America.

Endnotes

[1]Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR, *The Franciscan Sisters* (Steubenville: Franciscan University Press, 1993) 63.

[2]Felice Rossetti, "Linee della Spiritualità della B. Angelina," *Analecta TOR* (1984): 138-39.

[3]Luciano Canonici, *Santa Lucia di Foligno, Storia di un monastero e di un ideal* (Assisi: Edizione Portiuncola, 1974) 17.

[4]Pazzelli 64, citing Mariano d'Alatri, "Leggenda della beata Angelina da Montegiove, Genesis d'una biografia," *Analecta TOR* (1984): 42.

[5]Mario Sensi, "Documenti per la beata Angelina da Montegiove," *Analecta TOR* (1984): 53. Also in D'Alatri 42.

[6]Pazzelli 65.

[7]Sr. M. Clotilde Filannino, Vice General of the Tertiary Franciscans of Bl. Angeline, interview in Rome, May 27, 1994.

[8]Rossetti 140-41.
[9]Rossetti 142.
[10]Rossetti 143.
[11]Marco Bartoli, "Antiche Costituzioni delle Monache di Foligno," in *Analecta TOR* (1984) 131.
[12]Bartoli 129, quoting Constitution of 1496.
[13]Bartoli 127 ff.

Editor's note: The iconography of Angelina of Marsciano has been found in the chapel of the Bernardine Sisters at Reading, Pennsylvania, and in St. Rose of Viterbo Convent in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Sr. Roberta would be interested in hearing from any other congregations that have "Angelina of Marsciano" in any stained glass windows, paintings or other art work in any convents. She would be represented in one of the following ways: holding a book with *Regula* on it in one hand and a crucifix in the other; or holding a book with *Regula* on it in one hand and burning coals or flame in the other hand, usually waist-high. Sr. Roberta's address is:

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Early Friars and Poor Ladies in Conversation: *Scripta Leonis* and the Writings of Clare

A Common Matrix of Evangelical Contemplative Life for both Men and Women

Beth Lynn, O.S.C.*

Survey textbooks of medieval history show the Franciscan friars as innovative preachers and teachers of the 13th century, carrying the reforms of Lateran Council IV to the Christian populace. In addition, through diplomatic and missionary activities, they brought the peoples of East and West together in peaceful contacts. "Preaching and ministering to the people were their raison d'être."[1]

The women associated with the Franciscan movement, according to conventional wisdom, were either cloistered as traditional nuns or lived as tertiaries in their homes. "It is an inescapable paradox that the two Mendicant Orders, that had broken out of the monastic tradition of segregation and enclosure, originated two female contemplative orders which observed a regime of strict enclosure." [2]

I would like to suggest, however, a variant approach. From the beginning of the Franciscan movement there were men and women who were modeling and mirroring evangelical contemplative life for one another as well as for those who were *conversantibus in mundo* (living in the world) (Test 20). These

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Franciscans experienced the life of communal Christian contemplation as the foundation and expression of an evangelical life lived with responsibility for their fellow human beings.

Two stars in the galaxy of medieval scholarship inspire this study. The first is Caroline Walker Bynum. Her book, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo: an Aspect of Twelfth Century Spirituality*,[3] tracks the development and self awareness of the new monasticism (Cistercians and Premonstatensians) and the apostolically oriented canons regular of the 12th century. Bynum alerts one to look for frequently recurring words and phrases to identify "explicit content and implicit assumptions" of the early Franciscans and Poor Ladies regarding themselves.

Raoul Manselli, in *Francis of Assisi*,[4] utilizes extensively the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, the famous *Ms di Perugia 1046*.[5] Manselli points out that Francis left three witnesses to foster fidelity to the charism: his written Testament; the example of Brother Bernard as continuator of Francis himself along side the Order's hierarchy; and directives concerning the life of the Friars, particularly at the Portiuncula. In the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, then, we look for evidence of communal contemplative life at the Portiuncula and the possible connections between the Portiuncula, the center from which the Franciscan movement began, and San Damiano, the home of the first community of Poor Ladies.[6]

We shall examine a number of documents, primarily the Testament and Rule of Clare of Assisi, the first abbess of San Damiano[7] and, in juxtaposition with these writings, material from the *Compilatio Assisiensis*. Clare's Testament and Rule are dated around 1247. When pressed to accept the Rule of Innocent IV in 1247, Clare wrote her own clear presentation of "the form of life of the Order of Poor Sisters which the Blessed Francis founded." It was also about this time that she composed the document that we know as her Testament.

The *Compilatio Assisiensis* offers a more complicated picture.[8] There is agreement by the scholars that the stories and information in *Scripta Leonis* (hereafter referred to as SL) are from the early companions of Francis. They are identified by a cover letter naming them as Leo, Rufino and Angelo; this letter was later misplaced and appended to the so-called *Legend of the Three Companions*.

Leo, Rufino and Angelo and others of the early companions complied with a request, issued in 1244 by the Minister General, Crescentius of Jesi, for more stories and testimonies about St. Francis to be used by Thomas of Celano in the second life of Francis. Specialists agree that material in SL comes from the same source as that utilized for this second life. They date this material to about the same time that Clare was writing her Testament and Rule.

Among the contributors to SL, Leo was Francis's confessor, and Rufino was Clare's cousin, the son of her uncle, Scipione. According to witness lists and the *Chronicles of the 24 Generals*, they are identified as living at the Portiuncula.

These early companions of Francis were those most frequently in relation with the Poor Ladies at San Damiano. Angelo and Leo were so familiar with the Sisters that they were at Clare's deathbed. According to the Legend of Clare, Angelo, while mourning himself, consoled those who were also mourning. Leo kissed the bed of the dying Clare.[9]

In addition to the material taken from Rufino and Angelo, Leo also obtained stories for his compilation from Philip, the visitator of the Poor Ladies and John di Laudibus, the companion of Giles.[10]

Helpful to our analysis of the Testament and Rule of Clare and SL are a few documents that precede them in time and contribute to our understanding of early Franciscan life. These source documents allow us to track the experience of the early Franciscans in this formative phase.

Of particular significance is the Rule for Hermitages, written by Francis sometime between 1217-22. The rule is for three or four brothers, two of whom take the ministry of "mothers" to care for their "sons," who are focussed on prayer. Then the roles are reversed. Note the familial context for their community of prayer. They have a form of enclosure with cells for the brothers. They pray the Office of the Hours. The "Mothers" beg for the needs of the sons and themselves. This document gives witness to a contemplative orientation for at least some of the Friars, most likely before 1217, as legislation normally follows experience.[11]

As for the Poor Ladies of San Damiano we have a short piece preserved for us, authored by St. Francis and given to the Poor Ladies 1212/1213:

> 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 to have that same loving care and special solicitude for you as I have for them (RCl 6).

This verbatim from Francis to the Poor Ladies, preserved in Chapter 6 of the Rule of Clare, underlines the pledge of Francis on behalf of himself and his brothers to a commonality of love and care for both the sisters and brothers.

In 1216 we have the witness of Jacques de Vitry, passing through Umbria on his way to taking up duties as Bishop of Acre:

> I found one consolation in those parts, nevertheless; many men and women, rich and worldly, after renouncing everything for Christ, fled the world. They are called Lesser Brothers and Lesser Sisters. They are held in great esteem by the Lord Pope and the cardinals. They do not occupy themselves with temporal affairs, but work each day with great desire and enthusiastic zeal to capture those souls that were perishing from the vanities of the world and to bring them along with them. They have already borne much fruit through the grace of God, and have converted many, so that whoever hears them says, "Come," and one circle of hearers draws another.... The women live near the cities in various hospices. They accept nothing, but live from the work of their hands.[12]

Note the similar way in which de Vitry names the friars and Poor Ladies, "Lesser Brothers and Lesser Sisters." He cites the radiance of their mission and spiritual generativity and describes similar elements in both communities: their zeal, fruitfulness, poverty and "flight from the world."

Now we are ready to look at SL and the 1247 writings of Clare. From these we will work our way back to some appreciation of the communities from which these documents emanated.

The first reference to the Portiuncula in SL is in #8. Francis wants to acquire "some small and poor church where the brothers

can say their Hours, and which has near it only some small, poor dwelling made of mud and wattle where the brothers can rest and attend to their needs." Francis was concerned because there was no place for the brothers to say their Hours or to bury their dead.

In her Testament Clare recalls the history of the sisters' communal vocation. She writes "And thus, by the will of God and our most blessed father Francis, we went to dwell in the Church of San Damiano, where, in a little while, the Lord...fulfilled what he had foretold through his saint" (30-31). Earlier in the Testament Clare had quoted the prophecy of Francis regarding the Poor Ladies: "Ladies will again dwell here [San Damiano] who will glorify our heavenly Father throughout His holy, universal Church by their celebrated and holy manner of life" (12-14).

Brother Leo remembers these words from Francis: "I want to ordain and leave to the brothers in the Testament that the brothers ought always to have the greatest reverence and devotion...for the Portiuncula" (SL 9.) Francis wanted the community there to nurture "its holiness with continuous prayer day and night, and continuous silence" (9). If they talked it was to be about the "praise of God and the salvation of souls" (9). They practiced brotherly correction, fasted, kept vigil, worked with their hands and helped the neighbors in their fields.

In Clare's Rule we find sisterly correction, prayer by day and by night, fasting, work with their hands and sisters who served outside the monastery (RCl 10:1-5; 3:1-7; 3:8-11; 7:1-5; 9:11-16).)

In #10 of SL the Portiuncula community is to be a "mirror and good example" to the whole Order. In #11 the idea is repeated, namely, that the Portiuncula "should always be the model and example for all the houses of the friars." In #12 Francis is in dispute with the Minister General over a house being constructed at Portiuncula. Francis called the Minister General and said: "Brother, this place is the model and example for the whole Order."

Clare writes in her Testament:

> For the Lord Himself has placed us not only as a form for others in being an example and mirror, but even for our sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life as well, that they in turn might be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since the Lord has called us to such

great things that those who are to be a mirror and example to others may be reflected in us, we are greatly bound to bless and praise God and be all the more strengthened to do good in the Lord (Test 19- 22).

SL uses *speculum* (mirror) two times with the same sense as that in the Testament of Clare.[13] Francis himself never uses the word mirror in his authenticated writings.

Common to both SL and the writings of Clare is the understanding of the communities at Portiuncula and San Damiano as models, mirrors and examples for the life of the brothers and sisters in the Order as well as for the larger community.

In SL Francis speaks of the good example the friars are bound to show to others:

> When the brothers go to any city where they have no house and they find someone who wants to give them enough land for them to build a house and have a garden and what is necessary for them, they ought first to consider how much land will suffice, always bearing in mind the holy poverty which we have promised and the good example which we are bound to show to others in all things (14).

In Chapter 6 of the Rule Clare enjoins holy poverty on the Sisters, indicating that they are not to receive or to have:

> any possession or ownership either of themselves or through an intermediary or even anything that might reasonably be called property, except as much land as necessity requires for the integrity and proper seclusion of the monastery and this land may not be cultivated except as a garden for the needs of the sisters.

Again in #14 of SL the compiler writes:

> The holy father said this because he wished the friars on no account either in houses or churches, in gardens or in any things they used, to exceed the measure of poverty, or to possess proprietary rights in any places, but always to live in them as pilgrims and strangers.

The similar passage from the Rule of Clare:

> Let the sisters not appropriate anything, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all; instead, as pilgrims and strangers in this world who serve the Lord in poverty and humility, let them confidently send for alms (8).

This passage is a direct quote from the Rule of Frances of 1223. It was Brother Leo, who in SL #113 is described as having withdrawn to a mountain with Francis and Brother Bonizzo of Bologna to assist in drawing up the Rule of 1223.

A form of the word, *exemplum* (example or model), is used twenty times in SL: of the community at the Portiuncula four times; of the friars once; against the bad example of the friars once; of Francis and the friars once; of the Church once; of the birds of the air once. The author of SL has Francis say of himself that he, Francis, is the example for his brothers and/or the larger community ten times.

Clare frequently uses *exemplum* in the 1247 writings. In a passage otherwise taken from the Rule of St. Benedict, Ch 64, Clare inserts the word "example." The sisters are called forth to obey by the "example" of the abbess (cf.RCl 4). In her most personal contribution to the Rule, Clare cites the "example and teaching of St. Francis" as the manner in which she was enlightened to do penance (RCl 6).

In the Testament Clare uses "example" twelve times. Francis has taught the sisters by word and example five times. Francis had the sisters examined according to the example of the saints and his brothers. The Sisters are called to be mirrors and examples for one another and the larger community three times. The Sisters by their faithfulness will leave to others an example. The abbess is to be an example for her sisters two times.

To summarize the use of the word *exemplum*: in SL *exemplum* is used twenty times; in two relatively short writings, Clare uses it fourteen times; in the much larger corpus of the authenticated writings of Francis, he uses the word eleven times; SL uses the word ten times in reference to Francis as the *exemplum*; Clare uses the word five times in her short Testament in reference to Francis as the *exemplum*; Francis never uses the word in reference to himself in his authenticated writings.

In 1225 after composing the Canticle of the Creatures, Francis wrote the Canticle of Exhortation for the Poor Ladies. This text was recently discovered and verified by Father Giovanni Boccali.[14] Until this recent discovery the only source of knowledge of the existence of this text was in SL. In SL we read the story about this composition. Note the themes of conversion through the example and preaching of Francis and the sisters' role of edification.

> In composing these words he wished briefly to disclose to them what his will was then and for ever: how they ought to be of one mind and live together in charity because they had been converted to Christ by his example and preaching when the friars were as yet few. Their conversion and way of life not only ennobled and edified the Order of Friars, whose little plant they were, but also God's universal church (45).

This theme is repeated in SL #109. In addition the author gives information about Clare's illness at the time of Francis's death which is found in no other source, indicating that the author had a close association with the sisters at San Damiano.

Thomas of Celano was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX to compose the official *legenda* for the cult of St. Francis, approved in 1229. Thomas writes of the Poor Ladies and their effective witness. Using biblical analogy, he calls them a house of God built on the foundation which is Christ (1Cel 18). The Lady Clare, Francis's foremost woman disciple, Thomas calls the foundation stone of this glorious religion, who "lived for the advantage of many and as an example to countless others" (1Cel 18). Thomas writes in detail of the Poor Ladies, citing their mutual charity, humility, virginity and chastity, poverty, abstinence and silence, patience and contemplation (1Cel 19).

In the second life of Francis, written by Thomas of Celano around 1248, Francis promises the Poor Ladies that "he [Francis] would always give them his help and counsel and that of his brothers,...saying that one and the same spirit had led the brothers and the poor ladies out of the world"(2Cel 204).

Clare writes in her Testament:

> I commend and leave my sisters, both those present and those to come, to the successor of our blessed Father Francis and the entire Order, that they may always help us to progress in serving God more perfectly and, above all, to observe most holy poverty (48).

In the early days of the Franciscan movement, rather than apostolically active friars and contemplative reclusive nuns, there were brothers and sisters modeling and mirroring an evangelical life of prayer that was concerned for the well-being of their neighbors. Francis was founder for the brothers as well as for the sisters. Both of these communities took Francis, his words and deeds, for their model or pattern and example. Each group was concerned for the other, to build up one another in fidelity to their common charism. There is a similarity in use of words and phrases employed by both groups, as we have seen by comparing SL and the writings of Clare. From the "explicit content" we can make "implicit assumptions" about a common spiritual perspective from which these early friars and Poor Ladies wrote. The writings of Clare come from a long life of experience and concern for the continuity of the sisters' form of life. Brothers Leo and company were in a similar position. They too looked to Francis and the past with concern for a rapidly changing and fragmenting Order. Their common challenge was to preserve the charism and the bond which existed between the two communities while responding to the evermore complex social milieu in which they lived.

Endnotes

[1]C. H. Laurence, *Medieval Monasticism* (New York: Longman Group, Ltd., 1984) 192.

[2]Laurence 215

[3]Caroline Walker Bynum, *Docere Verbo et Exemplo* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979).

[4]Raoul Manselli, *St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988).

[5]Marino Bigaroni, O.F.M., *Compilatio Assisiensis dagli scritti di fr. Leone e Compagni su S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Assisi: Porziuncola, 1975). Rosalind B. Brooke, *Scripta Leonis, Rufino et Angeli socioroum S. Francisci* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

[6]For a study of the early friars at the Portiuncula, cf. Octavian Schmucki, "*Mentis Silentium*: le programme contemplatif de l'ordre franciscain primitif," *Fidelis* 69 (1982): 114-52.

[7]*Claire d'Assise, Ecrits*, intro. and trans. Marie-France Becker, Jean-François Godet and Thadée Matura (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1985). In this paper I am comparing language fields. The Latin texts from *Ecrits* as well as the French translation and the Latin texts of *Scripta* are essential. English texts of Clare's writings can be found in *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents*, trans. Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1993). Verse numberings are the same in Latin, French and English.

[8]Cf. Brooke.

[9]For the English translation of the Process of Canonization and the Legend of Clare see *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* 132-85, 246-308.

[10]Brooke 87.

[11]For the English translation see *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap. and Ignatius Brady, OFM, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 146-48.

[12]Jaques de Vitry, *Lettres de Jaques de Vitry*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Leyde, 1960). English translation in *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents* 313-14.

[13]For a concordance of Franciscan texts cf. *Corpus des Sources Franciscaines*, ed. George Mailleux and Jean-François Godet (Louvain: Centre de Traitement Electronique des Documents de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1974-1976). 4 vols.

[14]Oktavian Schmucki, "The Rediscovery of the Exhortation *Audite* of St. Francis for the Poor Ladies of San Damiano," *Greyfriars Review* 3 (1989): 115-26.

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The Vision of Formation

Sue Cavanaugh, SFO*

Introduction

> [Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade" (Mark 4:26-32).[1]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, our Lord compares the Reign of God to a farmer preparing the ground and sowing the seed in order to describe the "inner strength" which causes the Kingdom of God to grow upon earth — a growth which is to continue until the day of harvest: the day of final judgment. Jesus is telling His disciples, and us today, about the Church and its role in the world. The Kingdom of God comes about through the preaching of the Gospel — "seed generously sown and unfailingly yielding its fruit" — because **God gives the growth.**[2]

The Kingdom of God also refers to the action of God's grace in each and every soul. God silently works within us, transforming

•Sue Cavanaugh gave this presentation at a Regional Formation Workshop for the emerging Secular Franciscan Region of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis in Maggie Valley, North Carolina on July 9, 1994. She is Minister and Formation Director of the Immaculate Conception Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in Atlanta, Georgia.

us, as we open and surrender ourselves to Him and respond to His grace. To the extent we are docile to the Holy Spirit, the image of Christ will grow more fully in us, and we will be brought closer to God the Father day by day.[3]

The seed of the Kingdom of God on earth and in our individual hearts is so very tiny to begin with. The first group of Jesus disciples grew and spread throughout the centuries until the Church now has become a great multitude. In our own souls, this mysterious growth also occurs as we make ourselves small and humble to the mercy of God.[4]

As Secular Franciscans, we look to our Father Francis and reflect upon the multitude who, through the centuries and in our own day, makes up his spiritual family. We ponder (and marvel!) how this one simple, little life had such a profound bearing on the times in which he lived and how he compels us and so many others in this very moment to look within and beyond ourselves to find God ever giving growth to the Mystical Body of His Son in the world.

To speak of the "Vision of Formation," is to draw very close to the profound mystery of God's love for each of His children. Whether we speak of Christian formation or Franciscan formation, we must acknowledge first and above all that it is God who sows the seed, God who causes the seed to sprout and grow and become fruitful, God who reaps the harvest. Our attitude, then, should be one of profound gratitude and great, great reverence.

We will seek to discuss the "Vision of Formation" from three perspectives:

1. The purpose, meaning, and characteristics of formation.
2. The meaning of vocation and conversion.
3. The formation of Secular Franciscans as lay people in the Church.

The Purpose, Meaning, and Characteristics of Formation

> The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and center of his life with God and people.[5]

Let us begin by pausing with our Father Francis at the foot of the Cross of San Damiano. Have you ever looked closely at this image of the Crucified? It is not the writhing, tortured Christ, nor is it the serene, expired Christ. It is Christ looking resolutely, lovingly, out upon the world. Blood is spurting from His hands and feet and side. It is not trickling down, but gushing forth. It is Christ freely, actively, totally, giving Himself. His Precious Blood comes forth in a great fountain upon us all.

Francis encountered this living Christ in the real and tangible moments of his life, in a deep yearning and in a call which first convinced him of the need for God's mercy and then flowered into a specific mission as his eyes met those of the Crucified Christ of San Damiano. His heart heard the words of Jesus. Francis was full of compassion toward this sacrificial Lamb ever pouring Himself out in love for our redemption, and he desired to set his own feet into the imprints of Christ's. The "way" of those imprints he found in the Gospel, and he simply began to follow.

Every sincere person who inquires into our Secular Franciscan way of life is ultimately seeking Christ in a deeper way. Therefore, the purpose of formation is to foster an intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ in an authentically Franciscan way. Every human being is called to holiness by God. Becoming holy means growing ever more deeply in union with God.

The *Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States* define the meaning of formation in three ways:

1. Formation means that we help "the member on his/her way to the full realization of his/her own human and Christian development"(11).
2. Formation means that we foster "the person's maturation of faith which will bring him/her to personal union with the Father in Christ the Lord through the Holy Spirit"(11).
3. Formation means that we facilitate the individual's "experience of Church within a

> community of faith and love, while at the same time remaining faithful to the conditions of his/her secular state in life, and of his/her mission in the world and in the Church"(11).

When we set about to develop or renew our formation programs, we must remember that formation has to do with the whole of human life. Formation seeks to provide an environment in which we may discover more profoundly the love and goodness of God and in which we may more and more allow God's Spirit to enliven every facet of our daily life. We must never lose sight that the vision of formation extends not only through inquiry and candidacy, but through the entirety of life as a professed Secular Franciscan. Properly understood, in the light of the lifetime example of St. Francis, formation is an essential and indispensable part of our way of life.

The *Guidelines* list nine characteristics of Secular Franciscan formation (11–14).

First, formation is **active**. This means that it must be drawn from the experiences of daily life and give direction to those experiences. The Gospels show us how Jesus nurtured His apostles and disciples by teaching them, sending them forth and recalling them to Himself. Their formation occurred in the midst of the world in which they lived. In the same way, Francis taught his followers about the Kingdom of God, sent them out to announce the Good News of peace and repentance and then gathered them back together. The Fathers of Vatican Council II teach us in the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity that Christian formation

> cannot consist in theoretical teaching alone.... There is need, right from the start of training, to learn gradually and prudently to see all things in the light of faith, to judge and act always in its light, to improve and perfect oneself by working with others, and in this manner to enter actively into the service of the Church (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 29f).

I do not believe, however, that formation can consist only of discussion of human experience. Remember that Jesus and, in His

footsteps, Francis both taught their disciples. We must present the truths of our Faith clearly in the context of authentic Franciscan spirituality and help one another enflesh them in the day–to–day living out of our vocation.

Second, formation is **communal**. It occurs in the context of the life of the local fraternity and in the more intimate sharing of the formation class. It is undeniable that formation requires a deep sense of commitment on the part of the formation director and team as well as on the part of the persons in formation. We need to convey the importance of this process by helping one another make the necessary adjustments and sacrifices of our time and energy. One of the blessings of this commitment is the sense of community which gradually grows in the formation class. It is vital to nourish a commitment to attendance at the monthly meetings of the fraternity. It is almost certain that a candidate who does not faithfully participate in the fraternity meeting during formation will not faithfully participate after profession. One of the goals in formation is the building up of the Body of Christ in the local fraternity. We must teach by our example and by our expectations and encouragement.

Third, formation is **centered on Jesus Christ and his gospel**. The rule of each branch of our Franciscan Family begins the same way: "The rule and life...is to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our Secular Franciscan Rule exhorts us to go "from gospel to life and life to gospel." The word "gospel" means literally "good news." The "good news" is the Incarnate God, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we could say we are called to go "from Christ to life and from life to Christ." If our formation has any other center-point than Jesus and the revealed Truth of God as taught by the Catholic Church, our formation will not be effective, meaningful, nor Franciscan.

Fourth, formation is **ecclesial**. One of the gifts of the Second Vatican Council is the development of our understanding of the meaning of Church as the "People of God," as a "Communion" and as "the Sign and Sacrament of Christ's presence." Another gift is the development of our understanding of the role of the laity in the Church and in the world. It is vital for us to root ourselves and

those to whom we are responsible in fraternity and in formation in the true understanding of the teachings of Vatican Council II, the encyclicals of our recent Popes and in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Here we are talking of the real work of the Holy Spirit in continuously forming the Church through these holy instruments. If we have not yet read these texts prayerfully and begun to apply them personally to our lives, we know from our Father Francis that it is never too late to begin!

Fifth, formation is **secular**. We are called to the Secular Franciscan way of life as lay men and women. Indeed, to emphasize this is a primary reason why, since 1978, we are known as the Secular Franciscan Order. There is much confusion today about the proper role of lay people, and I will speak more of this role later.

Sixth, formation is **Franciscan**. Here we must draw very close to our Father Francis. As he walked in the footsteps of Jesus, so must we desire to make our lives conform to Christ. Do you remember Brother John? In his love for Francis he tried to copy everything Francis did. If Francis stood, Brother John stood. If Francis knelt, Brother John knelt. If Francis coughed, then Brother John coughed. Francis was deeply touched by this Brother's simplicity, but he exhorted him not to continue this mimicry (2Cel 190).[6] Authentic Franciscan spirituality is not found in such external observance but in the way of penitence, that is, conversion, or as our Rule describes it — "radical interior change." Mother Angelica, in a letter to her EWTN family dated Summer 1994, shows us the meaning of conversion and the authentic following of St. Francis in a brief reflection on St. Clare. She writes:

> You sometimes hear it said that Clare "fell in love" with Francis, and that this is why she wanted to join him in his new way of Gospel living. Rather, the truth is that listening to Francis made Lady Clare fall more and more in love with **Jesus**. She made a deliberate choice to follow Jesus in the way Francis did. She gave all, and never looked back.

Her joy was not in Francis, but in the Will of God.

The seventh and eighth characteristics of formation are that it is **joyful** and imbued with a spirit of **simplicity**. No doubt we

have all been captivated by the joy and simplicity of Francis. So much of what attracts us in Francis is the result of his complete acceptance that God is **all** and his total surrender to the transforming love of God. Francis saw himself, others and all creation infinitely loved by God. His love was filled with a great celebration of the nobility and dignity of the human person. Our formation programs must express this same love.

Finally, formation is **open-ended**. Formation is a life-long process. God comes to us not once but in all the moments of our life. Because our Franciscan vocation is truly a walking with the Lord, we must be constantly open to His grace that we may grow fully mature in Him (cf. Eph. 3:19).

The Meaning of Vocation and Conversion

> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you will love one another (John 15:12–17).

Are there any words at all to describe the absolute gratuitousness of God in calling us to faith and then calling us to the Franciscan Family? "I chose you," Jesus says. God is always the one who calls. It is He who reaches into the present moment of our life inviting us into deeper relationship with Him. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states:

> The followers of Christ, called by God not in virtue of their works but by His design and grace, and justified in the Lord Jesus, have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified (*Lumen Gentium* [LG] 40a).

The purpose of the Secular Franciscan Order and, indeed, all Orders in the Church is to further the redemptive and salvific mission of Christ in the world. We are called to holiness not for our sake alone but that by loving and serving one another we may bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

The life of Francis overflows with the fruits of holiness. His life was lived humbly and intensely in union with God. Yet even at the very end of his life he hastened to say to his brothers, "Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up to now we have made little or no progress" (1Cel 103). The penitential life which he lived was ever a turning more and more to God until God pervaded all his being, a true life-long conversion.

At first Francis began to recognize his sins and failures, his need of God, and he strove "to bend his own will" to that of the Lord. He withdrew from the bustling activity of life around him and sought Jesus. He prayed that God would direct and teach him the way he was to follow. He repented of his sins and begged the mercy of God. Then he set about living out what he heard in his heart in prayer. The early days of his conversion were marked by many sufferings. For a time he hid himself in fear of the wrath of his father and prayed all the more for God's mercy. He fasted and wept and, at last, cast his care upon God who filled him with joy and great confidence to go forth once more into the world where he began to rebuild tumble-down churches in simple obedience to the words of the Crucified. Little by little, he began to hear the Gospel anew and, taking counsel from the Church that he might understand the holy words rightly, he began to live out in his daily life what he heard (Cf. 1Cel 6– 22).

Rooted in this very model of Francis's life, formation of the Secular Franciscan inquirer and candidate — as well as the on-going formation of the professed — is a process of conversion. Each of us is called to be made new in Christ as Francis was.

The Franciscan vocation builds upon Baptism, the initial radical transformation which Christ effects in our life, freeing us from original sin and incorporating us into His Mystical Body, the Church. The grace of the Franciscan vocation takes root in the core of our being and unites itself with the reality of our Baptism and of God's call to holiness.

Our vocation requires that we make a profound personal **decision** to open our lives to God, to allow Him to have His way with us from His intimate union with us in our soul outward to all that we are and do. It requires that we make a profound personal **commitment** to our Franciscan Family ordering our lives so that life in fraternity takes precedence in our decisions. Our vocation also requires that we make a profound personal **endeavor** to be more deeply formed in our Franciscan life. For each person, whether professed or in initial formation, this entails a willingness for on-going interior conversion. We are to be so imbued with God's Spirit and the Franciscan charism that our very beings proclaim the greatness of the Lord. This, I believe, is the real challenge of formation. We must all become truly poor and little before God in order to be conformed to His will daily. With Francis, we find the perfect advocate and model in our Blessed Mother.

Here I would like to make mention of what the *Guidelines* call the "Agents of Formation"(17–20). These are very adequately explained in the *Guidelines*, but here some comments are in order.

The primary agent of formation is the Holy Spirit. This fact should give those of us who serve as formation directors, team members and ministers a great sense of reverence toward our brothers and sisters in formation. We should be constantly awed and humbled to be permitted to walk so closely with others who are becoming aware of God's presence and love in their lives.

The inquirers or candidates are themselves agents of formation. Indeed, as adults we bear the primary responsibility for our own continued spiritual formation. Therefore, those in formation should be expected to be willing to participate actively in the study, prayer, dialogue and action of the formation process and in the life of the fraternity. They should be willing to share their personal and material gifts, talents and charisms with the fraternity and with others. And they should be willing and able to be active agents in their own formation and spiritual growth (18).

The entire local fraternity is to be involved in the formation process through personal interaction, shared experiences of the Franciscan way of life and all aspects of worship, education, ministry, communication, prayer and leisure. Additionally, the fraternity council has the responsibility to discern whether those

in formation have positive signs of a true vocation and the ability to make a permanent commitment. They also have the duty to foster authentic Franciscan life in the fraternity and to call and train suitable professed members to the formation team (18–19).

The formation director and the team are the key facilitators for the spiritual growth of the inquirers and candidates, and the spiritual assistant also shares this responsibility. Many fraternities involve a sponsor for each person in formation who also is an agent in the process. Finally, the regional, national and international levels of fraternity are participants as they provide guidelines, training and support to the local fraternity (19–20).

Before moving on to our final point of consideration in the vision of formation, I would like to share with you a brief reflection attributed to Francis by Angelo Clareno entitled, "St. Francis Discourses on the Reception of Novices." Sometimes we are concerned that our fraternity has so few members or so few in formation, and we are tempted to admit anyone who shows the least sign of interest. Francis says:

> It is not my business, brothers, nor yours to try to induce anyone to join our community. Our business is to preach penitence, both by the example which we give and by the words which we speak, and to draw all men to love and serve Christ and to hate and despise the world. It is for God, unto whom all hearts be open, to choose and to call those who are suitable for our way of life, and to give them grace to be loyal to it. In fact, He who planted this Order in the world desires that its direction and its size and its future should be wholly left to Him. For one of the ways in which the devil will try to destroy the Order will be through bad and thoughtless admissions. Evil spirits will make all kinds of unsuitable men want to join the Order and will stir up the minds of the Ministers so that they take in large numbers without testing either the firmness of purpose or the kind of motive or the strength of will of those whom they accept. Rather they will be swayed by such things as rank and wealth and learning and ability and reputation. And when such men have been admitted they will try to alter the whole intention of the Rule, and will consider themselves too good to keep the purity of it which is so dear to Christ. So you see that, in order to foil the cunning of the devil and to ensure the right progress of the Order, God wills that the Ministers shall accept only such men as have Christ and His Spirit in their hearts and who seek and know the things of God, for by such only will the Order continue in purity and holiness of life, and in all righteousness and perfection.[7]

The Formation of Lay People in the Church

> But in particular the lay faithful are called to restore to creation all its original value. In ordering creation to the authentic well-being of humanity in an activity governed by the life of grace, they share in the exercise of the power with which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself and subjects them along with himself to the Father, so that God might be everything to everyone (CL 14h).

These words come from Pope John Paul II's 1988 encyclical, *The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (Christifideles Laici)*, in which he teaches at length about the role of the laity. His teaching builds upon the documents of Vatican Council II. In these documents and in the encyclical we are taught that the role of the lay person is to act as a leaven in the world and thereby to renew the temporal order.

The "leaven" Jesus speaks about in the Gospels is yeast. He likens the Kingdom of God to the small amount of yeast a woman adds to bread dough. Yeast is fed on sugar and produces millions and millions of bubbles of air thus enlivening the whole dough and making it rise. Without leavening, dough is a heavy, lifeless glob of flour and water. Yeast is the life-force which makes the dough cohesive, elastic and light, suitable to be baked and eaten as nourishment. We, then, are to be like yeast, fed on the sweetness of the Holy Spirit by Him who is the Bread of Life and transformed into instruments of love and service to the world around us.

The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* defines the particular role of the laity in five points:

1. Lay people are "to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will"(31c).
2. Lay people are to live in the world "engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life" (31c).
3. Lay people are to "contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties" (31d).
4. Lay people are to "manifest Christ to others" by the witness of their lives (31d).
5. Lay people are "to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer" (31d).

It is essential that those of us who guide others along the pathways of Franciscan formation be well-formed ourselves in the Church's teaching on the role of the laity. We are blessed because our Rule is truly the work of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the teachings of Vatican II. It gives us a way of life which is truly Franciscan and authentically "secular," that is, for the lay person living in the world.

The majority of Catholic lay people have not yet heard nor understood clearly what their mission is, how indispensable it is and how it complements the roles proper to the clergy and the religious. We have a great obligation in the areas of both spiritual and doctrinal formation to proclaim this vital part of being a Catholic in the Church and in the world. Pope John Paul II says: "Only from inside the Church's mystery of communion is the 'identity' of the lay faithful made known and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined" (CL 8f).

What does it mean to "renew the temporal order"? The temporal order includes all aspects of our daily life: family life,

work, culture, politics, economics, education. It has to do with the proper and complementary roles of man and woman, with social life and parish life and with the environment in which we live. It also has to do with authentic human freedom, with rightful use of the goods of the earth and with peace and justice.

St. Paul speaks about making all things new in Christ. As we lay people are filled and made new by the Spirit of Christ, so are we to bring Christ into every aspect of our daily living. We are always present in the surroundings where the Gospel is needed in the world. We can relate to others as Christ did, as one person to another. We live and work in all the forums of human life which need to be transformed until they each reflect the fullness of God's will. Our Catholic Franciscan lives need to be so ordered that "apostolate" is not something we do when we have gotten off work or have finished raising our children. Our apostolic lives are the work we do, the family we are raising, the way we live on a day-to-day basis, the way we care for our neighbors and for our environment, the vote we cast, the issues we speak out on. All is to be done with Christ, in Christ and for Christ.

In our Franciscan formation, then, we must lead others to embrace the radical newness of the Christian life which comes from Baptism and is to be given a deeper meaning and reality in profession. In this way our new Secular Franciscans will be prepared to live the responsibilities and the **gift** of their vocation in full cooperation with God as lay people in the Church and in the world.

Conclusion

At the Last Supper Jesus prayed to His Father:

> I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world.... I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know

that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17: 6a, 20–23).

Our Father Francis saw in the poor and crucified Jesus, suffering and bleeding to His last breath and drop of blood, what our Lord meant when He said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"(John 14:6). Jesus's love for humanity and for each one of us individually was this great. The desire to love like Jesus, to love with Jesus's **love,** compelled Francis to identify himself totally with Christ. And so he prayed:

> My Lord Jesus Christ, I pray You to grant me two graces before I die: the first is that during my life I may feel in my soul and in my body, as much as possible, that pain which You, dear Jesus, sustained in the hour of Your most bitter Passion. The second is that I may feel in my heart, as much as possible, that excessive love with which You, O Son of God, were inflamed in willingly enduring such suffering for us sinners (CSD 3).

What was the fruit of Francis's total identification of himself with the life and love of Jesus? He became an *alter Christus,* another Christ. He became so conformed to Christ, so filled with Christ, that the holy stigmata burst forth -- a visible sign of the transformation of his entire being which had occurred through complete cooperation with God's grace. The wounds in Francis's hands and feet and side, like those of Jesus, teach us the goal of Franciscan formation and our Secular Franciscan way of life. We, too, are to become "other Christs." We, too, are to love God and one another this much.

Jesus upon the Cross looked out upon the whole of humanity from the beginning to the end of time. He poured out His Precious Blood upon all, "that all may be one." This communion, for which He prayed and for which He gave His life, is a share in the perfect communion of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is the full completion of love.

It should not surprise us that, in his "Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance" which forms the Prologue of our Secular Franciscan Rule, St. Francis makes the prayer of Jesus his own: "that all may be one." Nor is it a surprise that our Rule calls us to "strive for perfect charity."

The "Vision of Formation," then, is that we be made one with Jesus upon the Cross united in the intimate love which is the Holy Spirit with the Eternal Father in heaven as He draws all people into union with the most Holy Trinity. In Christ, with Christ and through Christ we enter into union with one another.

"That all may be one"! Dear Brothers and Sisters, this is the motto chosen for our emerging region of Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis. May it also be the motto written on the heart of each one of us as we grow in our Franciscan life and as we guide others in formation. Let us fulfill the appeal of our Holy Father who wrote to us lay people: "For one and all, the earnest prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper, **'That all may be one'** ought to become daily a required and undeniable program of life and action"(CL 64f).

Endnotes

[1]All Scripture quotations are taken from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV),* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[2]*The Navarre Bible* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1985) 96.

[3]*Navarre Bible* 96.

[4]*Navarre Bible* 96–7.

[5]Rule, art. 4.

[6]All quotations from Franciscan sources are from *Omnibus of Sources,* ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983).

[7]From Angelo Clareno, *Expositio Regulae,* as it appears in *Omnibus* 1844–5.

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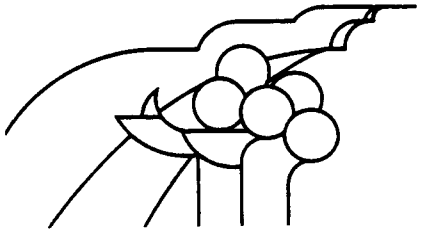

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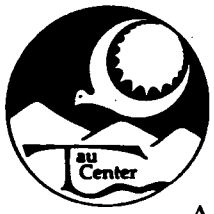

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Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy
EpCust	Letter to the Custodians
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful
2EpFid	Second Letter to 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 Peoples
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies
ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
LaudDei	Praises of God
LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
OffPass	Office of the Passion
OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB	Later Rule
RegNB	Earlier Rule
RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
Test	Testament
TestS	Testament written in Siena
UltVol	Last Will written for St. Clare
VPLaet	Dictate on True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

1LAg	First Letter to Agnes of Prague
2LAg	Second Letter to Agnes of Prague
3LAg	Third Letter to Agnes of Prague
4LAg	Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague
LEr	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
RCl	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCl	Blessing of Clare

Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
3Cel	Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
AP	Anonymous of Perugia
CL	Legend of Clare
CSD	Consideration of the Stigmata
Fior	Fioretti
JdV	Witness of Jacque de Vitry
LM	Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LMin	Minor Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LP	Legend of Perugia
L3S	Legend of the Three Companions
Proc	Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare
SC	Sacrum Commercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

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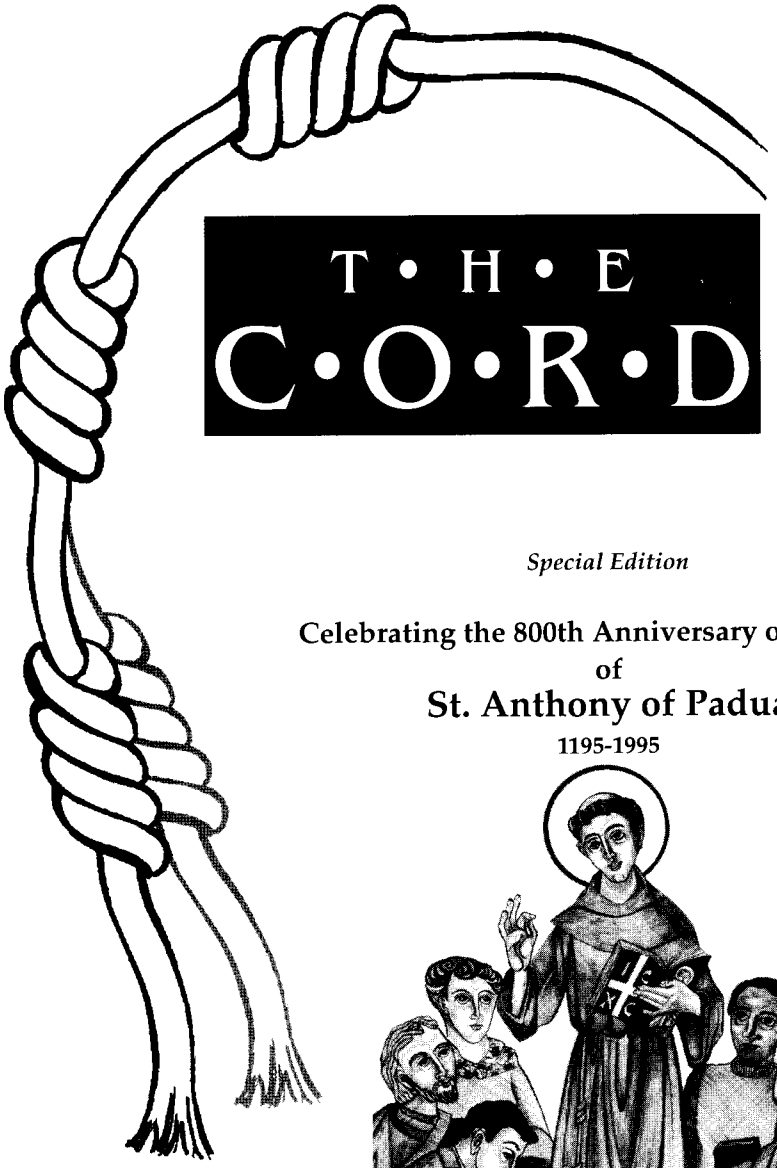

T • H • E C•O•R•D

Special Edition

Celebrating the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of

St. Anthony of Padua

1195-1995

DOCTOR EVANGELICUS

THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

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2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
   Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
   (1Cor. 13:6).
   (RegNB 23:2).
   (2Cel 5:8).
   (4LAg 2:13).
   A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. The edition of the Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss.

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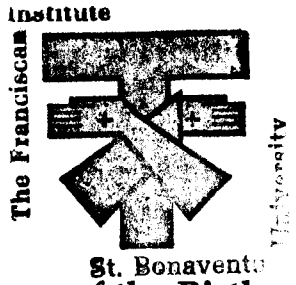
The Cord, 45.2 (1995)



Special Edition

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(Cover: © Clairvaux for the Franciscan Institute)

Brother Francis [sends his] wishes of health to Brother Anthony, my bishop. It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, as long as — in the words of the Rule — you "do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion" with study of this kind (Francis's Letter to Anthony).

Brother Anthony was ...present at this chapter.... While he was preaching very fervently and devoutly to the brothers ..., Brother Monaldo looked toward the door of the house in which there were many other brothers gathered and he saw there...Blessed Francis raised up into the air, his arms extended as though upon a cross, and blessing the brothers. And...they were all filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit (1Cel 48).

Today the poor, the simple, the illiterate, the peasants and the elderly are thirsty for the word of life and for the water of saving knowledge.... Only the poor are evangelized.... Those who are genuinely poor are not scandalized because they alone are evangelized, i.e., they are nourished with the word of the Gospel, because they are the people of the Lord and the sheep of his flock (Anthony, Sermones, II, 484, as quoted in Anthony, Man of The Gospel, Letter of the Ministers General of the Franciscan Family, Rome, June 13, 1994, 26).

EDITORIAL

From the Mission Statement:

> to aid in effecting among us a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life.

In the last issue of *The Cord*, Brother Ed Coughlin acknowledged that

> today there is an awakening interest in the Franciscan story, its roots and development, in the persons who first responded to this Spirit movement...in the persons who, over the centuries, allowed that same Spirit to operate in their own lives after the example of those first "Franciscans"(page 3).

Father Joe Doino, our respected predecessor, liked to say in his lectures: "The life of Francis and Clare and their followers becomes a story with openings in it for us."

It is by reflecting on our tradition and on those persons who epitomized its values in their lives that we contemporary Franciscans can find the "openings" that are ours in the story. *The Cord* has, for 45 years, sought to facilitate and enhance that very reflection and we hope it will continue to serve this purpose effectively.

In this issue we honor the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Anthony of Padua (Lisbon). Perhaps no other saint in the Franciscan calendar has had the appeal of Anthony, who in his popularity rivals Francis himself. Many of us who grew up in a pre-Vatican II church knew Anthony best through popular devotions: e.g. observing the thirteen Tuesdays or petitioning Anthony to help us find lost objects. Perhaps we have not known him quite as well as a luminous Doctor of the Church. A follower of Francis known for his outstanding ability to translate the Gospel message into very popular spirit-filled sermons, he received the special title: *Doctor Evangelicus*.

While miracles and wonder-working have characterized our memories of him, behind this image is a real flesh and blood man who struggled, as we do, to live the Franciscan way of life and to meet the challenges of his times with the best of his God-given gifts. In these pages, therefore, we present to you the story of Anthony as it has been told in the recent past.

The next few issues of *The Cord* are already taking shape. The

May/June issue will include papers on Scotus's thought given at the recent Redwood City Conference, co-sponsored by Region 6 of the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. Early next fall, we will feature papers dealing with aspects of ministry in our evangelical tradition. These were presented at breakout sessions of the Annual Federation Conference last August in Chicago.

We hope *The Cord* can offer, as well, a helpful networking service by presenting advertisements for programs and resources which support a deeper appreciation of our Franciscan way of life. A new monthly feature, called "On the Franciscan Circuit," will list upcoming events. We invite our readers to take advantage of these services by sending us ad copy and/or information to be listed.

An effective reflection on our charism requires that we continue to tell our story. We do this by careful historical research, by genuine examination of today's experience and by sharing our visions for the future. May *The Cord* serve as a kind of "story-book" for us in our English-speaking family and enhance the enlivening process by which we find our own particular "openings" in this story.

The Cord, 45.2 (1995)

The Life of Anthony of Padua

Charles McCarron, OFM Cap.*

The following account is a condensed version of the first chapter of *Anthony of Padua*, Sermones *for the Easter Season*, ed. George Marcil, OFM (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994). To make the text more readable, we have omitted the many footnotes and appended a short bibliography of the major sources used. For complete documentation, see the original chapter.

Anthony of Padua was a man who lived at the "crossroads." Culturally he was the product of the frontier between Moslem and Christian culture. In his religious life Anthony was a canon regular who left the stability of an established observance for the radical new lifestyle of the Friars Minor. Intellectually he was a man trained in the Augustinian mode who responded to the new Aristotelianism of the schools. The purpose of this investigation is to examine those facets of Anthony's life and times which affected his development as a thinker and "formator" of the Franciscan School. Peeling away the layers of popular legend and devotion which have encased the figure of Anthony for so many years will reveal the true depth and worth of his work. As Albert Lepître has said in his biography of Saint Anthony, "...the Saint's

*Charles McCarron, OFM, Cap., originally prepared this biographical overview in 1989 as a thesis for the Master of Arts degree at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University.

image is not unlike those medieval frescoes, distorted by successive restorings, which very careful scraping has at last brought back to their original simplicity and truth."

1. Anthony's Early Years and His Life as a Canon

Anthony of Padua was born in Lisbon in the Kingdom of Portugal. The chronology of his life is still a matter for much speculation. The traditional date given for his birth is 1195. However, some scholars have argued that 1191 is the correct date. The *Vita Prima* (hereafter referred to as *Vita*) tells us that he was born near the cathedral of Lisbon in a house appropriate for his family's position. His baptismal name was Ferdinand and his father's name was Martin, a knight of Alfonso.

The age in which Ferdinand was born and spent his youth was a turbulent one in Portugal's history. Unfortunately there is scant notice of this historical period in the early biographies. One must therefore examine the general history of the region at this time to form an adequate picture of the forces at work on Ferdinand.

The foundations of the period were laid in 1096 or 1097 when Count Henri of Burgundy, grandson of Duke Robert I, was given the land of Portugal as a fief by the King of Leon. Henri's son Alfonso Henriques, ruled the land of Portugal from 1141 until 1185. He rebelled against his liege lord, the King of Leon, and struggled to gain the title of king and the independence of Portugal.

Much of the turmoil which would occur in Ferdinand's lifetime was the result of a reaction to the favoritism that Alfonso I showed to the Church to further his political goals. In an attempt to gain independence from Leon, he gave the land of Portugal to Pope Lucius II and received it back as the pope's vassal. His expectation that the pope would grant him the title of king was frustrated when Lucius granted him only the title of duke. It was not until 1173 that Pope Alexander III named Alfonso Henriques king. Though it was not the capital of the new kingdom, Braga was the greatest city in the Christian realm of Portugal, having 5,000 inhabitants. As part of his move to gain independence from Leon, Alfonso I supported the claims to the primacy of Portugal of the Archbishop of Braga against those of the Archbishop of

Toledo. Because of Alfonso's policies, the Church became the largest landowner in the realm. The temporal power which the Church held virtually eclipsed the feudal struggle between secular nobles and king in Portugal, since the only significant struggle was between king and bishop. The secular nobles were little more than bystanders, taking sides as the winds of favor changed. An example of Alfonso's largess towards the Church is the role that he had in the founding, at Coimbra, of the Santa Cruz Abbey of the Augustinian canons, the congregation that Ferdinand was to join.

In the life of the young Ferdinand, Alfonso I also has importance as the conqueror of Lisbon, or Al-Usbuna as it was known to the Moors. Al-Usbuna was the greatest city of Moslem Portugal, situated as it was on the finest and deepest harbor on the coast. The town was a large one by Iberian standards, encompassing within its walls 15 hectares and having heavily populated suburbs to the east and west. It was a cosmopolitan city which bustled with merchants and seafarers. The size and wealth of Al-Usbuna made it the target of Alfonso I's military campaigns.

Most Moslem cities in Iberia had within their walls communities of Christians, called Mozarabs, who chose to remain under Moorish rule. With their own courts and judicial system, their own elders and bishops, they enjoyed the relative freedom of a ghetto existence. Over the years of their presence among the Moors, the Mozarabs, though Christian, had become Islamic in their culture. They adopted many of the practices and customs of their Moslem neighbors. Al-Usbuna was no exception and had its Mozarab community along with the other religious and ethnic groups that made up the composition of this port city.

The conquest of Al-Usbuna took place a mere forty-four years before the birth of Ferdinand. He was to spend the first twenty-two years of his life in the society that that campaign had created. In May 1147 a fleet of 144 vessels bearing 13,000 crusaders arrived in Alfonso's realm on their way to the Holy Land. The troops were divided into four nations, the English, the Flemish, the German and the French. With the promise of payment from Alfonso, they agreed to ally themselves with the Portuguese and to sail on Al-Usbuna. On June 24, a few hun-

dred landed and skirmished with the Moslems, but the main body of the force remained on the ships and seemed reluctant to act. Alfonso arrived and urged them on by appealing to their piety. However, religious ideals didn't seem to be their primary motivation and they remained intransigent. Finally, Alfonso offered them lands in his kingdom, the spoils of the city and the ransom of any captive that they took. This seemed to assuage any doubts they had, and the Crusaders agreed to attack the city. Alfonso sent one last delegation to Al-Usbuna asking the city to surrender. It was met by the Moslem governor and Mozarabic bishop who reproached the Crusaders for their greed and violence. On the next day the attack began. The siege lasted for 17 weeks and ended with the deaths of many of the civilian inhabitants. One of those slain was the Mozarabic bishop.

As promised, many of the Crusaders received lands and positions in return for their help. Alfonso I appointed the English priest Gilbert of Hastings as the new bishop of Lisbon, as the city came to be called. Alfonso then continued to battle for Moorish territory until his death in 1185.

When Alfonso's son, Sancho I, ascended the throne, his first concern was to extend his father's conquests. In 1189, a fleet of Crusaders once more came to the aid of a Portuguese king. They pushed through Moslem territory, capturing the city of Silves. The Moors launched a savage counteroffensive and all the gains that had been made by the Portuguese and their mercenaries after 1147 were lost. In June of 1191, two months before the birth of Ferdinand, the Christian armies were pushed back to Lisbon. Thus, Ferdinand was born in a town on the border between Moslem and Christian culture.

What was the situation of Ferdinand's family in this society? Were they people of rank, of privilege? According to the sixteenth-century chronicler Marc of Lisbon, Ferdinand's family name was Bulhoes, and the family was descended from Godfrey of Boullion. This report of illustrious ancestry has been rejected by most scholars as merely legendary but it may contain an element of truth. There was a large influx of Crusaders into Portugal during the time of the *Reconquista*. Ferdinand's father was a knight of Alfonso. This would seem to indicate that he won distinction during Alfonso I's reign. It is even possible that he entered the country at that time in one of the waves of crusaders passing through Portugal.

Ferdinand's education began in the cathedral school of Lisbon. The family house stood near the cathedral. As local tradition has it, the site of the cathedral was that of the Great Mosque. It took as its primary model the great church of Santiago in Compostella which was built during the years 1078 to 1130 in a massive and austere Romanesque style. Lisbon's cathedral was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The cathedral school was probably founded in compliance with the decree of Lateran III in 1179, which required that every cathedral sponsor a school in order to train young aspirants to the priesthood. At this school Ferdinand would have followed the standard curriculum, getting a foundation in the seven liberal arts. Here Ferdinand would also have been introduced to Latin and the chants and psalms of the Divine Office.

Young Ferdinand's education was not confined to the cloisters of the cathedral school but was enhanced by the life of the city itself. In addition to the community of northern Crusaders and their descendants, there was still a large Moslem and Mozarab population in Lisbon. Alfonso I had given Lisbon's Moslems a charter in 1185 allowing them to travel freely throughout the realm in order to conduct trade. Tension, nevertheless, would have existed between these merchants and the Christian overlords who were still at war with their compatriots. There would also have been tension between the relatively rough and uncultured northern Christians and the refined and well-educated Mozarabs. These factors contributed to a cosmopolitan city in which the young Ferdinand was brought into contact with various cultures and world views. It was in this setting that he came to the decision to enter the religious life.

According to the *Vita*, Ferdinand entered the Canons Regular of St.Augustine at Sao Vicente, just outside Lisbon's walls, at the age of fifteen. Fifteen, however, is somewhat problematic. If he entered in 1210, then, granted an 1191 birthdate, Ferdinand would have been closer to twenty at his entrance. The foundation of Sao Vicente had been made by Alfonso I in 1147 in gratitude for his success in the conquest of Lisbon. It was a daughter house of the Abbey of Santa Cruz in Coimbra.

The members of Santa Cruz were canons regular who lived a community life centered around prayer and ministry under the Rule of St. Augustine. This monastery and its daughter houses were among some 800 communities of canons which had adopted the customs of the congregation of St. Ruf of Avignon. Thus, the congregation of Santa Cruz was not an isolated religious community at the furthest reaches of civilization.

At Sao Vicente Ferdinand began a formal program of study in preparation for his ordination to the priesthood. There exists an inventory of the library of Sao Vicente at the time during which he lived there. This inventory allows one to view the interests that the canons had and perhaps speculate about the curriculum which would have been followed in their studies. Together with the standard works of theology, there are numerous texts on the natural sciences, particularly medicine, the probable source for the many references and allusions to the natural sciences which appear in St. Anthony's sermons. Outstanding among the teachers at Sao Vicente were the prior, Don Peter, and Don Peter Pires, both of whom were active in the political affairs of the kingdom. The prior was noted for his honesty in his policies and Pires was known as a scholar in grammar, rhetoric and logic, and perhaps most significantly for Anthony's later fame, as a preacher.

In 1212 Ferdinand requested to be transferred from Lisbon to Santa Cruz, perhaps to avoid the distractions caused him at Lisbon by the many visits and conversations with old friends. Given the political and military unrest of the period, the young and intelligent Ferdinand no doubt debated the current topics with the friends of his youth. His request for a transfer was granted and he moved to the Abbey of Santa Cruz at Coimbra.

Here Ferdinand applied himself to his studies in preparation for the priesthood. Santa Cruz, a royal foundation in the king's city, was very well endowed and could boast an excellent library containing the works of both Moslem and Christian masters. Ferdinand grew in his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Church Fathers, particularly St. Augustine. The pursuit of study and scholarship was one of the priorities at Coimbra, and it had become the intellectual center of the kingdom. It is probable that the teachers at Coimbra had received

their training in the schools of Paris, particularly that of the Canons of St. Victor. The scholastic ties between the two congregations of canons were quite strong.

The influence of the Victorine School on the future St. Anthony is clear. The older masters had studied under Hugh of St. Victor and Richard of St. Victor. There are also two allusions to the hymns of Adam of St. Victor in Anthony's *Sermones*. Ferdinand probably studied Adam's works as part of his liturgical preparation at Coimbra, for it is unlikely that such material would have been in use among the primitive Franciscans whom he was to join. In addition, the training of novices at Santa Cruz and Sao Vicente was conducted according to Hugh's *De Institutione Novitiorum*. Ferdinand's teachers were thus trained in the best schools of their age and exposed their pupils to the new methods and ideas arising in the Parisian schools. They could rank themselves favorably with any other school in Europe. Indeed we know that Ferdinand's teacher, known simply as Master John, attended the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 as a theologian.

Ferdinand's early biographers are unanimous in speaking of the promise he showed in his studies and the remarkable memory that he displayed. He is said to have studied the Scriptures night and day while at Coimbra. In the description of Ferdinand's method of study given in the *Vita* one finds another connection with the School of St. Victor. He is said to have read a text seeking first its historical truth, then an allegorical interpretation and finally a moral sense. Only then would he proceed to "theologize" with the help of the Fathers. It is the method that Hugh of St. Victor initiates and teaches as the proper form of Scripture study in Book Six of the *Didascalicon*. The notion that Ferdinand's intellectual formation was carried out under Victorine guidelines thus gains further credence.

In spite of Coimbra's reputation not all was peace and the pursuit of wisdom at Santa Cruz. In a religious house as large and important as Ferdinand's it was hard to keep the "world" and its politics outside the cloister wall. Many biographers of the saint have depicted his years at Santa Cruz as a quiet and sheltered time of study. The facts of history do not allow such an assumption. The historical events that are known to have taken place in and around Santa Cruz had to have

an effect on the young man. They probably were factors contributing to his eventual entrance into the Friars Minor. Alfonso II, along with the entire kingdom of Portugal, had been placed under interdict by the bishops of Zamora and Compostella in the same year that Ferdinand had transferred to Coimbra. Alfonso had tried to ignore his sisters' claims on their father's estates, and Alfonso IX of Leon took up their cause. He invaded Portugal that very year. Pope Innocent III, however, had need of the two kingdoms' support in a crusade against the Moors and lifted the interdict, restoring a truce.

The Abbey of Santa Cruz itself was in a period of crisis, and this situation gave Ferdinand an intimate experience of human frailty and political intrigue that was to serve him well in his later life. In 1222 Pope Honorius III ordered three of Lisbon's priors to perform an inquest into the charges brought against John, the prior of Coimbra, by Ferdinand's teacher, Master John. Prior John had already been accused under the previous pope, Innocent III, of having placed Santa Cruz in near-bankruptcy, reducing the canons to a life of misery. He had received several excommunications, but ignoring them he continued to celebrate the Divine Office and Liturgy. Honorius' bull also restated the charges that Prior John caused public scandal by his acts of perjury, adultery, pederasty and incest. This caused great turmoil and division between the group that supported Prior John in his lifestyle and those that backed Master John in his attempts at reform. It seems likely that it was at this turbulent time, ca. 1219-1220, that Ferdinand was ordained a priest.

The question of the date and place of Ferdinand's ordination has perhaps involved more debate than any other topic regarding the chronology of his life. The question is whether Ferdinand was ordained as a canon regular at Coimbra, or later as a Friar Minor. There is no record of either in any of the early lives of the saint. The argument for the Friar Minor period centers around the story of the ordination at Forli. In other words, Ferdinand would not have attended the ordination merely as a guest but as one of those to be ordained. Those who support the Forli ordination point to the current church law of the day which set the minimum age for priestly ordination at thirty. If Ferdinand was ordained in 1220 he would have been only 29 years old. However,

it has been shown that this statute had been disregarded in Portugal. The first prior of Santa Cruz, Saint Teotonio, had been ordained at the age of 25. The key to the question seems to be given in the *Vita's* account of the first chapter that Ferdinand attended as a Friar Minor. He was assigned at that chapter to the hermitage of Monte Paola so that the brothers there might have the divine mysteries celebrated for them. The version of the incident which appears in a fourteenth-century (ca. 1330) manuscript of the *Vita* is even more explicit. When asked if he is a priest, Ferdinand answered, "I am." In the light of the above evidence it seems probable that Ferdinand was ordained in Coimbra in 1220. It was during this same year that Ferdinand had his first documented encounter with the Friars Minor.

2. Anthony's Life as a Friar Minor

The Friars Minor first entered Portugal in 1217 with the intent of establishing their community there. A party had been sent from the General Chapter that year under the direction of Bernard of Quintavalle to Iberia in order to found communities of the Order. The chronicler, Marc of Lisbon, says that Queen Urraca asked her husband to concede to Friar Zachary of Rome and his companions a poor little hermitage near Coimbra, at Olivais. The little chapel, dedicated to St. Anthony of Egypt, had been built ca. 1064, possibly by the Hospitallers of St. Anthony. The friars from Olivais often came to the door of Santa Cruz seeking alms. It is here that Ferdinand first met the friars and became acquainted with their lifestyle.

Several reasons can be offered to explain Ferdinand's decision to enter the Friars Minor. Given the condition of the religious life at Santa Cruz, the idealism of the Friars might have impressed itself upon the young canon. The fervor with which he was to embrace the ideals and lifestyle of the Franciscans point to a prior disposition in Ferdinand's life. There is a description of the lifestyle of this province, apparently modeled on Francis' Rule for Hermitages in Celano's Second Life. One reason that has been proposed as a possible source for Ferdinand's vocation to the Friars is the introduction of the new methodology of the schools by Coimbra's Parisian-trained masters. In the

monastic schools one passed from reading (*lectio*) to meditation (*meditatio*), to prayer (*oratio*), and finally, perhaps, to contemplation (*contemplatio*). The new Parisian method envisaged reading (*lectio*), leading one to disputation (*disputatio*), and then being shared in preaching (*predicatio*). This outward thrust toward preaching, and what would today be called evangelization, which characterized the Friars Minor from the beginning, no doubt attracted the young man who was to become the "Evangelical Doctor."

The missionary vocation had been part of the Franciscan movement since the movement's inception. According to the primitive biographers, the desire to spread the Gospel and risk martyrdom in the attempt was a key component of Ferdinand's vocation to the Friars. Five friars, proto-martyrs of the Franciscan Order, were killed in Morocco on January 20, 1220. Their bodies were acquired by the Portuguese king and after a triumphal procession were installed as the bones of saints in the Abbey of Santa Cruz. Ferdinand was inspired by the example of the martyrs and felt the call to follow them in preaching and ultimately in martyrdom. Ferdinand gained the necessary permission and entered the Friars Minor at Olivais. He took the name of the hermitage's patron as his own and after a very short time left with a companion for Morocco in order to seek a martyr's death.

Upon reaching the shores of North Africa the new Friar Anthony became gravely ill and was persuaded to return home to Portugal. However, his boat was driven off course and he landed at Sicily instead. He located the community of friars at Messina. Anthony stayed with them until they departed for the General Chapter to be held in Assisi at Pentecost of 1221; and he accompanied them there.

This was an important chapter in the Order's history and in the life of St. Anthony. Francis had returned from his own attempt to evangelize the Saracens and win martyrdom only to find the Order in crisis. Francis, with the help of Caesar of Speyer, revised the Rule to accommodate the new situations in which the friars were finding themselves while safeguarding the original ideals of the community. This revised version of the Rule was to be the central topic at the Chapter of 1221. Friar Elias of Cortona was made Francis's vicar in the place of Peter Catanii. Jordan tells how Francis sat humbly at Elias's feet, tugging on the sleeves of his habit if he wished to say anything. It was to be the last chapter that was attended by all the friars. Jordan of Giano, while perhaps conflating the details of the chapters of 1219 and 1221 gives us a lively account of the bustling scene where more than 3000 friars had gathered around the little church of the Portiuncula on the plain below Assisi.

Certainly this was an important milestone in the life of Anthony, confronted for the first time with a throng of friars attempting to live in the temporary fraternity of the Chapter the lifestyle he had only recently professed. Another important event at this Chapter was his first personal experience of Francis of Assisi. There is no record of a meeting between the two men. Perhaps in the midst of that great crowd none could have occurred. The Fioretti gives an account of a sermon Francis is said to have delivered at this chapter. He exhorted the friars to live in harmony and peace with one another and to remain loyal to the practice of poverty.

As the chapter wore on, the question of where he was to go came up in Anthony's mind. He delayed the resolution of the problem till the last moments of the chapter. According to the *Vita*, Anthony did not make himself known or push himself to the forefront of the chapter. He waited until its conclusion, when most of the friars had already left, to ask Brother Gratian, the Minister of Romagna, if he might join his province. Brother Gratian accepted him and he was assigned to the hermitage at Monte Paola, near Forli. As we have seen, he was sent there so that the lay brothers of the place would have a priest for mass. His assignment to Monte Paola can be dated June 1221.

He remained there for an unspecified time leading the life of the hermitage which he had first experienced at Olivais. This length of time (ca. 15 months) would have been the period of Anthony's Franciscan formation; it would seem that he left Monte Paola around the month of September 1222. Then he attended the ordination of the Friars Minor and Friars Preacher that was held at Forli.

The ordination of Forli marked the end of Anthony's obscurity in the Friars Minor and the beginning of his life of service to the fraternity in positions of responsibility. Rather than have a reading at the meal following the ordination, the Franciscan superior asked that

one of those assembled address the crowd. Neither a Franciscan nor a Dominican would accept, saying that they had not been given enough time to prepare a proper presentation for such a gathering. The superior finally asked Anthony to address the group. The early sources are unanimous in telling of the surprise and admiration with which Anthony's eloquence and knowledge of Scripture were greeted. After his success with his impromptu address at Forli, Anthony was given the office of preacher and for the next two years he pursued that mission within the province of Romagna, where he preached against the heretical Cathars in Rimini. This preaching mission lasted until the end of 1223 or the beginning of 1224.

Anthony's reputation as a scholar and preacher reached the ears of Francis. Again there is no record of any meeting between the two men. Nevertheless, Francis gave Anthony a mission that was to have an effect not only on Anthony's own life but on the direction of the entire Order. The year 1222/23 is given as the date for a letter written by St. Francis which is now accepted by most authorities as authentic. It is addressed to Anthony and authorizes him to teach the friars theology, as long as the spirit of prayer and devotion which the Friars have promised in the Rule is not extinguished. The letter was apparently written after some problems with an unauthorized studium in Bologna. Francis, realizing that studies were to become a reality in the Order, decided to entrust the task to a learned friar whom he felt he could trust to safeguard the spirit of the fraternity. It was to Anthony that he turned.

Bologna during this period was a bustling city of students and scholars. One of these scholars, a master of the new university, John of Sciacca, entered the friars while holding the chair of law. He set up a studium in which he taught the friars according to the method of the school, perhaps even teaching them law. This, it would seem, is the house of Bologna from which, as he records in his second biography of Francis, the ill Thomas of Celano recalls having been thrown out at Francis's command. It is to this house that, through the good offices of Cardinal Hugolino, the friars returned and in which Anthony lectured.

Anthony left Bologna sometime in 1224 to begin a mission in France. He first stayed in Montpellier, where he taught theology to the

friars. In September 1224, Anthony attended the chapter of the friars that had been convoked at Arles. Here it was that the stigmatized Francis of Assisi appeared to Anthony while he preached to the chapter on the sign of the cross. In 1225, it seems that Anthony went to preach and teach at Toulouse. In this region of France, Anthony was to take up again his preaching against the Cathars. Many of the themes of Anthony's *Sermones* have their source in his attempt to answer the heretical doctrines which he encountered. It would be helpful to examine briefly the Cathar heresy and the conditions in southern France at this time.

The Cathar heresy was of eastern dualist origins. Its doctrines, however, frequently differed from region to region, confusing the inquisitors who sought to stamp them out. It was known as the one heresy which denied Christ; yet in its ceremonies it speaks of the Trinity and of the God who was placed upon the cross. The distinguishing feature of the heresy was its dualism. The earth and all created matter was evil and the Devil's domain. There also existed a sort of caste system. Those who had received the great Cathar sacrament of the *consolomentum* lived a life of great austerity, disdaining all wealth and physical pleasure. They were known as the "Perfect." The majority of the Cathars were the "Believers." The latter delayed the reception of the *consolomentum* until their deathbeds so that they would not incur the heavy obligations of the Perfect.

The severe lifestyle of the Perfect compared favorably in the eyes of the people with the decadent life lived by a large part of the orthodox clergy. It was this fact that contributed to the Cathars' popularity and also put the preachers of the orthodox position on the defensive. It finally forced the latter to change their mode of operation and to adopt a lifestyle of strict poverty coupled with itinerant preaching in the manner of some of the earlier twelfth-century reform movements. It was this strategy that was behind Dominic Guzman's program in founding what was to become the Order of Preachers.

The heresy had great success and became very powerful. Perhaps the best description of the effect the heresies of the day had on the people comes from the pen of Italian author Umberto Eco. Though the period he writes on is the fourteenth century, his words are equally

applicable to Anthony's day:

> ...What makes them [the heresies] live is also what makes them die. The movements grow, gathering simple people who have been aroused by other movements and who believe all have the same impulse of revolt and hope... The simple cannot choose their personal heresy.... They cling to the man preaching in their land, who passes through their village or stops in their square (232).

In or around the year 1226 Anthony was named the Custos of Limoges and founded the friary at Brive. There is also the possibility that he attended a synod called by Archbishop Simon de Sully of Bourges in 1226.

In October of that year, St. Francis died and Elias called a General Chapter to be held during Pentecost of the following year. As a Custos, Anthony attended the chapter, and while there he was chosen to be the minister provincial of Romagna. In his earlier preaching mission in Italy, Anthony had become familiar with the problems of that region. The experience he had gained in France while preaching to the Cathars was to prove invaluable to him in his new ministry. The region of Romagna had become a refuge for the French Cathar *Perfecti* who had been driven from Languedoc by the work of the Inquisition and preachers like Anthony and Dominic. As it had in the south of France, the political unrest of the region greatly contributed to the success of the heretics. The strife between communes that is familiar to any student of Franciscan history in the story of Perugia and Assisi is to be found in Romagna as well. The support of heresy was often the tool which the podestas and nobility used to gain their ends. Because of the size of the province which Anthony governed, his lifestyle as minister provincial was primarily itinerant. It was probably at this point, ca.1228, that Anthony first met the great Victorine abbot, Thomas Gallus.

Thomas, the abbot of the Victorine monastery of St. Andrew at Vercelli, had taught at the School of St. Victor in Paris. This meeting was to have a profound effect on Anthony's life and thought. The friendship between Anthony and Thomas is attested to by a writing of Thomas that praises Anthony for his knowledge of mysticism and the holiness of his life. Thomas was not only a friend of Anthony of Padua, but also of Robert Grosseteste, Adam Marsh and Giles of Assisi. Arising from the friendship between Thomas and Anthony is the legend that Anthony studied theology under Thomas at Vercelli and that his "classmate" in this endeavor was Adam Marsh. The legend gains credence from a fourteenth century fresco over the tomb of Thomas Gallus in St. Andrew in which Thomas is depicted as a teacher giving a lecture in a study hall to a group of canons. Seated at one of the student desks, among the canons, is a Friar Minor, which the tradition at St. Andrew has long taken to be Anthony. Anthony would have been about thirty-three by the time he met Thomas at Vercelli, a little past the normal age for a student in the Middle Ages. Regarding Adam Marsh's involvement, he did not enter the friars until after Anthony had died. The story is, however, a legendary way of stating the debt that Anthony's thought holds to Thomas and to the Victorine School.

We know that Anthony visited Padua several times at this period of his life. Padua was recognized as the center of orthodoxy in the region of Romagna. Initially, it seems that he stayed at a place of the friars outside Padua, coming into the city to preach. It was at this time that he wrote his great work, *The Sunday Sermons* (*Sermones*). At this same period he also appears to have founded the small studium of the friars at Padua. Becoming more involved in the life of Padua, he gradually took a more active voice in its civil disputes. As the burden of his many tasks weighed more heavily upon him, Anthony asked to be relieved of the office of minister provincial. The General Chapter of May 30, 1230, granted this request. It was probably while he was in Rome for this chapter that he preached before the curia and Gregory IX. After the sermon Gregory called Anthony the "Ark of the Testament." Upon returning to the region of Padua he entered into the disputes of the area. Through his involvement a law was passed by the city of Padua, March 17, 1231, in favor of debtors who could not pay their creditors. In the same year he went on a mission to Ezzelino to win the freedom of some Guelph prisoners. Though the mission was a failure, it points to Anthony's willingness to enter into the affairs of his day while remaining active in pulpit and classroom.

During this period Anthony withdrew to some land that had been offered to him outside Padua in order to work on the texts of his *Sermones* for saints' feastdays which had been commissioned by the Bishop of Ostia, the future Alexander IV. He worked on them until his death, never completing the series. Anthony, in 1231, preached his final Lenten cycle in Padua. In the second half of May 1231, Anthony became seriously ill and withdrew once more to Camposampiero. Knowing that he was near death he asked to be taken back to the friary in Padua in order not to burden the friars of the hermitage. While on the way they met a friar from Padua, who, upon seeing Anthony's condition, urged that he be taken to the place of the friars at the Poor Clare monastery of Arcella. They had barely arrived when Anthony, having received the last rites, died chanting the hymn, "O Gloriosa Domina, Excelsa super sidera." The date was June 13, 1231.

There ensued a battle over the remains. The friars, the Poor Clares, and the citizens of the neighboring town of Capodiponte all claimed his body. Commissions were held and the friars finally won the right to bury their brother at the friary in Padua. They attempted to remove the remains secretly but were discovered, and a battle was literally fought, including the destruction of a bridge to prevent his body from being taken across to Padua. Eventually, the friars were successful, and Anthony was laid to rest in Padua. On Pentecost Sunday, May 30, 1232, less than a year after Anthony's death, Gregory IX canonized him in the cathedral of Spoleto. In 1263, his body was moved one more time to the new basilica which had been erected in Padua in his honor. Thus ended the earthly journeys of Brother Anthony of Padua and Lisbon.

Anthony of Padua's life was spent in a turbulent age. The reality of his life does not coincide well with the image that he has in popular devotion. In his youth Anthony had to deal with all the tensions that came from living in what we would call today one of the world's "trouble spots." Lisbon was a city on the border between two hostile cultures. The young saint had to make for himself a synthesis that would combine the two cultural streams of his early life. As a young religious, Anthony lived in a community that, while a center of learning, was also embroiled in all sorts of intrigue and scandal. He was forced to

develop an individual spirituality that would sustain his vocation in such surroundings. Finally, in his decision to become a Friar Minor, Anthony had to adapt to the itinerant lifestyle and the mendicancy of the new community after the stable existence of the canons regular. The versatility and adaptability that the facts of his biography show forth help one understand the nature and source of his *Sermones*. In them also we can see a man who adapts himself to the world around him, particularly as it expresses itself in the spiritual needs of the people and the institutional Church which seeks to serve them.

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The Cord, 45.2 (1995)

On January 16, 1946, in the apostolic letter, *Exulta Lusitania Felix*, Pius XII declared St. Anthony of Padua a Doctor of the Church. The following November, at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, the Franciscans of the United States sponsored commemorative ceremonies in honor of the new Franciscan Doctor. A number of talks presented at that gathering almost fifty years ago still have a message for us today. We are happy to offer, in edited and condensed form, some of these talks which celebrate St. Anthony as theologian, as preacher and as man of the people. The entire texts of these papers can be found in "St. Anthony of Padua, Doctor of the Church Universal," Souvenir of the Commemorative Ceremonies, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, Nov. 11, 1946, collected in *Franciscan Pamphlets*, Vol. 57, Friedsam Memorial Library, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY. [Ed.]

— ST. ANTHONY — The Theologian

Thomas Plassmann OFM*

I consider it my duty to say a word of thanks to the promoters and coordinators of this program for their genial insistence which compelled me to withdraw for a while from administrative work and to bury myself, for the preparation of this paper, among ancient tomes and time-worn manuscripts in our library, hidden away under the lofty pines of the romantic Cattaraugus Hills. Needless to say, the reward was bountiful and manifold. But there were three crushing disappointments. First, I learned to my dismay that the celebrated *Concordantiae Morales Sacrorum Bibliorum* which antiquity attributed to St. Anthony and which, as I have often assured my younger brethren, established the Saint of Padua as the first of Biblical Concordists, must now be relegated among his *opera dubia*. Right here, I must confess, one of my youthful dreams was shattered, and those heartless critics are to blame. Second, the beautiful Sermon of St. Bonaventure on his confrere St. Anthony which begins "*Invocavi, et venit in me spiritus Sapientiae*" [Therefore I prayed, ...and the spirit of wisdom came to me] (Wis. 7: 7), and in which the Seraphic Doctor in glowing terms lauds the celestial wisdom of our new *Doctor Evangelicus*, is no longer found among the authentic works of St. Bonaventure in the critical Quaracchi Edition of his *Opera Omnia*. Another dream dissipated by those same cruel critics. Third, and this was the greatest calamity of all. In his *Sermo II* on the Seraphic Patriarch, St. Bonaventure makes the following statement: "Litteras non scivit nec instructorem habuit; tamen praedicavit, nec verbum unum reprehensibile dixit," and then he adds, "similiter Antonius." [He was not lettered, nor had he had instruction. Nevertheless he preached, and without a single reproachable word; likewise Anthony.]

My heart sank when I read these last two words. Can it be true that the man who today is honored as a *Doctor Ecclesiae* was ignorant of letters? To tell the truth, I roguishly reflected: What a blessing that the Sacred Congregation did not light upon this passage. But then, my better judgment soon dispelled all fears when I considered that Bonaventure was speaking as a university professor, and, as we all know, it is the privilege of university professors to refer disdainfully, and sometimes perhaps with a slight admixture of enviousness, to the career and accomplishments of a seminary professor "back in the sticks," not to mention a poor college president. But seriously, Doctor Bonaventure, who had been groomed from his early youth under Master Alexander at the metropolis of Paris, was most likely unfamiliar with the early hidden life of Anthony. In fact, while he undoubtedly absorbed much of the sublime teachings of the Saint of Padua, he could not help but prize beyond all wisdom and learning the Saint's love of poverty and humility. That is precisely the tenor of his one authentic Sermon on St. Anthony, in which incidentally he quotes from one of the current *Legendae:* "He spent more time in the beginning of his conversion washing pots than in studying Scripture."

*At the time of this presentation, Father Thomas Plassmann was the President of St. Bonaventure College and of Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure, NY. The numerous footnotes have been omitted for readability. A list of major sources is appended at the end of the article.

Premising this, we shall follow St. Anthony through three main phases of his career: (a) his cultural formation, (b) his workshop and method, (c) his doctrine.

I. Cultural Formation

From a few brief statements in the early biographies we hope to piece together, with a fair amount of accuracy, the main facts and factors in the scholastic and cultural formation of the *Doctor Evangelicus*. Still a child he was entered at the Cathedral School of Lisbon which happened to be located but a few steps from his parental home. The boy was taught the rudiments of Latin from the Psalms and other liturgical texts and possibly from the grammars of Donatus and Priscian, according to the common practice in cathedral and monastery schools of that day.

At the age of fifteen, young Ferdinand was admitted to the Monastery Santo Vincente de Fora of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine in the same city. After about two years, he transferred to the famous Abbey of Santa Cruz in Coimbra where he remained nine years. At that time Santa Cruz ranked foremost among Portuguese centers of higher learning. Here the young canon "nourished his intellect with study, and exercised his soul by meditation, and neither day nor night did he cease holy reading." His biographers take pains to point out that his favorite texts were the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. We are also told that the youthful Augustinian had set himself three objectives. Day and night he poured over the Sacred Scriptures in order, first, to seek his own sanctification; secondly, to acquire the art of rooting up vice and planting virtue in the souls of others; thirdly, to build up in his own mind a standard of faith for the purpose of effectively championing the cause of holy Church.

Then, with the blessing of his spiritual fathers, Anthony bade farewell to Santa Cruz and knocked at the gate of the little Friary at d'Olivares to beg for the humble garb of the Poverello. Though unbeknown to those in charge, this was a precious gift to the Order of Friars Minor, then in its early infancy and devoid of the means to educate its members for the mission that lay ahead. Such is the way of Divine Providence which made the great Benedictine Order surrender young Thomas Aquinas to the Friars Preachers even as the learned university professor Alexander of Hales was inveigled by the pleadings of a simple

lay brother to join the Order of Friars Minor.

Having been denied the palm of martyrdom, Anthony now set foot on the Sicilian coast. For a year and nine months he enjoyed the solitude of Monte Paolo, devoting himself to prayer, piety and study, and to assembling and coordinating the seminal thoughts which later ripened into a bountiful harvest. In this peaceful retreat, we may assume, the seraphic synthesis of Antonian Theology was formulated.

An intimate friendship and a healthy intellectual partnership developed, probably at this period, between our Saint and the celebrated mystic, Abbott Thomas Galla of Vercelli. This erudite scholar, the bridgehead between the School of St. Victor and St. Bonaventure and a recognized exponent of the *Coelestis Hierachia* of Pseudo-Dionysius, undoubtedly gave a strong impulse to the trend of symbolism and mysticism that proved so impressive in St. Anthony's sermons and the Franciscan School generally.

What sort of a student was St. Anthony? What were his qualifications, reactions, trends? A modern aptitude test would reveal, first of all, what is best described by the Latin term *ingenium*. It comprises acumen, depth and a large measure of originality. One of his biographers aptly credits him with a happy curiosity. Again, he possessed a phenomenal, an exceedingly tenacious memory, so much so that, as another biographer avers, "he used his memory instead of books." With ease and grace he draws at will from this rich storehouse the choicest biblical and patristic sayings and similes, to fascinate his hearers or readers with entrancing picturesquesness of style and substance. Lastly, his ardent and devout soul visualizes everything in the spiritual, supernatural light. In his mind, on his lips and in his pen, the truths of faith are living things that must be ardently loved to be fully understood. His motto must have been "I love so that I might understand." It is what St. Bonaventure would have called, the *unctio seraphica*.

II. Workshop and Method

It happened at Forli, during a memorable ordination ceremony, that the remarkable talents which this man of God had so sedulously and so successfully hidden were suddenly brought to light. As a result, the Friars begged their holy Father that he command Brother Anthony to teach them. In substance the brief note which St. Francis in his characteristic way inscribed to "Brother Anthony, my bishop," appoint-

ing him lector of Sacred Theology on condition that he extinguish not the spirit of prayer and devotion, is historically vouched for. Thus Anthony, unadorned with academic attainments and honors, but a man after the Poverello's inmost heart, became the first officially appointed lector of Sacred Theology in the Order.

Bologna was the first scene of his activity. At Bologna, the cradle of jurisprudence since Gratian and later a leading center of the arts and theology, the Friars Minor established a *Studium Generale* whose influence was as varied as it was widespread. The ever growing roster of this *studium* listed an astounding number of students, both native and foreign, of various religious orders, and especially of the secular priesthood from every land. Its curriculum embraced both university studies and what in our day would be the equivalent of seminary courses. The education of priests in their pastoral work was its main objective. Salimbene, that colorful, whimsical and imperturbably inquisitive friar, gives a graphic account. St. Anthony also taught in Toulouse, in Montpellier, and probably elsewhere, but the Franciscan *studium* at Bologna will ever owe a debt of gratitude to the first Lector in the Franciscan Order.

How is it, you may ask, that the Franciscan School, instead of following one great leader, seems to scatter its energies among so many masters? The offhand answer is that the good Lord has so blessed us with a multitude of outstanding luminaries as to make the choice difficult. However, the real reasons lie deeper. While the Order of St. Francis boasts of possessing and promoting among its members both a happy individualism and a felicitous originality, it also recognizes that right here is the source of both its strength and its weakness. And yet, for the sake of the former we are willing to bear with the latter, even though much grief may result. For in the long run the former nullifies the latter in the great cause of truth.

Enjoying, as we do, the liberty of the children of God, we glory in an electivism which is genuine because it stimulates the search for the truth wherever it may be found, whether it be in the sober, matter-of-fact "capitula" of our *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, Alexander of Hales, or on "the mountain of incense and myrrh," where St. Bonaventure, the *Doctor Seraphicus* bids us abide, or in the labyrinthine profundities of John Duns Scotus, the *Doctor Subtilis*, or lastly in the musty and dusty workshop where Roger Bacon, the *Doctor Admirabilis*, is struggling with old tomes and tricky tools. All this, we believe, is consonant with the mind

of Mother Church; and St. Francis was first and foremost, a *Vir Catholicus et totus Apostolicus*.

But now, to make the choice still more difficult and the variety still more bewildering, along comes Anthony, our new *Doctor Evangelicus*.. True, he was not our greatest Doctor. His works cannot compare with the monumental tomes of the aforesaid Masters. But definitely he stands out as the embodiment of the pure and pristine cradle days of Franciscanism. He fully merits the title *Evangelicus*, not only because this title crystalizes his work with convincing clarity, but especially because it springs from the very core of our charter and Rule, which is: "to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

St. Anthony catches the very soul of the Seraphic Father. But, did St. Francis ever define theology? Great spiritual minds do not define; they utter the profoundest truths in simple, unadorned language. When St. Francis writes in his Testament that "we should honor and venerate all theologians and those who announce to us the most Holy Divine Words as those who minister to us spirit and life," he touches upon the very marrow of theology. And this is precisely the sort of theology that Anthony made his plan and pattern.

The mediaeval schoolmen were builders. When the lofty cathedrals of Europe rose to the sky, the Scholastics composed their monumental Summas. Whether by predetermined plan or casual association, both groups followed architectonic patterns. In this sense, the Summa of Aquinas has been aptly compared to the majestic cathedral of Cologne — a perfect expression of order, proportion and symmetry.

The earliest plans for the Temple of Theology had been projected by the giant architects St. Augustine and St. John of Damascus. Peter Lombard assembled all previous projects in the classic of the age, the *Four Books of the Sentences*. Then came the master builders, Alexander of Hales, the first Summist, and Albert the Great, who adhered in the main to the four divisions of the Lombard. Aquinas devised his immortal synthesis after the pattern of a cathedral with three spacious naves: "Deus Creator, Homo Peccator, Christus Salvator." Meanwhile Bonaventure composed his inimitable *Breviloquium* after the fashion of a heptagon, the Incarnate Word in the center, "so that he might come to have first place in everything" (Col. 1: 18). Duns Scotus raised this edifice to unprecedented heights by dint of the ingenious device of the Pointed Arch — the "ultimate symbol of the Incarnation" — to give emphasis to the "primacy of Christ" and the predestined privileges of

the immaculate "Queen at his right hand."

St. Anthony moved in different environments. The doctors at Paris were still itching under the papal bans that hung over the works of Aristotle and pagan authors generally. In fact, it was only a few days before St. Anthony's death that Gregory IX relaxed the earlier censures.

In spirit let us pay a visit to St. Anthony's little cell and glance at the books on his desk. Our young lector was not a builder, not a framer of scholastic argumentation. A more fitting name would be husbandman or gardener. He loved life; he worked to save life — the life of the soul. For this he dedicated his own life to Him Who had yielded His spirit that immortal souls might live. "Spirit and life" was his theology, and theology meant Sacred Scripture. "Theology," he says, "is knowledge of divine Scripture." The simile dearest to him was the picture of a fertile field which nourishes the roots of virtue and produces, first the stem, then the ear and finally the ripe fruit of holy joy and peace.

To Anthony, the lover of nature, creation held the key to many a mystery on the Sacred Page. The Saviour Himself, so Anthony tells us, drew His parables from the fields, the birds, the flowers and trees. When his own observation failed him, he looked for nature's properties and phenomena in the *bestiaria* and *lapidaria*, and the popular *Physiologus*, all of which were surely to be found in the monastery library, and to which he refers in the usual phrase "dicitur in naturalibus."

But all these were subsidiary to one book which constantly lay on our lector's "cathedra" beside the Holy Bible. It was none other than St. Augustine's "Doctrina Christiana." Anthony adopted with an open heart the teaching of Augustine, which thenceforward became the focus of Franciscan philosophical and theological thinking, and which through geniuses like Bonaventure and Scotus assembled "the unfathomable riches of Christ," "the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God" (Eph. 3: 8-9) into a harmonious synthesis.

III. Doctrine.

Except for some fragments, none of Anthony's class lectures has come down to us. It is generally agreed, however, that the *Sermones Dominicales; in laudem et honorera B.M. Virginis; Sermones in Solemnitatibus*, in Locatelli's edition, are authentic.

The *Sermones* are sketches rather than set sermons. Hence, they

may well serve as an index to St. Anthony's theological teaching. To say that his doctrine, approach, general outlook, and even his language and style are biblical throughout, is a true estimate. His exegesis follows in the wake of patristic interpretations, with a strong leaning towards the Alexandrian School. Yet he duly appreciates the significance of the literal sense, and follows it in all positive teaching.

Meanwhile, the allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses fascinate him with intriguing persistence. Like a skillful artist he adorns, enhances, and embellishes the temple of God, the sanctuary and the mysteries of Holy Faith with spiritual and symbolical adaptations garnered from the Sacred Text. At this, one is reminded of a boy who has discovered a merry stamping ground or of children plucking flowers at will in a vast and beautiful garden. To my knowledge Anthony is among the foremost promoters of the Liturgical Movement. At the hand of Mother Church he paces through the winding rotunda of the Ecclesiastical Year, and Sunday after Sunday he aptly works into a beautiful mosaic the Introit, the Epistle, the Gospel and the Lessons of the day.

Needless to say, his symbolism frequently goes beyond bounds. At times his deductions are farfetched, if not horrendously forced, while his etymologies, though genuinely delightful, defy all philological standards. But such was the temper of the day. His own excuse is, that because his hearers seek entertainment and stimulation, it is well that they find it around the pulpit rather than in the haunts of evil.

As might be expected, of the three spiritual senses Anthony favors the moral application. For him, the human soul is all that matters. With Paul of Tarsus he exclaims: "You are God's field, God's building" (1Cor. 3: 9). In fact he embraces the entire Pauline program: the individual soul as well as the union of all souls in Christ's Mystical Body. On St. Anthony's lips all our dogmas are devotions: each has a specific bearing on human life. With this in mind Anthony consistently seizes upon that aspect of the dogma which emphasizes the effect upon growth toward God.

In a few incisive sentences he succinctly sets forth St. Augustine's doctrine on the fundamental mystery of our faith — the Blessed Trinity. The Father is the first Principle of all; the Son is the Truth of the Father, Beauty supreme and the Exemplar of all things; the Holy Spirit, the *Bonum* of Father and Son, is Joy and Goodness infinite. And forthwith Anthony strikes a practical note: To the Father we must return; the Son we must follow, while the Holy Spirit imparts to us grace.

But this relationship is more intimate, Anthony avers: "Our soul is marked by the image of the Holy Trinity." Our memory reflects the Father, our intellect the Son, our will and love the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, as St. Augustine bids, the soul must dedicate its life to the adorable Trinity: "I will remember You, I will understand You, I will desire You." As Caesar's image was printed on the coin of tribute, even so is God's image imprinted on our souls. That image is attained by seeking divine truth; that likeness, by the love of a virtuous life.

The eloquence, fervor and inventive genius of Anthony seem to reach their zenith when he contemplates the *Verbum Incarnatum*. Christ, he says in the words of St. James, is the "perfect gift from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1: 17). The Father of lights comes forth as the munificent Almoner who gives us the best he possesses. And as the bright beam proceeds from the sun, without separating from it, even so the Eternal Son proceeded from the Father and yet remained in "the bosom of the Father."

Anthony caught the full meaning of the *Reductio ad Deum*, which became a popular theme in scholastic discussions. The Incarnate Word, he explains, moves in a wide circle with three stations: "Came out from the Father, passed to those below, and returned to the seat of the Father." "The Son of God," he adds with a note of tenderness, "came forth from God so that you can depart the world; He came to you so that you can go to Him."

With serene sureness he traces the golden circle of the mission of the Word Incarnate. He proceeds to move calmly between the Old and New Testaments. Culling freely, now from the rich blossoms of the Sapiential Books, now from the ripe fruits of the Pauline Epistles, he weaves both into a crown of glory, grace and splendor for Christ the King and Center of all. By every token the Precursor of the Franciscan school, he bequeathed to us a theological heritage which the mystic meditations of St. Bonaventure, the searching speculations of John Duns Scotus, and later the stirring Sermons of St. Bernardino have developed and formulated into those priceless gems that now adorn the festive calendar of Mother Church — the Primacy of Christ, the Holy Name of Jesus and the Cult of the Savior's Sacred Heart.

The Word Incarnate he calls "omnium creaturarum Principium" and in this sense he explains the much disputed text Prov. 8: 22: "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work." "To the King of kings, Lord of all creation, Jesus Christ, who is eminent over humans and

angels" — to him royal honor is due. Usually, however, Anthony strikes a minor key as he envisages his King with the Crown of Thorns.

The mystery of the Holy Name was but a variation of Anthony's love for the Infant Savior warranted by unbroken Tradition: "And his name was called Jesus." In the vein of St. Bernard, Anthony exults over this "sweet name, delectable name, comfort of sinners, name of blessed hope." Thomas of Celano relates, that "over the honey and honeycomb of Jesus, the sweet voice spoke out to all people."

In his colorful direct way St. Anthony anticipated the profound discussions on the Mystical Body of Christ. Like the tribes of Israel, he urges, the faithful should say to their King: "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (2 Kings 5: 1). "You are our flesh and brother, and therefore you will be compassionate and sympathize with the misery of your brothers." As the bees swarm about their queen and die with her, even so must Christians swarm about Christ the Head, witness his death and die with him. The Holy Eucharist is the center in this Mystic Union. Here "we have an advocate with the Father" (1John 2: 1).

The Passion of Christ occupied a foremost place in early Franciscan Theology and piety. Springing from the hills of Umbria at the feet of Blessed Francis the streamlets of this devotion were gathered by Anthony and later burst forth into a mighty stream — namely Bonaventure's two classics, the *Lignum Vitae* and *Vitis Mystica*. To Anthony the Five Wounds are the "five cities in the land of Egypt, speaking the language of Chanaan," as Isaias had foretold (19: 18). The sacred Wound in the Savior's side is the City of the Sun (Is. 19: 18); it is "the cleft in the rock" whither the soul flees like the bird from the claws of the eagle. It is the gate of heaven and of love divine. Here we strike the root of the "cult of the Sacred Heart." For if the blood from the side of a dove, as St. Anthony had read in natural history, has the power to heal blindness, should not the Blood from our Savior's side heal the blindness of the human race?

I often wonder if, with all our modern biblical apparatus and physical equipment, we are really better off than was Anthony at Bologna with only one book before him — the *venerabilis Vulgata*? The comparison is not fair. St. Anthony had more — a memory which was a veritable storehouse of "the new and the old"; a mind that dared to reach forth into the things "hidden from eternity in God"; a heart that in a grand synthesis grasped "the breadth and length and height and depth" of the love of Him Who said: "You have one teacher, Christ."

Bonaventure put it all in a nutshell: "As is the Incarnate Word, so the inspired word."

To the Holy Spirit our Doctor accords the role of creative, energizing and vitalizing power in the work of salvation and sanctification. With clear vision and firm grasp he points out the salient features of the entire tract "De Gratia," while stepping lightly over the crevices that before and after him entangled theological schools in endless controversies. The Spirit, he says on Pentecost, appears in tongues of fire, "burns, cleanses, warms and illuminates." St. Bonaventure graphically develops this thought in the fifth book of his immortal "Breviloquium." The Holy Spirit, St. Anthony claims, alone fills the soul which the whole world is unable to fill. And mark this amazingly apt illustration of the operation of the Spirit in the contrite heart. "In the contrite heart, the grace of the Holy Spirit is joined to the soul, remorseful for its sins, like a bridegroom to a bride; from such a union is born an heir to eternal life."

Filial affection blended with chivalrous gallantry inspires his pen when he writes of the glorious Virgin Mary. The most fragrant flowers, the choicest images and figures, the strongest superlatives are laid reverently at her altar. He picks his texts for her five main festivities from the exquisitely beautiful passage in Ecclesiasticus: the twelve precious stones in the diadem of the high priest are the twelve stars in the crown of the glorious Virgin. At her Nativity she is hailed as "the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full" (Eccl. 50: 6). At the Annunciation the Archangel greets her as the sun that shines "in the temple of God" (50: 7). At the Nativity of our Lord Mary appears "as the flower of roses in the days of the spring, as the lilies that are on the brink of the waters" (50: 8). At her Purification she enters the temple "as the sweet smelling frankincense in the time of summer" (50: 8). And lastly, at her Assumption she enters into her glory "as a massy vessel of gold, adorned with every precious stone" (50: 10).

If I may presume to synthesize the theology of Anthony after his own form and fashion, I would say that he placed Scriptures in view of all; he explained page after page, story after story as a mother would explain a picture book to her children. His aim was to engender and foster "spirit and life" in God's children. To this end he set up in the temples of human hearts the amiable figure of the Savior in all the charm of his lovable "benignitas et humanitas" (Tit. 3: 4). And next to

Him he placed the figure of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, in a raiment of grace and beauty celestial.

In the realm of mystical theology Anthony easily attains the authority of a master. His doctrine is sound, solid, and cannot but fascinate the soul aspiring to perfection. His intuitions are astounding; his diction precise. As it behooves a son of St. Francis, he favors the affective method in meditation and insists on the primacy of the will in the higher forms of prayer. There is evidence that Anthony's teachings influenced the mystical writings of Bonaventure. It is remarkable too that, centuries before St. John of the Cross wrote his "Dark Night of the Soul," St. Anthony — as the first among all known writers — dealt with this theme in a clear-cut, authoritative manner. There could be no other source available than his own spiritual experiences. True to his pattern, he accentuates human liberty in such divine manifestations, on the one hand, while, on the other, he stresses their real purpose as a means to a greater and more ardent love of God. As we conclude this study, the words of Abbot Thomas Galla come to mind: "He was a burning and shining lamp" (John 5: 35).

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St. Anthony the Preacher

Ignatius Smith, OP*

The thirteenth century was a century of arresting paradoxes. Stupendous learning stood side by side with pitiable illiteracy. Heroic sanctity flourished by the side of moral degradation. A high state of democracy prevailed in the midst of feudalistic serfdom and tyrannical monarchy. Marvelous pulpit eloquence could be found in the midst of deplorable preaching mediocrity. As a matter of fact in no area of life was contrast so evident as in that devoted to the presentation of the word of God. Papal documents and popular protest indicate that the art of preaching had fallen, generally, into disrepute.

At the same time appeared some of the most outstanding preachers in Christian history. And rivalling the most brilliant of thirteenth century pulpit orators is St. Anthony of Padua. This statement will surprise many who are familiar with many other heroic and miraculous accomplishments of St. Anthony but who have been unaware of his qualifications as a preacher. As a matter of historical record the miracle worker of Padua was so illustrious in his preaching that his contemporaries thought this ministry surpassed all his other activities.

St. Anthony was well equipped by nature, by training, by industry and by God's special grace for the all important work of preaching. He had a loud, clear voice that served him well when speaking outdoors to audiences of thirty thousand persons. He had a winning countenance and an ingratiating manner that drew even unsympathetic people into his audiences. He was gifted with a phenomenal memory, a remarkable power of synthesis and a very vivid creative imagination. All of these help to explain the popularity of St. Anthony, his ready familiarity with the Scriptures and the Fathers and his sound originality in sermon construction.

The academic background of St. Anthony reveals a providential preparation for extraordinary pulpit work. Born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1195, his education for the ministry was directed by the Canons Regular of St. Augustine for about eight years, first at Lisbon and then at Coimbra. Under the direction of teachers who most probably were trained at Paris, Anthony acquired unusual mastery of the Scriptures, the Fathers and many other of the contemporary arts and physical sciences. He was regarded by his professors as possessing great intelligence, remarkable wisdom, expertness in science and an extraordinary thirst for learning.

St. Anthony received the Franciscan habit in 1220 at the age of twenty-five. His subsequent missionary search for martyrdom in Morocco merely deepened his apostolic zeal, and his humble attempt to conceal his unusual learning was not long successful. His residence at Forli with the lay brothers gave him plentiful opportunity to freshen his wisdom, and his appointment as first teacher of the Friars Minor by St. Francis gave him occasion to widen the horizon of his ecclesiastical learning. Intellectually he was magnificently prepared for a career of superb preaching.

St. Anthony was ceaseless in his cultivation of those external and internal qualities without which preaching is unproductive. I refer to his successful efforts to acquire oratorical perfection, his long hours of careful preparation of sermon outlines, his zeal for the sovereignty of Catholic truth and morality and his courage in condemning popular error and vices. All of these qualities were acquired through and fortified by long hours of solitude, prayer and study.

To the natural ability, the academic training and the sterling industry of Anthony, God added special help for and approval of his preaching. At Bourges, where, from a cliff Anthony was preaching to 30,000 persons gathered below him, the audience was kept dry while a deluge of rain fell all around. At Rimini a hostile group of heretics, to whom the eloquent Anthony was preaching, deliberately and insult-

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ingly left him. He turned toward the sea, continuing to preach. There gathered, bobbing on the waves, a multitude of fishes as an audience, and so miraculous was the phenomenon that the heretics returned to listen. At Rome, on Easter Sunday, Anthony preached to a polyglot audience and the miracle of the first Pentecost was repeated when Greeks, Latins, Slavs, French, English and Germans all heard him in their own tongues. At Verona, preaching at the funeral of a renegade usurious Catholic and introducing the thought that where a person's treasure is there is his heart, he directed the friends and relatives to search the money chest of the deceased. They did so and found the miser's heart.

The audiences whom Anthony addressed would test the power of any preacher. In numbers they made the largest churches too small. Then the largest public squares became too crowded, and Anthony preached in meadows and on hillsides. On the Iberian Peninsula, in Italy and in France, the announcement that he was to preach evoked the same response. Shops were closed, courts of law suspended their sessions, soldiers were relieved of service, the nobility left their games and sports, secular clergy, members of religious orders, the cathedral chapter, Bishops and Archbishops all flocked to hear Anthony. Often the laity gathered the evening before and waited all during the night to hear him in the morning.

Heretics formed no small part of the audiences that Anthony addressed. They heckled him and he disputed publicly with them. He attacked their errors indirectly as well as explicitly and directly. They continued to come and to be converted. Sinners heard their immorality excoriated with biting invective but they continued to seek out Anthony and to be won to God. A gorgeous golden swath he cut in the fields of the Albigenses, the Cathari and the Paterini. Though most of his preaching was done at Padua, he also addressed great audiences throughout Italy and France. Everywhere, mixed audiences gathered in great crowds. Saints and sinners, both sides of warring factions, clergy and laity, believers and heretics, nobles and peasants, rich and poor, subjects and rulers came to hear the truth from this gentle but implacable, eloquent man of God.

The sermons of Anthony must have averaged each about two hours in length. We are fortunate that many of his authentic sermons have been preserved for us. Certainly genuine are the *Sermones Dominicales, Sermones in Solemnitatibus seu Sanctorales* and *Sermones in honorem et laudem Beatissimae Mariae Virginis*. Most of the sermons as they have come down to us are really complete outlines upon which the preacher elaborated at length. It seems that the *Dominicales* were delivered at Padua and that most of the authentic sermons were compiled at the insistence of the Lord Bishop of Ostia.

The general qualities of these *Sermones* reflect the character of St. Anthony and the nature of the audiences of that day. (1) They are dominated by a breadth of treatment that would make them interesting to every class of his varied audiences. (2) They reflect a devotion to true originality and sound novelty. (3) They are consonant with traditional preaching in that there is no segregation of dogmatic, moral, pastoral, mystical, apologetic or polemic theology. (4) They end on a sustained note of hope.

The breadth of treatment in each sermon is explained by St. Anthony's use of Sacred Scripture of which he is a master. He quotes with a facility that reveals a unique power of correlation and he explains with a keenness that betrays a dazzling knowledge.

Akin to this comprehension is St. Anthony's evaluation of true originality and sound novelty. Only a man of profound learning would dare to be as original as he deliberately proposed to be. In the Prologue of his Sunday Sermons (*Dominicales)* he states that the audiences of his day will neither read nor listen to a writer or speaker unless he uses polished language and has a novel approach. Therefore he plans to insert a prologue to each Gospel containing etymology and a digest of contemporary physics and biology with their respective meaning for moral life and Catholic belief. He proposes to use the arts and sciences as a means of capturing the attention of his hearers and leading them to God. He will make every sermon on each Sunday gospel like a four wheeled chariot; he will place in holy coalition the Sunday gospel, the Sunday epistle, the Introit of the Sunday Mass and the scriptural lessons of the Sunday Office. This was an ingenious innovation and the Saint carries out this concordance with remarkable success.

With such complex audiences of such different beliefs and of such different social, spiritual, mental and moral levels, his variety of presentation and his power of integration made his sermons of interest to all. In the successful accomplishment of this task his familiarity with the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, the anagogic and the accommodated senses of Scripture gives him solid unity and charming variety. His sermons become not only a biblical concordance and a

manual of exegesis but a handbook of mystical theology as well.

In his attack both on sin and the heretical justification of sin, St. Anthony usually proceeds by stating and showing the beauties of Catholic moral living and then flaying mercilessly the violation of the moral code given by Jesus to His Church. While hating sin he shows tender love for sinners. From all he demands repentance and to all he emphasizes the mercy of God and the reasonableness of hope.

Anthony was on God's side in terrific competition with Albigenses, Cathari and Paterini for human souls, unity of the Church, the suppression of war and the betterment of society. The heretics, in a day when Catholic preaching was not generally excellent, adopted preaching as their weapon and used it well. St. Anthony took back the traditional sword of the Church and turned it with supernatural power against its enemies. He was determined that no truth revealed by God should be neglected or denied; humankind needed all of them. He was determined that divine commands with all their obligations should be known and observed by all; humankind needed all of them. He was determined that the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice should be realized by all. He was determined that heresy with its immorality and social disorganization should not triumph over the Kingdom of God..

Aside from Scripture, the arts and the natural sciences already mentioned, St. Anthony uses the teaching of the Fathers extensively. These seem to appeal to him in the following order of importance,—Augustine, Bernard, Gregory, Jerome, Isadore, Ambrose, Origen, Bede, John Damascene, Rabannus Maurus and Cassiodorus. He is an expert in philosophy of the Augustinist tradition and uses it abundantly, especially in preaching on human origins, human nature and the human soul.

The truths most frequently preached by St. Anthony reveal the virulence of the heresies he attacked. He emphasizes the Unity of God against that Manichean dualism revived by the Cathari and the Paterini. Against the Waldenses, Cathari, Paterini and Albigenses he spoke most frequently about the Divinity of Christ, Redemption by Jesus, the real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, free will, the rights and duty of authority, civil and religious, the sovereignty of justice and the social purpose of wealth. His sermons reveal also his favorite devotions in which he sought to interest the people. They were devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus and devotion to the Sacred Blood of Christ. The popular vices against which he most frequently preached were hatred, enmity, luxury, greed and tyranny.

One is not surprised to find scattered throughout Anthony's sermons many practical and inspiring instructions to preachers, all of them of value today. He warns that preaching must be right in the sense that both the words and the example of the preacher should be a sun of light and life to those to whom he preaches. The life of the preacher should not belie his words because the authority of his message is nullified when his voice is not aided by his deeds. Preaching must be solid and not given over to mere words that are sarcastic, abusive or "ornate." Words must move to sorrow for sin, to contrition of heart and to purposes of amendment. The preacher must be courageous in attacking every impediment and obstacle to virtuous living. The preacher must be patient. He should find and manifest joy in his work. He should be honest in preaching the entire word and will of God, keep in mind the needs of the audience and neglect no truth or law that should be preached. The preacher should be poor, as Christ was poor. He must live in the presence of God and realize that his greatest reward is the eternal happiness he secures for himself and for his hearers. He must be helpful and inspire hope and in all things, while sincere, be sweet and affable. Above all he must be a workman of God, of virtuous life, of constant and industrious preparation and trained in sacred eloquence.

There is neither time nor need to stress the God-given results of St. Anthony's preaching. The titles with which he has been addressed are a recognition of his success. He is the "Hammer of Heretics." He is the "Ark of the Covenant." By the designation of Pope Pius XII he is a Doctor of the Church with the special title *Doctor Evangelicus* because of his brilliant preaching services to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He influenced a long line of successful Franciscan preachers. He impressed St. Francis. He fascinated Pope Gregory. He made heresy ridiculous to hundreds of thousands of converts. Everywhere he preached, confessionals were crowded, wars were declared off, peace and concord were restored, usury was eradicated, justice was respected, restitution was made, brotherly love and respect were deepened, God was acknowledged as Sovereign Lord.

St. Anthony was canonized by Gregory IX in 1232, the year after his death. Thirty-two years later his remains were transferred from

Vercelli to Padua. All his flesh had turned to dust except his tongue, which was still fresh and red. St. Bonaventure, then Minister General, present at this ceremony and a witness to the miracle cried out: "0 Blessed Tongue, which always didst bless the Lord and caused others also to bless Him, now it is evident how highly thou wert esteemed by God."

As Pius XI said of St. Anthony, he sought not popular favor or consideration of rich and prominent persons or the empty applause of humans. He sought and received the high esteem of God and of God's Church. He has earned also the gratitude of all who prize highly the mission of the pulpit today for Christ, our Divine Model.

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St. Anthony and the People

Gerald G. Walsh, SJ*

Two facts strike a historian in connection with St. Anthony of Padua. The first is that he won an immediate and permanent place in the hearts of the *people* of Christendom. The second is that he won a no less immediate and permanent place in the special esteem of the *Roman Pontiffs*.

Anthony was hardly dead before both the people and Pope insisted on declaring him a saint. He died on June 13, 1231. On May 30, 1232, he was canonized. And now in our own day, he has been declared a Doctor of the Church.

Is there, perhaps, some direct connection between the popular appeal and Papal approval? Is it possible that it is precisely because St. Anthony was so beloved by the people that he has been declared a Doctor of the Church?

If the answer to that question is Yes, it suggests a further and very important conclusion. It means that the Popes both of the thirteenth century and of our own day have been trying to tell the Church and the world that in times of crisis the Christian apostolate must take a rather special form.

It is the character of St. Anthony's apostolate that makes him significant today. St. Anthony lived his meteoric career from 1195 to 1231

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in an age that was very like our own, an age of tremendous unrest — social, economic, political, moral, intellectual, spiritual. Everywhere on the surface of a hitherto settled world great chasms of material desires, intellectual curiosity and spiritual aspiration suddenly opened; and those chasms clamored to be filled. Then, as now, the choice lay between material pleasures, mental aberrations and morbid illusions on the one hand and, on the other, social and economic satisfactions, the unfolding of new truths and the stirring of spiritual ideals. Medieval leaders of the established order were puzzled. While they hesitated, revolutionists rushed in — revolutionists who wanted to fill the chasms with the ruins of the existing world, revolutionists who wanted to pull down and bury the achievements of the past for the sake of an imaginary world of tomorrow, revolutionists who wanted the immediate annihilation of the whole of that feudal system which — for all its shortcomings — had held the world together after the cataclysm of the Fall of Rome.

It is the law of human history — tragic in appearance but salutary in substance — that human needs are always ahead of the means of satisfaction, human doubts always ahead of the discovery of new truths, human ideals always ahead of the power to realize them. In the age of St. Anthony human demand for more goods, more freedom from feudalism, more political rights, more educational opportunities, more scientific discoveries, more sacramental life, more religious experience and spiritual idealism were far ahead of the means of supply. Social, economic and political life had settled down into rigid forms. Leadership in society had fallen more and more to soldiers and lawyers whose business was to defend the *status quo* with arms or to justify it with frozen formulae.

When men of brilliant intellect, restless energy or radical idealism arose, men like Abelard of Paris or Arnold of Brescia or Joachim of Flora, they were opposed as heretics. And indeed they were, in part, heretical. Nevertheless, in the brain of Abelard were the seeds of a Scholastic movement that would reach its autumn richness in Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus; in the heart of Arnold of Brescia were the democratic aspirations that would take ultimate form in the Four Freedoms; in the apocalyptic visions of Joachim of Flora was the dream of a world in which love would take its rightful place along with power and wisdom, in which saints would have a say in the councils of soldiers and statesmen, in which religion would play a part with secular

civilization and culture, in which human souls would be no more forgotten than their minds and bodies.

To understand the immense appeal which St. Anthony made on the simple people of Christendom in the early years of the thirteenth century we must remember the ferment in the hearts and hopes of those simple folk. The early legends of St. Anthony's life have dramatized that appeal by spelling it out in terms of miracles, many of which —at this date — are difficult for a critical historian to verify. But one marvel of St. Anthony's life is more certainly verifiable — the marvel of a voice that spoke in that age with the passion of a revolutionist, the precision of a dogmatic theologian and the sober responsibility of a practical reformer. Of course, the deepest secret of Anthony's appeal was that his passion was the passion of love, not the passion of hate. He was not moved with hatred for institutions he wanted to destroy; he was led by love for the people whose lot he wanted to improve.

The historical fact of most significance in the first third of the thirteenth century is that the lot of the people needed to be improved. If one is to find a single word for the people's need it would be Christian democracy; that is, such a vindication of human dignity as would forget neither humans' moral duty nor their immortal destiny. Unfortunately, the vindication of human dignity — then as now — was too often in the hands of those who cared nothing for either moral duty or immortal destiny. Still the clamor for freedom was in the air; and to understand St. Anthony's apostolate we must realize the nature of the people's need.

The demand for Christian democracy had begun at the end of the Dark Ages as little more than a muffled sob and sigh. At the beginning of the eleventh century Europe was alarmingly feudalized. The sons of soldiers who had played a part in establishing order after the Fall of Rome settled down to enjoy the fruits of their fathers' efforts. They wanted the people to be their serfs, and they wanted the Church to collaborate in keeping the people down. They had so far succeeded that there were high prelates in the Church who had accepted a purely feudal conception of life. They lived in princely palaces, went out to hunt with vast retinues of retainers, sold spiritual favors for material gain and, in many cases, paid no attention to the canon of ecclesiastical celibacy.

Against this double menace to social and spiritual emancipation the people rose in revolt. The first organized rebellion was in Milan in

northern Italy. The people found a pious, learned, energetic priest to lead them. His name was Arialdo of Como. He was helped by a young subdeacon, Landolfo, an aristocrat by birth and a highly gifted speaker, but a radical incensed by the simony and other sins of baronial ecclesiastics. A band of people marched into the Cathedral and drove from their stalls the rich and married canons who were singing office. Arialdo and Landolfo were promptly excommunicated by local authority; but they appealed to the Pope in the name of the people. As a result, Pope Nicholas II sent a saint, Peter Damian, and an administrative genius, Anselm of Lucca, as papal legates to examine the situation. It was found to be shocking. The popular revolt led to ecclesiastical reform. The feudal archbishop repented and went on pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella. Later, the reformer Arialdo paid for his zeal by his life; but at least a breach had been made in the feudal oppression of the people and the feudal control of the Church.

The century between 1095, the year of the first Crusade, and 1195, the birth of St. Anthony, was a period of crisis. On the one hand, the need of baronial armies threatened to give a new life to feudalism; on the other hand, the absence of the barons in the Holy Land led to a new and non-feudal life in the walled cities of Europe. The reminder that battles were being fought for the sepulcher of our Divine Redeemer stirred a new religious fervor among the people. The hero of this new age was St. Bernard of Clairvaux. In many ways he may be called a pre-Franciscan. Not only is a great deal of Anthony's theology inspired by Bernard, but his preaching and apostolate are largely modeled on that of Bernard, who was never tired of insisting on the Christlike virtues of poverty and purity. Bernard also kept insisting that the rulers, both in the State and in the Church, have not merely the right to rule but, likewise, the responsibility to serve.

In the meantime, however, the cause of Christian democracy was menaced by heretical revolutionism. The abuse of wealth and power made it easy for the people to be seduced by the ideas that wealth and power are evils in themselves. Lay preachers who called themselves the "pure ones," the Cathari, began to spread Manichaean doctrines among the restless people of upper Italy and southern France. To exalt spiritual ideals they kept insisting that all material reality is evil. To foster interior life, they revolted against all that was exterior. In the name of liberty, they denied the role of law. In the name of equality, they preached social nihilism. In the name of fraternity, they demanded

the abolition of all order and authority.

Twenty years before Anthony was born, a merchant of Lyons named Peter Waldo made an immense appeal to the people. Peter literally sold what he had and gave to the poor. Then he began to preach that no one can serve both God and Mammon. In vain local decrees were issued declaring that no layman should dare to preach against the abuses in the Church. Peter wanted to be both a Catholic and a radical reformer. He appealed to the Pope. Alexander III made an excellent compromise. Peter might preach and still better practice the ideal of poverty, but as a layman he must not meddle in dogmatic matters beyond his competence.

The distinction was not always easy to make. The Waldenses, Peter's followers, often enough overstepped the frontier between social reform and religious heresy. Ten years before Anthony was born, the Waldenses as a body were excommunicated. They broke from the authority of the Church, and the Poor Men of Lyons went their irresponsible way.

This then was the problem of the Popes in the age of St. Anthony. Leadership must be found for the people who were clamoring for a richer social and religious life. They could find none to satisfy them but this or that heretical revolutionist. Fortunately, in the north of Lombardy, Pope Innocent III found a body of canons ready to renounce their riches and even to work for a living while preaching the Gospel. They called themselves the Lowly Ones, the *Umiliati.* Associated with them, like a second Order, was a body of laymen and laywomen, all of them ordinary workers, who were willing to live in religious community for the sake of the Christian apostolate. Still another branch of the *Umiliati* — somewhat like the later Franciscan Tertiaries — was made up of workers, men and women, who were married and lived in their own homes, but who followed a high ideal of Christian living. The three Orders were officially confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1201 when Anthony was a boy of six.

It was not long after this that Francesco Bernardone of Assisi fell in love with Lady Poverty. He heard the strange, strong voice: "Francis, do you not see My House in ruins; go and rebuild it." Still more clearly he heard addressed to himself the Gospel counsel: "Go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come follow me."

This was the kind of man that Pope Innocent needed to win the souls of simple people from the seductions of heretical revolution. Here

was a man poorer than the Poor Men of Lyons, purer than any of the *Cathari*, more in love with the people than any of the popular leaders; and, above all he was in love with Jesus Christ and His Church on earth.

In two marvelous cantos of the *Paradiso* Dante sings of St. Francis and St. Dominic — the one of them a flame of Seraphic love, the other a splendor of Cherubic truth. In a very real sense St. Anthony of Padua was a combination of St. Francis and St. Dominic. The period of his life which is most open to the scrutiny of critical history is the period from 1227 to his death in 1231. They were four critical years in the struggle between Christian democracy and secular feudalism. It was in these years that the Franciscan Tertiaries got their real start and made their indelible mark on the history of Western civilization.

In virtue of the Constitutions of the Order of Penance, men and women living in the world could volunteer to follow Franciscan ideals of justice, charity and peace in social life and penance, purity and poverty in private life. They set themselves against nearly all the corrupting currents of the age. They rejected the tyranny of extravagant fashions by modesty in dress and moderation in banqueting and balls. They rejected the tyranny of feudal barons and municipal factions by refusing to bear arms and to take oaths — arms and oaths were the very life blood of feudalism and city factions. The Tertiaries made a further attack on greed and discord by making their wills in good time. Thus dissensions among the heirs and unscrupulous confiscations by feudal lords were equally attacked.

Such Christian radicalism startled the barons and the commercial magnates in the cities. A typical crisis occurred in Faenza in 1227. The local faction leaders wanted the Tertiaries to join their brawls. The Tertiaries replied: "We are religious and we will no longer bind ourselves to your fortune by our oaths." Appeal was made to the Pope, and Honorius III gave this epoch-making reply: "The lords and magnates must be enemies of all virtues if they constrain to military service men who have renounced all glory in this world and aspire to nothing but a Christian life and the practice of penance."

This collaboration between the Pope and the people was continued by Gregory IX — the Pope who, as Cardinal Ugolino, had helped Francis draw up the Constitution of the Order of Penance. One of his first pontifical acts was to write to the Bishops of Italy denouncing the tyranny of feudal lords who, as the Pope said, like the Pharaohs of

ancient Egypt were oppressing the people of Israel. He renewed the right of the Tertiaries to be free from military obligations. In a letter to the Tertiaries he encouraged them in their pursuit of freedom. He insisted on their right to collect a common fund for the redemption from feudal obligations.

It was while this crisis was at its height that St. Anthony came to Padua in 1229. The chronicler of the time, Rolandino, makes this coming a matter of Paduan history. St. Anthony made an immediate appeal to the "little people," the "underprivileged," as we might say today. In St. Anthony Christianity suddenly took concrete, social shape as a radicalism born of love and fed on peace and charity.

This Christian radicalism had no quarrel with law and order, but only with tyranny and faction; it was not against social differences, but only against social injustice; it did not envy the rich, but rather pitied them. What is most important is that the Tertiaries lived under a law of their own making and that their lives were better than any secular law could ask for from its citizens.

One point of St. Anthony's apostolate which is singled out by the chronicler for special mention may seem relatively unimportant. The Saint pleaded that no one in Padua should be imprisoned for debt so long as he was willing to surrender what property he had to pay his creditors. This suggestion became Paduan law. It speaks loudly for the Christian humanitarianism of St. Anthony; but it also reveals a deep wound in thirteenth-century social life. The new prosperity in the cities was followed by a wave of luxurious extravagance and reckless spending. This in turn brought about an invasion of money lenders, who exploited the passions of the poor by offering loans and then charging 20 to 30% interest.

It is a little difficult to catch the echo of Anthony's passion from the sedate and highly artificial latin sermons that have come down to us. And yet even here the love of the Christian radical breaks through the surface of medieval schematism. On the first page of Locatelli's ponderous volume you may read the key words: "Love is wider than the ocean." Again and again the sins of greed and usury are attacked with a vigor that reminds one of the canto of Dante's *Inferno* where the lordly usurers with their family insignia are crouched up on the burning sand and trying to defend themselves vainly from the inexorable flakes of flame that fall like snow when no wind stirs. In the sermon for the third Sunday of Lent the voice of the Christian radical rises:

"Men who are burdened with wealth and position become a haunt of demons rather than a temple of God." On the third Sunday after Easter it is the overwealthy monasteries that feel the lash: "Greed like smoke has blackened the fair face of religious life." In the great Easter sermon the Saint enumerates the virtues of the genuine shepherd of souls. He insists not only on purity of life, eloquence of tongue, instancy in prayer, obedience to superiors, but also on compassion for the *poor*, solicitude for the *people* committed to their care.

One of the best known stories of St. Anthony is the sudden remark he made while preaching before Simon Sully, the Archbishop of Bourges. In the midst of an attack on sin, the saint turned towards the archbishop and said: "And that goes for you, you with the mitre there." And yet Archbishop Sully was something of a model among prelates. He was a good friend of Anthony and always remained his friend. The story is a proof both of the love with which St. Anthony spoke and also of the genuine freedom of speech which belongs to Christian radicalism born of love.

St. Anthony, then, was the apostle of freedom — freedom in its fullest sense; freedom from private passion, from greed, gluttony and lust by the practice of poverty, penance and purity; freedom from political passions by refusal to take part in bloodshed and party brawls; freedom from feudal oppression by claiming democratic rights in the name of justice, charity and peace. Such radicalism goes to the roots of all our human troubles, because the root freedom is freedom *from* ourselves for the sake of order, law and God. It is altogether different from freedom *for* ourselves so that we may be free from order, law and God.

A historian would be untrue to his task of analysis if he failed to add a warning to this lesson from St. Anthony's life. It is sometimes felt that if we in our day could recapture the spirit of Christian radicalism we could rid the world of the menace of hate.

I am not sure that the history of St. Anthony justifies this optimism. When one makes a cold calculation of the concrete effects of Anthony's marvelous apostolate in the name of Christian radicalism, one reaches the conclusion that not even saints can do more than scratch the surface of social problems. You will look in vain in all that Anthony ever wrote for the idea that a better world was just around the corner. Christian radicals know that there is no such thing in recorded human history as a completely successful social revolution. One has only to read the great sermon of that other Christian radical, Dante Alighieri,

to realize that not only Hell but even Purgatory and Heaven are paved with unrealized good intentions. Dante's *Inferno* written almost a century after St. Anthony's apostolate is a tragic confession of how little can be done in a short time. The world in the fourteenth century still seemed to Dante to be a dark wood, lightless and trackless, filled with the beasts of human passions. Pride, envy and avarice were still the flames that set all hearts on fire. In Dante's river of blood there are innumerable tyrants and in his flaming tombs prelates guilty of the feudal sin of simony.

Thus the final lesson of St. Anthony's life is that the war of radical Love and revolutionary Hate is as old as Hell and will go on from generation to generation. An angel with a flaming sword still stands before the gate of *Utopia*. As St. Anthony was fond of saying: "We have not here a lasting mansion."

BOOK REVIEW

Anthony of Padua: "Sermones" for the Easter Cycle. Translation with Introduction. Edited by George Marcil, OFM. The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY, 1994, xii-230 pp.

Anthony of Padua, the evangelical doctor, played an important role in the development of the Franciscan School in his time by his ministry as a preacher, professor and formator. Edward Coughlin, OFM, director of the Franciscan Institute, indicates in the preface that this work contains the first English translation of the *Sunday Sermons* of St. Anthony for the Easter season. This translation is preceded by an important introduction by Charles McCarron, OFM Cap., who gives the chronology of St. Anthony's life, situating his preaching within that of the Church and of the Order in the Middle Ages. He explains the origin, the function and the structure of the *Sermones* written to inspire preachers according to the pastoral vision elaborated by the fourth Lateran Council. The *Sermones* contain material which helped friars prepare sermons in keeping with a pastoral plan. They present a vision of the ministry of preaching and of evangelization such as existed in the first years of the Franciscan movement. The work of translation begun by Hugh Eller, OFM, has been completed by George Marcil, OFM, editor of the volume. A specialist in medieval Latin, Canisius Connors, OFM, served as advisor and reviewed the whole project. This book offers to the English-speaking world an excellent introduction to the life and work of Anthony of Padua.

Georges-A. Robert, OFM, Montreal.

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Saturday, October 21- Sunday, October 22
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Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy
EpCust	Letter to the Custodians
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful
2EpFid	Second Letter to 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 Peoples
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies
ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
LaudDei	Praises of God
LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
OffPass	Office of the Passion
OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB	Later Rule
RegNB	Earlier Rule
RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
Test	Testament
TestS	Testament written in Siena
UltVol	Last Will written for St. Clare
VPLaet	Dictate on True and Perfect Joy

Writings of Saint Clare

1LAg	First Letter to Agnes of Prague
2LAg	Second Letter to Agnes of Prague
3LAg	Third Letter to Agnes of Prague
4LAg	Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague
LEr	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
RCl	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCl	Blessing of Clare

Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
3Cel	Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
AP	Anonymous of Perugia
CL	Legend of Clare
CSD	Consideration of the Stigmata
Fior	Fioretti
JdV	Witness of Jacque de Vitry
LM	Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LMin	Minor Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LP	Legend of Perugia
L3S	Legend of the Three Companions
Proc	Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare
SC	Sacrum Commercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

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A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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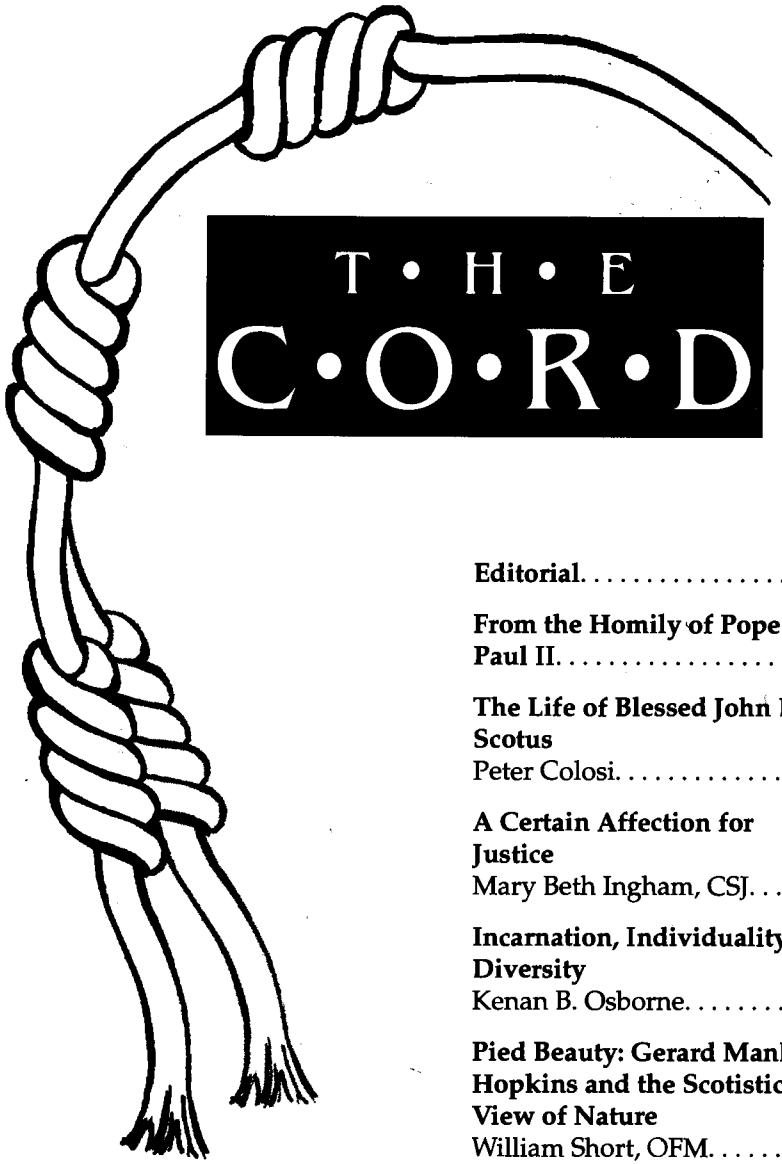

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

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To save unnecessary delay and expense, contributors are asked to observe the following directives:

1. MSS should be submitted, preferably on disk, or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced.
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
   Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
   (1Cor. 13:6).
   (RegNB 23:2).
   (2Cel 5:8).
   (4LAg 2:13).
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EDITORIAL

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, 1266-1308.

John Duns Scotus was born in Scotland c. 1266 and died in Cologne in 1308. He was one of the most outstanding of the medieval Scholastics. Charles Sanders Peirce, an American pragmatist, describes him as "one of the profoundest metaphysicians that ever lived."[1] Although his reputation fell into the shadows for several centuries because of the Church's official adoption of the theology of Thomas Aquinas, these past years have seen a resurgence of interest in both the philosophical and theological work of the "Subtle Doctor." His beatification on March 21, 1993, testifies to the Church's re-evaluation of his life and work.

Herbert Schneider, OFM, of the Cologne province, is a promoter of Scotus's cause. Writing in *Fraternitas*, January 1993, he claims that the thought of Scotus is very compatible with modern intellectual movements. Human "co-creativity," the value of each created person and thing, trust in the experience of existence, the process-nature of creatures' movement toward the fullness of being—all these Scotistic ideas have affinity with contemporary thought.

In spite of the great subtlety of his speculative work, Duns Scotus is nevertheless very pragmatic. In keeping with his Franciscan character, he lays stress on the affective and the practical in his theology. According to Philotheus Boehner, OFM, Scotus believed that the very purpose of theology was "to instruct us about and lead us to the highest 'praxis,' to Charity that is, the Love of God."[2]

In this issue of *The Cord* we are happy to feature our brother, Blessed John Duns Scotus. We offer the words with which Pope John Paul II

celebrated Scotus's beatification in 1993 as well as an overview of his life in the troubled society of 13th century Europe and England. We reflect on his particular contribution to the "Franciscan School" of philosophy and theology and to contemporary Christological understanding.

This latter is especially timely as we become more aware of how forcefully our Christology impacts our self-understanding and our grasp of the Incarnational event. We are pleased to be able to share with our readers the presentations made last January at the Redwood City Conference, co-sponsored by Region 6 of the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley.

Endnotes

[1]As quoted by Joseph Gallagher, "The now-blessed theologian behind the pejorative 'dunce.'" *The National Catholic Reporter* (26 Mar. 1993): 29.

[2]*The History of the Franciscan School, Part 3, Duns Scotus,* unpublished manuscript, St. Bonaventure University (St. Bonaventure, NY., 1945)123.

"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" (Letter of the Ministers General of the Four Franciscan Families, 1993).

From the Homily of Pope John Paul II during the beatification ceremonies of John Duns Scotus

March 21, 1993*

"We appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain"(2Cor. 6:1).... During this evocative liturgy...I shall have the joy of...declaring the recognition of the liturgical veneration of John Duns Scotus, a Franciscan.... Born in Scotland around 1265, John Duns Scotus was called "blessed" almost immediately after his death, which occurred in Cologne on November 8, 1308. In that diocese, as well as in the Dioceses of Edinburgh and Nola, and in the Seraphic Order, too, for centuries public veneration has been offered to him, which the church solemnly recognized on July 6, 1991, and confirms today....

I want to offer my greeting to the...whole large Franciscan family, inviting everyone to bless the name of the Lord whose glory shines forth in the teaching and holiness of lifeof Blessed John, minstrel of the Incarnate Word and defender of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

In our age, although it has a wealth of human, scientific and technological resources, but in which many have lost the sense of faith and lead a life distant from Christ and His Gospel, Blessed Duns Scotus presents himself not only with his sharp mind and extraordinary ability to penetrate the mystery of God, but also with the persuasive power of his holiness of life which for the church and the whole of humanity makes him a teacher of thought and life. His doctrine, which, as my predecessor Pope Paul VI said, "can yield shining arms for combatting and chasing away the dark clouds of atheism which casts its shadow upon our era," energetically builds up the Church, sustaining her in her urgent mission of the new evangelization of the peoples of the earth.

In particular for theologians, priests, pastors of souls, religious, and especially for the Franciscans, Blessed Duns Scotus is an example of fideltity to the revealed truth, of effective priestly ministry, of serious dialogue in the search for unity, he who, as John Gerson said, throughout his life was always motivated "not by the contentious singularity of winning, but by the humility of reaching an accord."

May his spirit and memory enlighten with the very light of Christ the trials and hopes of our society....

We are all called to holiness. In our lives we must create that dialogue of love and union with God which leads to true happiness and total fulfillment of the most intimate aspirations of the human heart.

The paths for following the Gospel call can be different according to the inexhaustible riches of supernatural grace. However, they have one goal: to reproduce the image of the Son of God in one's life.

Authentic spirituality is based on this elementary and decisive condition: express the Gospel message concretely, responding without hesitation to the Lord's saving activity....

John Duns Scotus reminds us that active love for one's brothers and sisters comes from seeking the truth and contemplating it in the silence of prayer and in the flawless witness of total adherence to the Lord's will.

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*From *Con queste parole*, "Authentic Witnesses of the Gospel," *The Pope Speaks* 38 (July/Aug. 1993): 245-248.

The Cord, 45.3 (1995)

The Life of Blessed John Duns Scotus

by Peter Colosi

Introduction

There is not very much known about the details of the life of Blessed John Duns Scotus and much of what is known is often disputed. Nonetheless, modern research techniques have been valuable in ascertaining many facts concerning Scotus's birthplace as well as chronological information about his life. We will attempt to present the facts of his life which are known, beginning with his date and place of birth.

Scotus's Birthplace

According to his name, he would have been born in the country of Scotland in the town of Duns, most likely in 1265. This date is based on information concerning his entrance into the Order and his ordination to the priesthood.[1]

In the town of Duns there is an immemorial tradition that Scotus was born there as evidenced by the following account of Dr. Robert Bowmaker, the Protestant pastor of that town, published in 1792:

> Nothing is more certain, than that the family, of which this extraordinary man was a branch, were heritors of the parish of Dunse and continued to be proprietors of that estate which now belongs to Mr. Christie, till after the beginning of the present century, called them in all ancient writings Duns' half of Grueldykes. These lands are adjoining to the town of Dunse. The father of J. Duns Scotus had been a younger brother of the

family of Grueldykes, and resided in the town of Dunse. The site of the house where he was born is still well known, and has been in use, generation after generation, to be pointed out to the young people by their parents, as the birthplace of so great and learned a man.[3]

The Franciscans in Scotland

Before turning directly to the life of Scotus, let us look very briefly at some of the developments of the Franciscan Order in Scotland. The Friars Minor went into Scotland in 1231, and in 1233 Elias, who was Minister General at the time, made Scotland a separate province. However, in 1239, after the fall of Elias, the Scottish province was suppressed and its convents given over to the custody of New Castle, England. A few years later, in 1260 and then again in 1278, the Scottish Friars attempted to regain independence; yet, even with papal support, they were unable to convince the general chapter to give it to them. And so the Scottish Friars took the law into their own hands and elected Elias Duns, the uncle of John Duns Scotus, to be their Vicar General. In 1279 the Pope addressed a letter to the "Provincial Minister of the Friars Minor in Scotland." In 1269, a compromise was made in which the Scottish houses were kept officially a part of the English province, yet were independent of the custos of New Castle. Finally, in 1329, the Scottish houses became entirely separate from England as an autonomous vicariate.[4]

The Life of Duns Scotus

Sometime in 1278-79, Fr. Elias Duns brought his young nephew to the Franciscan monastery in Dumfries, and from 1280-1291, John Duns Scotus studied in preparation for the priesthood and was ordained on March 17, 1291.[5] These dates are based on the prescriptions of the Church and the Order for priestly preparation. Between 1291 and 1293 Scotus did his university studies in Scotland and England. Then, from 1293-1297, in Paris, Scotus studied under the masters Gonsalvus of Spain and James of Carceto or Quarcheto. From 1297-1300 he successfully lectured on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at Cambridge, and these lectures aroused great interest at the university. From 1300-1301 he lectured on the *Sentences*, this time at Oxford.[6]

On July 26, 1300, Fr. Hugh of Hartlepool, Minister Provincial of England, presented twenty-two Friars Minor from the monastery at Oxford to receive the faculty of hearing confessions. In the list of those names Scotus's is present.[7] These names were presented to the bishop of Lincoln, John Dalberby, who did not give Scotus faculties to hear confession.[8]

In the General Chapter of 1302, at the recommendation of the Minister Provincial of England, Scotus was assigned to teach at the University of Paris. Thus, at the end of 1302 he interrupted his lectures on the *Sentences* at Oxford and went to Paris. There he began his lectures commenting on the fourth book of the *Sentences*.

Sometime between June 25-28, 1303, he was forced to leave the University of Paris because he refused to sign a petition of Philip the Fair, King of France, against Pope Boniface VIII. Philip the Fair was striving to get popular opinion in France on his side and against the Pope. His efforts from March to the end of June 1303 resulted in his gaining the support of the nobility, the high clergy, the University of Paris and the chapter of Notre Dame.[9] Then on June 24 there was an anti-papal demonstration in the gardens of the Louvre, in which the mendicant friars took part. The speakers at this event were Bertold of St. Denys, the Bishop of Orleans, two Friars Preacher and two Friars Minor.[10] On June 25 the convent of Dominicans in Paris gave their support to the King, and on the 26th each Friar Minor was individually questioned as to his position.[11]

This inquisition resulted in various lists of those who were for and those who were against the king. The first list contained the names of 68 Friars Minor who supported the king; these were mostly French. The second was a list of 87 Friars Minor who opposed the king. And the third was the final and official list of those who approved of the king's appeal for a general council and a true pope in place of Boniface VIII. Scotus's name can be found on the second of these lists, which are preserved in Paris. Those on the second list were to leave France within three days.[12]

On August 15, 1303, Boniface responded to these actions of the King by suspending the right of the University of Paris to grant degrees in theology and canon and civil law.[13] On April 18, 1304, Pope Benedict XI revoked the decree which deprived the University of Paris of its right to grant academic degrees. Scotus returned to Paris sometime after that date.[14] From the time he left Paris to the time he returned, he was at Oxford. Then, on November 18, 1304 Gonsalvus of Spain, the Minister General of the Order, sent a letter to the Minister Provincial of France, presenting Scotus as a candidate for the doctoral degree. The following is a section of that letter which expresses some of the traits of Scotus:

In reference to the promotion of Fr. Gilles de Ligny,

> about whom I have been informed by your letters, we ought, as the custom is, to make provision for another similar presentation. Since, according to the statutes of the Order and the statutes of your convent, the Bachelor to be presented this time should belong to some province other than the province of France, I assign to you Fr. John Scotus—of whose laudable life, excellent knowledge and most subtle ability and his other remarkable qualities I am fully informed, partly from long experience and partly from report which has been spread everywhere—to be presented primarily and in the regular course after the said Fr. Gilles.[15]

In 1305 Scotus obtained the degree of Doctor. In 1306 and 1307 Scotus acted as *magister regens* at Paris.

There is some record of certain disputations in which Scotus was involved. For example, a *questio magistralis* preserves a disputation between Scotus and a Dominican by the name of Guillaume Pierre Godin. There is also evidence of serious controversies between Scotus and Hervé Nédellac. And finally, there is a Quodlibet of Jean de Pouilly of 1308 giving evidence that Scotus "roused great animosity" by his defense of the Immaculate Conception.[16]

Scotus and the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

It is understandable that this last dispute raised great animosity when one considers the tradition of Catholic thinkers who held the opposite view; yet it shows at the same time the great subtleties of Scotus's mind in his ability to perceive this truth about the Blessed Mother. There were two trends developing in the Church with respect to the teaching on the Immaculate Conception of Mary. One was a growing desire in the hearts of all the faithful to attribute to Mary the greatest possible holiness. Many expressions of this strong intuition had sprung up. In the Council of Ephesus in 431 Mary was proclaimed to be the Mother of God, thus emphasizing her holiness. By the year 700 there was already a feast celebrating Mary's Conception, though not specifically as immaculate; and in the 8th century her flawless and immense holiness was revered throughout the Byzantine world. This feast reached England around the year 1050, was repressed for awhile and revived about 1125. In 1099 St. Anselm had said that her purity was so great that none greater under God could be conceived.

The other development in the Church with respect to this doctrine was related to the thought of the great teachers. These men believed in the holiness of the Mother of God, but because they could not

see how to reconcile the concept of the Immaculate Conception with the Pauline doctrine of the universal redemption of humankind by Christ (1 Tim. 4:10), all of them denied that Mary was immaculately conceived. St. Anselm, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent and St. Thomas Aquinas are among those who held that Mary was not immaculately conceived, yet also among those who revered her immense holiness.[17] St. Thomas's position was that if Mary had been immaculately conceived, this would have detracted from the dignity of Christ as the Savior of all humankind because she would not have needed the redemption that he brought. Nonetheless, these great theologians, because of their honor of and respect for Mary, held that original sin touched her for only a very short time and she was cleansed from it before her birth.

Scotus was able to see that in reality there is no contradiction between the two doctrines, namely, the universal redemption of humankind by Christ and the Immaculate Conception of Christ's mother. He showed that if Mary was indeed preserved from original sin, this would not take away her dependence on the redemption of Christ; rather, such preservation would actually need more of His redemptive work than the act of freeing human beings from original sin. We will not attempt to present all his arguments here, but it is important for understanding Scotus to see the subtle character of his mind which was capable of touching a seeming contradiction lightly and perceiving the truth which lay within it.

After this work of Scotus, the way was cleared for the acceptance of this doctrine, and in 1854 Pope Pius IX declared in the encyclical letter *Ineffabilis Deus* that "the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin in the first instant of her Conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, savior of the human race, has been revealed by God and must, therefore, firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful."[18]

The End of His Life

In 1307 Scotus was transferred to Cologne to teach as *lector principalis*. Cologne did not get a university until the year 1389, but the Franciscans had a school there which was flourishing, and Scotus taught at that school.[19] There has been some discussion, with good grounds, that Scotus left Paris for Cologne rather suddenly. It has been conjectured that Gonsalvo had him sent to Cologne to put him out of danger and to ease the tension caused by his presence in Paris. Recall

that he had already been banished once for not obeying the king. He had also been accused of heresy by the Dominicans, and was somehow involved with the king's opposition to the Templars.[20]

On November 8, 1308, Duns Scotus died in Cologne and was buried there in a Franciscan Church.

Endnotes

[1] Charles Balic "The Life and Works of John Duns Scotus," *John Duns Scotus, 1265-1965* , vol. 3 of *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965) 8.

[3] Robert Bowmaker, "Parish of Dunse (County of Berwick) by the Rev. Dr. Robert Bowmaker," *The Statistical Account of Scotland Drawn up from the Communications of the Ministers of the Different Parishes* by Johns Sinclair, 390, cited by Balic 5.

[4] John R.H. Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988) 175.

[5] Ephrem Longpré, OFM, "L'ordination sacerdotale du Bx. Jean Duns Scot," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 22 (1929): 54.

[6] Balic 8-13.

[7] A.G. Little, *Franciscan Papers, Lists, and Documents* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943) 235.

[8] Edward Hutton, *The Franciscans in England, 1224-1538* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926)152.

[9] A.G. Little, "Chronological Notes on the Life of Duns Scotus," *The English Historical Review* (1932): 575.

[10] Little, "Notes" 575.

[11] Little, "Notes" 575.

[12] Little, "Notes" 575-76.

[13] Little, " Notes" 577.

[14] Little , "Notes" 577.

[15] Little, " Notes" 577.

[16] Little, " Notes" 581.

[17] Berard Vogt, *Duns Scotus, Defender of the Immaculate Conception: A Historical Dogmatic Study* (Paterson, New Jersey: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1955) 1-11 gives a brief overview of theological opinion before Scotus.

[18] Cited in W. Ubachs, "Immaculate Conception," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967. The above information on the history of the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is based on this article.

[19] Moorman 139.

[20] Little, "Notes" 581-82.

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A Certain Affection for Justice

The here and now of praxis: human freedom and acts of justice

Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ

I. Introduction

Duns Scotus's commitment to the importance of the Incarnation and to the primacy of Christ appears clearly when he talks about human freedom and acts of justice. Scotus has a "this world" attitude which shines through his texts. He admires the intricacy of reality and affirms the value of each individual. His thought inspired the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. For Scotus, the kingdom is truly here—even though we cannot see it yet—the future is now, in germ, awaiting our acknowledgement of its presence: our free response to the gifts of God around us. In this article I discuss Scotus's thought in terms of its moral significance for us today. By this I mean the aspects of his moral philosophy which contribute to a contemporary understanding of our place in the world and the ways in which we might act to bring about the Reign of God. This discussion involves an awareness of the present moment and what it calls forth in us, the realization of the importance of human freedom for our response, and the human attraction to justice in the form of right relationships.

II. The present moment: a here and now of praxis

As we look around us we see a world spinning out of control.

Even Bette Midler's popular song "From a Distance" places God pretty far away—as if even God doesn't want to get too close to what's really going on here. Descartes's *clock-maker* image is an attractive one for believers today. It is just too difficult to reconcile the infinite goodness of God with the present chaos. But as Christians, and especially within the Franciscan tradition, we must acknowledge both the tragedy of today and the intimate presence of God: a God who must spend a good deal of time weeping with those who suffer and who long for the Kingdom to be revealed in all its fullness.

Politically, our world is in fragments. Eastern Europe struggles after the breakdown of the communist society. Ethnic rivalries in former Yugoslavia horrify us with inhuman actions. The movement of peoples throughout Europe provokes the response of Right Wing Nationalism, and we are all reminded of Nazi Germany. But the horrors are not limited to Europe. In Africa we have witnessed events in Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia. Glimmers of hope shine forth in South Africa, but these glimmers are, unfortunately, the exceptions rather than the rule. The international community is unable (perhaps unwilling) to enter conflict-ridden situations and normal citizens say, as did the marvelous character in the film *Grand Canyon*, "this is not the way things are supposed to be."

Not the way things are meant to be. How do we know this? We know it deep in our hearts. We see the moral unravelling around us, and we know that the society in which we live is deeply wounded. Children should not be in schools where they fear daily for their lives. How can any real education take place in an environment of fear? Citizens should not fear a system of justice "stacked against them." When the fundamental bond of trust disappears from a society, the ultimate disintegration of that society cannot be far behind.

The last ten years have changed the way we look at the world around us. The old, tried and true, cold war ideological balance is gone. We must admit, there was security in knowing who the enemy was: we were the *good guys*, they were the *bad guys*. There is no longer an "evil communist empire" against which we can raise our so-called standard of democracy. Capitalist societies must ask themselves the hard questions of justice, of equal opportunity, of oppression, of propaganda, of social sins that we so easily directed at communist nations and whose policies we so quickly condemned.

The spiritual *angst* of the late 20th century descends upon us all. We witness widespread disenchantment with the institution of religion and, at the same time, the growth of new age "natural religion." James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy*[1] has been a best seller for over a

year. In this treatise-novel, people of good will seek spiritual liberation through a journey of self-help, meditation, aura-reading and personal enhancement. The beauty of nature and of creation affirmed in the first insights is ultimately transcended in a rapture-like experience of otherworldliness. The book documents a religious journey without need for a personal God, taking the best of all traditions and placing them side by side to climb out of the world, to get away (finally) from this "vale of tears," to reach that distant point where salvation is found, at one with Bette Midler's God—way out there, far away, where we can all find peace in spiritual oblivion.

Yes, the letter to the Romans rings true for us today. All creation yearns and longs for the revelation of the children of God. We groan with labor pains in which we intuit the nearness of death and destruction. The normal human reaction to pain? Run away, hide in drugs, in alcohol, in spiritual oblivion. Get away from here, get out of now—anywhere has to be better. After all, I have to take care of myself first, everyone else comes after me.

And the response of Scotus? This salvation you seek, this peace you long for, it's right here, it's right now. The faith-filled response of the spiritually mature means we "sit tight," hold our place and act as midwives in the birth of a "new heaven and new earth." The centrality of Christ for Scotus, for Franciscans, means that we have an incarnational commitment to remain right here "in the world," with muddy hands and dirty faces.

Scotus talks of *praxis* in light of the Incarnation, of persons transformed in Christ to be transformative agents, architects of the Kingdom, right here, right now. A deep spirituality, a oneness with Christ must support these persons. In their action for justice, they cannot be self-serving, but other serving. They must reach out of themselves in love toward a world bent on its own destruction, fascinated with death, with violence, with addictive behaviors. Our action for justice will bear no fruit unless we turn our gaze incessantly toward Jesus, both suffering and risen, and beg for the strength and the courage to be his emissaries among the living dead.

An image Scotus uses of the person perfected in Incarnational *praxis* is that of the musician. Just as the guitar player knows at each moment which string to pluck and which chord to play because of years of study and practice, so the transformed agent of change has trained carefully for moments of action. With agile fingers, such agents know what to do, they know how to be creative of beauty, they know what works and what doesn't.[2] They have tried for years to develop their talent. As any musician knows, training is not success. We often make

the most progress through moments of failure.

III. Response of persons in freedom

More than any major medieval thinker, Scotus emphasizes the centrality of freedom for human action. Our own time is influenced by a strain of determinism which is often difficult to identify and even more difficult to overcome. My past has made me this way, my family has taught me how to relate to others, societal forces prevent me from acting as I might like. I am surrounded by Karma, by Fate, by factors which determine what I shall do.

Scotus acknowledges the presence of forces over which we have no control, but he affirms all the more strongly that freedom is the determining characteristic of rational beings.[3] Nothing is so much in my power as my own actions or reactions to events around me. Today we say, "Don't react, respond to life." Scotus might say, "Don't be forced, be self-determining in your choices." Acknowledge those aspects which determine, but find the corner of freedom and embrace it.

The self-determination of the human will means that no one can force me to will what they want me to. Of course, I can be forced to act, but not to assent. This basic human freedom is the seed for the much greater freedom to be creative of beauty, to affirm values, a freedom for goodness. Scotus calls this the affection for justice, and here he follows St. Anselm in his description of the motivation within the human heart.

The human heart has two affections: one directed toward itself, which we might identify with self-preservation, and one directed outward toward others. This second affection is characteristic of rational beings and is called the affection for justice. It is the orientation of rational beings toward right loving and right action. It is that critical piece in our makeup which asks the question: why am I doing this? Because this is a desire to give each what is due, Scotus and Anselm called it the affection for justice, since justice really involves treating all persons and objects as they deserve.[4] It is not limited to "social justice" or to dealings with persons. It is a stance outward toward reality. It undergirds the ecological concern today to treat nature in a manner fitting its dignity. The affection for justice is the human desire to *Do the Right Thing*, as Spike Lee's film depicts.

We have an affection for justice, but we don't always operate out of it. Too often our own desires come first. Our self-preservation instinct is getting all the attention when we care more about our personal property than about the cry of the poor, when the haves gang up on the have-nots and systematically exclude them from real dialogue,

when conspicuous consumption takes the place of selfless sharing and when all decisions are made out of concern for the "bottom line." We can choose to act out of the affection for justice, but it must be our choice. The freedom which Scotus describes is a freedom for self-direction, for self-orientation toward goodness, toward an other-centered life based upon right relationships with nature, with persons, with God. But this freedom has been handicapped as a result of our sinful condition. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, the human will carries an affection for possession which all too often governs the affection for justice. By grace the affection for justice directs the affection for possession: it is only with God's help that we overcome our natural self-centeredness.

The fullness of human perfection involves the right ordering of the two affections. When the affection for justice directs my life I see myself in my place and in my relationships with others. I look outside my own needs toward the needs of others. I work to help others just as others work to help me. The result is a dynamic of mutual love and expanding inclusivity.[5]

IV. Right relationships and the Reign of God

What would it mean for us today to embrace freely, to own and act out of, affection for justice?

First it would mean the development of a *self-reflexive stance* toward my own life. This means that I would consider prayerfully my own life journey, my own actions in light of the self-preservation or justice affections. This does not mean that I never think of myself, but only that I think of myself in an appropriate manner. I give myself the attention I deserve and turn my gaze more often toward others. I become aware of these two affections within me. I acknowledge that they are both natural and both healthy, but I work to keep them in their proper place. I ask as well for the grace to do this.

Second, I would work to develop a *critical awareness of injustices around me*. No situation is too small or unimportant to call for a response, an act which brings justice to birth in the daily setting. I might do this with others in an effort to enhance my own ability to recognize situations of injustice and work to improve them.

Third, I would try to develop the *courage to act as quickly as possible*. The here and now of justice means the right here and right now of justice. Our culture tells us to wait, to be careful, to avoid risks. I am not encouraging a foolhardy attitude, but St. Francis was given more often than not to foolish acts. Maybe our present moment needs the insanity of sanctity right here and right now. The person trans-

formed in Christ knows immediately what to do, says Scotus, and acts quickly. We know that nothing energizes like action and nothing paralyzes like inertia. This swift judgment and action comes from years of training, of prayer, of carefully reading the signs of the times, of discernment with others.

The justice of right relationships involves a stance of mutuality which is suggested by Scotist thought. When we relate in justice to others, we raise them to equality with us or we lower ourselves to equality with them. This is the model of the Incarnation, of God-with-us. In Jesus we see the icon for our journey. He came to walk with us, to put himself at our level, to communicate the love of God to each of us, to create a relationship which ultimately brings us into union and communion with a God whose essence is right relationship, a Triune community.

V. The significance of Scotus today

Like other medieval thinkers, Scotus rises above partial perspectives to offer an understanding of moral living which is closely related to a spirituality of goodness and love. He seeks to integrate partial viewpoints into an organic and dynamic description of human living. Moral living is not a mathematical problem nor a technological calculus, it is the human response to the particular events of a particular life. As a paradigm of integration, Scotus's moral vision offers several values that make it attractive today.

First, Scotus is optimistic about the human capacity to be morally active in the world. In the will's two affections we find a straightforward description of the desires within the human heart. Not only do we possess a desire for justice, but also a healthy desire for self-protection. Our will is constituted so as to respond rationally to the command of Jesus: love your neighbor as yourself. Both love of self and love of neighbor are required in moral living, and their proper relationship of mutuality must be the result of rational deliberation and choice.

The key to self-control lies within the constitution of the will. The moral dimension is natural and rational; it expresses what is best in the human person. Human choice in light of self and others moves naturally toward ordered and rational consistency if there is a moral community to support such growth. Natural affection for the good develops toward increasingly higher levels of moral awareness in a society where good is really rewarded and evil really punished.

Second, Scotus is optimistic about the goodness of creation. The Franciscan insight about the connectedness of all reality (divine, human, natural) informs his moral discussion. All reality is good and beautiful. This is why, for Scotus, moral loving does not so much involve finding those objects worthy of love (since all reality is good), but rather working out the intricate manner by which we can love reality as it deserves. My moral living involves my relationship to all beings which surround me and my efforts to strengthen and enhance that mutuality.

The value of relationship imbues the Scotist perspective. Since all reality is good, then my relationships with others ought to promote goodness. In addition, my relationship with God plays a key role in my moral living and my moral choices. My goal centers around the proper integration of all segments of my life into a beautiful, harmonious whole, both intentionally through charity and extensionally throughout my lifetime. The final goal is not a state of eternal rest, but rather an eternal dynamic life of mutuality, part of the cosmic journey of all things to God.

Scotus has a vision which is both dynamic and organic. All reality grows toward the future through the present. New levels of consciousness promote the integration of all aspects of human life into the "global village" or "spaceship earth." Moral living is part of this integration and moral choices promote the development and flourishing of life. The promotion of moral attitudes belongs not only to individuals but to families and to moral communities. For the human community, this means that society has a responsibility to promote values which sustain and promote human life. The need for moral communities is increasingly felt today as the fragmentation of the social fabric results in civic communities which are concerned to arm themselves at ever higher rates. The increase of violent crime gives tragic testimony to a civilization already in decline. For many there is no hope, no future, no reason to live.

If relationship and mutuality are appropriate human goods, then they are moral goals. Accordingly, all persons have a right to share equally in the resources of the earth. The consumption by the few at the expense of the many, the structures of sin which continue to oppress and dominate, the culture of death and destruction which sells contraceptives but no antibiotics to the poor of the Third World: none of these can be morally justified, nor should they be tolerated. The Christian moral vision, a vision of the sanctity of life and of each person, must continue to speak to such a world, to denounce systems of exploitation and dominance. We must speak to all—poor as well as rich, simple as well as learned, humble as well as powerful.

As friends of Jesus we do not belong to another world, we do

not deal with people from a distance. Scotus's interest in a philosophical and theological discussion of God, of the Incarnation and of human freedom reflects the spirituality of Francis, a saint who saw the glory of God in the beauty of this world. Francis reached out to the dispossessed, he sought out the marginated and the powerless, he lowered himself to create mutuality with all and he worked for a more just distribution of the wealth of this earth. The time is now; the call is ours. As we move into the third millenium, let us embrace that same generosity which inspired Francis. Let us act freely to create right relationships of justice and mutuality in our world.

Endnotes

[1] Warner Books 1993.

[2] See my *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral Living According to John Duns Scotus* (Franciscan Press 1995). (Forthcoming.)

[3] See Allan B. Wolter, OFM, "Native Freedom of the Will as a Key to the Ethics of Scotus," *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, Marilyn M. Adams, ed. (Cornell University Press 1990) 148-62.

[4] Wolter 151-2.

[5] See my "Scotus and the Moral Order," *The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993): 127-50.

"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'" (Etienne Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot*).

The Cord, 45.3 (1995)

INCARNATION, INDIVIDUALITY AND DIVERSITY

How does Christ reveal the unique value of each person and thing?

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INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

In Robert Sokolowski's recent book, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure*, the author, a priest of the archdiocese of Hartford teaching philosophy at The Catholic University of America, describes necessary and contingent being in this way:

> To turn everything in the world into the contingent...would be to equate the contingency that marks the world as a whole with the contingency that is found as part of the world. The consequence of such a confusion, of course, would be another confusion regarding necessity; the necessity by which God exists would be equated with the necessity that is part of the world, and the divine choice to create would be assimilated to events that take place within the contingent domain of the world. God's choice would then appear as a "merely contingent" event and would take on the quality of being arbitrary. Cajetan criticizes Scotus for making this mistake. [1]

Thomas de Vio Cajetan was a Dominican who lived in the sixteenth century at the time of the Council of Trent. Cajetan at that time

had written: "How uncultivated and upstart is Scotus's way of speaking...when he calls the divine will 'the first contingent cause.' It is nefarious to speak of contingency in the divine will."[2] This is the only reference to John Duns Scotus in Sokolowski's book—and he is quoting Cajetan!

How easy it appears to be, even today, to dismiss the thought of Scotus and to do this by simply citing another author, in this case, Cajetan. This particular instance is remarkable, since Sokolowski states clearly in his introduction—the very first sentence in fact—that he wants "to discuss a type of theological thinking that draws on the philosophical resources provided by phenomenology."[3] Oddly enough, one of the masters of phenomenology, Martin Heidegger, wrote his doctoral thesis on John Duns Scotus, a philosopher whom Sokolowski cites but once. Moreover, one wonders whether Sokolowski has truly understood the insights of Scotus on the issues of necessity and contingency. What he has presented above is really a superficial picture of the thought of Scotus on the theme of contingent and necessary being.

I did not write a doctoral thesis on John Duns Scotus, but in my youthful days when I was a senior in college, I did write a final paper for my philosophy professor, Geoffrey Bridges, OFM. My paper was different from the ones to which he was accustomed. The theme was *haecceitas* or "thisness" as found in Scotus. The style, however, was a whimsical platonic dialogue between myself and John Duns Scotus, which took place in a small boat called the Shenandoah adrift in Whelan's lake, where we college students often went for picnics. In the dialogue, I kept asking Scotus: "What does it mean to be an individual? What does it mean to be a person?" Scotus's thought responds to such questions with valuable insights. Even though his work bears all the hallmarks of medievalism, and we, on the other hand, are living in the so-called post-christian age and on the very threshold of the third millennium, nevertheless we can learn from Scotus today.

In order to place these questions in a clear way and to offer some answers to them, I would like to take a walk with you through some Scotistic positions in order to comprehend some of the essential background and reasoning of "thisness" which Scotus himself perceived.

SCOTUS: A CHRISTIAN REALIST

First of all, Scotus was a believing realist, both ontologically and epistemologically. This means that his Christian faith penetrated his human real life. For Scotus there was indeed a God and there was indeed a created world. The world actually existed, and it existed in its details long before any of us began thinking about it and naming the things in it. Scotus in this regard was neither a nominalist, nor a solipsist, nor an idealist. Although the realist position which he espoused cannot logically be proven and must serve only as a presupposition, Scotus accepted the reality of the world about him, both epistemologically and ontologically. However, he was a *Christian* realist, and as such he accepted in faith the existence of God, the incarnation, the church, and all the other major tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. His was a medieval faith, untouched by the many pluralistic, secularistic, even atheistic questions of contemporary life. It is against this background of Christian realism that he asked the question: what is "thisness"?[4]

HIS METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the mystery of God, at least to some degree, Scotus places on the table of observation all of creation, that is, every finite, created being. Nothing is to be left out. The environment is certainly there, with its physical nature and its vegetative and animal life. Human life is also there, with every person from Adam and Eve to those living at the close of the thirteenth century and even those who were yet to come. The angels, too, are placed on this observation table. Scotus adds one other keenly important creature to this table of observation: namely, the humanity of Jesus, the most important, the most perfect, the most wonderful of all God's creatures.

However, not only are the good aspects of finite being spread out on this table of observation, but also the misshapen aspects, the sinful aspects are also there, including satan and the legions of demons. It is a table on which there is good, indeed the most wonderfully good, and on which there is bad, indeed the most dreadfully evil. Through this mass of creatures, both good and evil, Scotus looks for a God who is not only the God of the good, but also the God of the weak, the God of the sinful. What kind of a God can this be?

I find this methodology very helpful for us today, since in many ways our scientific and secularistic world asks us to consider a God of the totality. We cannot have religion only in one small part of our life and science in another part of our life. We cannot be schizophrenic, either religiously or scientifically. This is of advantage in today's religiously plural world, for were Scotus alive today he would place on the table of observation Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and all other religious groups. He would place on the table all the atoms and sub-atomic particles as well as the processes of thermo-nuclear dynamics and electro-magnetics. When all created and finite beings known to us would finally be placed on the table, Scotus would then ask: given all of this data, what kind of a credible God accounts for this multiple

form of finitude? It is within this observational methodology that Scotus seeks the meaning of "thisness."

GOD: THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

Given this massive array of the Christian "real" world, Scotus then asks: what God is mirrored here? This Scotus attempts to answer in his book: *A Treatise on God as First Principle*.[5] While this work might seem very abstract and challenging, nevertheless, it is an important basis for understanding Scotus. In an introductory essay to this treatise, Allan Wolter reminds us that the First Principle [God] can be understood in three ways: as cause of all that is (efficiency), as ultimate end or purpose for which all exists (finality), or as first in the order of relative perfection (eminence).[6] Further on Wolter writes: "If the whole of creation depends upon God's free decision, then any factual or existential statement about the world will be radically contingent."[7]

Scotus looks at our world and realizes that God is absolutely free—nothing created is necessary; God did not *have to* create anything; all is gift and grace. God, the first principle, is both absolutely necessary and at the same time absolutely free. Most medieval theologians stressed that God as first principle was a necessary being. Scotus, on the other hand, in a fairly unique way, stressed the absolute freedom of this necessary God.

What one hears in the writings of Scotus is an emphasis on the free willing of God, on a free contingent willing of a necessary God, but a willing of contingent beings nonetheless. In *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, Scotus presents God as the efficient cause of all created beings, but he also stresses throughout chapter three of this treatise that God as First Principle is absolutely necessary and absolutely free; that there is a triple primacy—of efficiency, finality and eminence. Since such a God as First Principle has no efficient cause of God's own being, God is necessary.[8] This is the *aseitas* [the uncaused cause] of so many medieval writers. However, in Scotus's view, finality and eminence are of higher value than efficiency. It is not the "how" but the "why" which is important. *Aseitas* simply says that there is no beginning, no other cause. This term speaks of the "how" or better the lack of any "how." God, however, is much more than one who has no beginning, no cause. God is *love* and this is the "why" or the finality and eminence. Nor is God simply love; God is absolutely free love; and this absolutely free love is absolutely eminent. Meaning, not origin, has primacy of place. For Scotus, "thisness" of created beings can only be understood in the light of this absolutely eminent and free God, who in love wills each and every contingent being.

CREATION

Freedom is reflected in God's freely creating contingent beings. Efficient causality is indeed present, i.e., "how" contingent beings arise. But *final* causality, i.e., "why" they are created, is for Scotus of greater significance. God does not create just because God can create. God creates for a purpose, namely, God's own glory and God's own love. Let us return to the table and look over all those items of this creative God. We see our environment, we see our first parents and all other persons, we see ourselves, we see our sins, we see the sins of all men and women and we see that special created, finite, contingent being which we call the humanity of Jesus.

It is in the *Reportatio* that Scotus clearly "de-links" the incarnation from the fall of Adam and Eve, but already in the *Ordinatio* he had begun this process.[9] In a well-known passage he writes:

> Therefore I argue as follows: in the first place God loves himself. Secondly, he loves himself in others and this is most pure and holy love. Thirdly God wills to be loved by another who can love him perfectly and here I am referring to the love of someone outside God. Therefore, fourthly, God foresees the union between the Word and the creature Christ who owes him supreme love, even had there never been the Fall.... In the fifth place, he sees Christ as Mediator coming to suffer and redeem his people because of sin.[10]

Here Scotus is speaking primarily about God, the First Principle, creating the world we know. This is a passage which is primarily theological and only secondarily christological; it says something about God first and only then something about Christ. This theocentric interpretation is based on the structure of the passage: i.e., Scotus says that God first..., then God second..., then God third..., etc. In this view, Jesus, in his humanity, indeed sacramentalizes the finality of God's whole world, a world in which human freedom and human mis-freedom (sin) exist. The whole world is sacramentalized, not just the "nice" part of it. The incarnation, then, begins, one might say, with the very first act of God *ad extra*—the first creative moment of our world. The incarnation is a process moving through the history of our created world, and with each subsequent step the meaning of the world, the finality of the world, the "why" of the world emerges to some degree in a clearer way. We are finding out more about the incarnation than ever before. It is an ascending experience. Like climbing a mountain, the higher one goes, the wider and broader one's perspective.

In the Jesus-event, a major revelation of the meaning of creation, the "why" of creation, takes place. This is what the world and its history are all about. But this Jesus-event includes not only his life and death, his preaching and healing, but also his resurrection, his ascension, his sending of the Spirit and his eschatological place at the right hand of God. This is where Jesus was always meant to go. The Church itself is part of this process, since the resurrection of Jesus and our own resurrection are intrinsically one. More strongly put, the Christ at God's right hand cannot be understood except in and with the mystical body of Christ here on earth.

This is what it's all about. This is what it's always been about. Where Jesus went we are meant to go and have always been meant to go. This is the *Christus totus*, the whole Christ, of which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks when it asks "Who celebrates the sacraments?" and answers "The *Christus totus*." The full meaning of incarnation is not that Jesus has a human and a divine nature, but that Jesus has a human nature and we, all of us, all human beings, are related to it. One might say that the incarnation as a process is still continuing and will continue until the eschaton, until the "why" of God's free action to create reaches its own fullness. All that is, all that has ever been, is related to incarnation. Only with this understanding can we realize the height and depth, the length and breadth of "why" there is something finite and not nothing at all except God.

Scotus certainly did not believe that a "greater-than-Jesus" would ever appear. The Jesus in his statement above is the risen Jesus, the eschaton Jesus, not simply the Jesus who walked this earth and died. In Scotus's thought, it is Jesus who gives the greatest glory to God. Scotus did, however, believe that *none of this was necessary*. Even the humanity of Jesus, even the incarnation itself, was not "necessary." The humanity of Jesus, just as my own humanity, is contingent. Only God is necessary and only God is absolutely free. From the point of view of the *absolute power of God*, God could have done quite otherwise. From the point of view of the *actualized power of God*, God freely and contingently acted in a specific way. Why, one might ask, did God choose this specific way of creating something? For Scotus, the only reason is God's love and God's desire to express this divine love in a contingent and finite world. Only within this framework can one begin to understand what Scotus wants to say about "thisness."

HAECCEITAS OR "THISNESS"

We have almost finished our walk, brisk and quick as it has been. Let us pause now, thinking over the details which Scotus has pointed out, for it is against the background of all these details that Scotus addresses the issue of "thisness." In his early Oxford lecture on individuation, Scotus begins by noting that a stone is singular long before we perceive it. It has its own unity of singularity before we call it a stone.

There is indeed an *epistemological* "thisness," which means that we often perceive individual things first of all through accidental individual characteristics. We see that someone is tall, short, thin or fat. Only in and with time do we begin to appreciate the "individual person" beneath these observable appearances. This is epistemological "thisness," but Scotus and others had much more in mind than merely epistemological individuation. Scotus wanted to talk about *essential* "thisness," essential individuation, ontological *haecceitas*.

At the beginning of his discussion on this matter, he rejected several views which other theologians of his time had proposed: 1) that all one needed were the four Aristotelian causes, material, formal, efficient and final, to account for individuation; 2) that individuation is based on quantity; 3) that individuation is based on negation; 4) that individuation is based on matter. Scotus makes the claim that individuation must be based in the very substance of a thing or person, not in some accidental aspect of a thing or person. There is a form connected to the very substance of a being through which individuation takes place. I cannot simply put on or take off my individuality. It belongs to my very essence. Elizabeth Ingham summarizes this: "It [*haecceitas*] grounds the substantial being internally and points to individuality at the core of each thing, not as a function of the material component, but as the internal instantiation of the substantial being."[11]

Wolter, at the end of his preface on the text and translation of Scotus's early *Oxford Lecture on Individuation* writes:

> In the *Ordinatio* revision of this seventh question, Scotus makes an important claim, that where rational beings are concerned it is the person rather than the nature that God primarily desired to create. His remark is in answer to an objection that individuals do not pertain to the order of the universe, for order is based on priority and posteriority, and individuals are all on a par with one another. Not only do individuals pertain to the order of God's universe, Scotus replies, but in communicating his good as something befitting his beauty in each species, he delights in producing a multiplicity of individuals. And in those beings which are the highest and most important, it is the individual that is primarily intended by God. Viewed from this aspect, Scotus' doctrine of thisness applied to the human person would seem to invest each with a unique value as one singularly wanted and loved by God, quite apart from any trait that person shares with others or any contribution he or she might make to society. One could even say "thisness" is our personal gift

from God.[12]

God, then, does not want primarily to create "human nature," an abstraction, but this particular human person.

Haecceitas, Ingham writes, refers to that positive dimension of every concrete and contingent being which identifies it and makes it worthy of attention.[13] Scotus elaborates an understanding of reality imbued with freedom, contingency and attention to the particular.[14] Even more, this singularity is especially important for the human person as a *moral person*. In this regard, Scotus alters his general approach which favors final causality and focuses the individual on his or her own efficiently causing will. The individual actually causes events to happen. Scotus leads us to ask: What does it mean to be myself? Of what am I a cause? What will I, in my particular life, cause to happen through my own free choices?

We have free will, and it is particularly in this free will that we evidence the image of God. We cannot claim that we are part of a process which is cosmic and beyond our control. Rather, we are responsible individual persons with individual wills, and we do cause good and also cause evil. Free will is not the choice to sin or not to sin, but simply choice. It is our perception of the harmony of goodness and our choice of this harmony of goodness which is at the basis of our moral action. Here again we see the importance of the individual over the general, the concrete over the abstract, the person over the nature.

Endnotes

[1] Robert Sokolowski, *Euchristic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993) 48.

[2] Cajetan, *Commentary on St. Thomas Aquinas*, Summa theologiae, I, 19, 3, Leonine Edition (Rome: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei, 1888).

[3] Sokolowski 5.

[4] Cf. Allan B. Wolter, "The Realism of Scotus," *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) 42-53.

[5] John Duns Scotus, *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, trans. and ed. Allan B. Wolter, OFM (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966).

[6] Scotus xiii.

[7] Scotus xvii.

[8] Scotus 42-72.

[9] Cf. Mary Elizabeth Ingham, CSJ, "John Duns Scotus: An Integrated Vision," *The History of Franciscan Theology*, edited by K. B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994) 220.

[10] Scotus, *Reportata Parisiensia* III, d. 7, q.4, n. 5.

[11] Ingham 210.

[12] Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus' Early Oxford Lecture on Individuation* (Santa Barbara, California: Old Mission Santa Barbara, 1992) xxvii.

[13] Ingham 190.

[14] Ingham 198.

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Pied Beauty: Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Scotistic View of Nature

William Short, OFM

Introduction

On the third of August, 1872, a group of Jesuit scholastics arrived on the Isle of Man for vacation. One of them noted in his journal: "At this time I had first begun to get hold of the copy of Scotus on the Sentences in the Baddely library and was flush with a new stroke of enthusiasm. It may come to nothing or it may be a mercy from God." His journal entry for that day continues, "But just then when I took in any inscape of the sky or sea I thought of Scotus."[1]

In this presentation, I would like to examine the Christology of Scotus as it touches the question of Nature. And to do this I will use the writings of that Jesuit journaling during his holiday on the Isle of Man. His name is Gerard Manley Hopkins. We may find it easier to read Scotus through Hopkins (and I think this is a valid way) than to attempt reading the original, which even scholars often find difficult both for its ideas and its expression of them. The British Jesuit Hopkins was reading the British Franciscan Scotus, with whom he shared the experience of the intellectual life of Oxford. Hopkins speaks our language and lived close to our time. He died in 1889 at the age of 45. I will leave it to you to determine if this way of approaching Scotus is congenial. I

hope it will be.

In his poem, "Duns Scotus's Oxford," we hear Hopkins rejoice in the privilege of simply being in the same place where Scotus once lived and worked. After describing the city , he reflects on Scotus:

> Yet ah! this air I gather and I release
> He lived on; these weeds and waters, these walls are what
> He haunted who of all men most sways my spirits to peace.
>
> Of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller; a not
> Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece;
> Who fired France for Mary without spot (#21).

The Problem of Nature

A convert to Rome from the Church of England, Hopkins entered the Jesuit novitiate shortly after completing a brilliant undergraduate career at Oxford. His training was in late nineteenth-century Catholic theology, the Scholasticism of the manuals and within the strongly anti-worldly spirituality of his time. Hopkins felt himself morally or spiritually misformed because of his fascination and delight with specific individual things, especially the things of nature, a fascination observed by others. A Jesuit brother who had lived at Stonyhurst while Hopkins was a student there, remembers him in this way:

> One of Hopkins's special delights was the path from the Seminary to the College. After a shower, he would run and crouch down to gaze at the crushed quartz glittering as the sun came out again. "Ay, a strange yoong man, crouching down that gate to stare at some wet sand. A fair natural 'e seemed to us, that Mr. 'opkins."[2]

This fascination, this sensual delight in the things of nature, became a problem for Hopkins, something he felt he must suppress or discipline through asceticism in order to conform himself to the search for "heavenly things," "the things that are above." It was a mercy of God that during his theology days he came across the works of Scotus in the library of the Jesuit theologate at St. Beuno's in Wales. J. Hillis Miller, in his lovely study of Hopkins and Christology, says: "Ultimately, with the help of Scotus and other theologians, Hopkins broadens his theory of the Incarnation until he comes to see all things as created in Christ."[3]

This was a revelation. It was also the solution to that severe problem of conscience that had plagued Hopkins since his conversion. On

reading Scotus he found a theologically positive view of the specific and individual. He discovered Christ in matter. This discovery he expressed in both prose and poetry in his journals. One of those journal entries speaks of this new-found delight in nature: "As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home."[4]

This same delight is expressed in the following stanza from Hopkins's early masterpiece, "The Wreck of the Deutschland," written in memory of a group of Franciscan sisters:

> I kiss my hand
> To the stars, lovely-asunder
> Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
> Glow, glory in thunder;
> Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west;
> Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
> His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
> For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand
> (#5).

Hopkins's writings may be seen as an example of Scotus's understanding of the Incarnation. The poet attends to the specific–even the minutest details–like the tiny, crushed quartz crystals of the sand in the path at Stonyhurst. From a Franciscan perspective, the reason this makes sense is that the tiny grains of sand are eucharistic, with a small "e" if you like, but truly eucharistic, the extension of the Incarnation in matter.

Listen to a selection from Hopkins's journals where he records his observations of clouds in the sky:

> ... below the sun it was like clear oil but just as full of colour, shaken over with slanted flashing "travellers," all in flight, stepping one behind the other, their edges tossed with bright ravelling, as if white napkins were thrown up in the sun but not quite at the same moment so that they were all in a scale down the air falling one after the other to the ground.[5]

Christ as Exemplary Cause

Here is the key to Nature as an American amateur Scotist sees it. The humanity of Jesus–even more emphatically the *body* of Jesus–is the point of God's creating everything. In Scholastic terms, the humanity of Jesus is the *exemplary cause* of creation. This is the model on which

God models everything else: those white napkins of sunlight, stars, snails, raindrops, oxygen, magnesium, protons, grapes, every shade of the color purple, coffee beans, volcanoes: each of them and the relation each has with every other thing. They do something. What they do is, in odd language, themselves: they do them-selves. Consider two other poems of Hopkins, "God's Grandeur" and "Pied Beauty." In each we see a world filled with God's presence and an intense attention to particularity and diversity. In these poems, all things are doing themselves; they are "themselving":

> The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
> It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
> It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
> Crushed....
> ...nature is never spent;
> There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
> And though the last lights off the black West went
> Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs
> Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
> World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings
> (God's Grandeur, #8).

> Glory be to God for dappled things–
> For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
> For rose-moles in all stipple upon trout that swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
> Landscape plotted and pieced–fold, fallow, and plough;
> And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

> All things counter, original, spare, strange;
> Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
> With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
> He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
> Praise him (Pied Beauty, #14).

The grape grapes, the star stars, coffee coffees, a volcano volcanoes. Each doing this is being itself, doing what it is. Hopkins calls this "do-being" (a Frank Sinatra kind of theological term).

Univocity of Being

This do-being is doing-Christ. That is what all things were formed to do. This can be difficult to understand–perhaps it is also difficult to experience. It may be best to say what this is *not* before trying to say what it is. And then we can talk a bit more about the "why" of this.

What is *not* the relation between a grain of sand and Christ? The sand-grain is not just a *symbol* of Christ, though it can be that if we work at it. But that requires the grain to *stand for something about* Christ. Let us say we decide that the grain of sand, because it is small, makes us think of the humility of Christ. This is a very familiar use of religious language. What have we done? We have abstracted, identified an adjective about the sand-grain, "small," with an adjective about Christ, "humble." We have taken a quality of a thing and associated it with a quality of a person. But the sand-grain isn't all that important, a small acorn or a small tomato could do the job just as well. They are dispensable, interchangeable. They are *used* to achieve some other purpose, to teach a lesson, usually a moral lesson.

And whether we use the sand, the acorn or the tomato, the *thing* can produce only a reference to some quality or aspect of Christ: humility or some other description *about* Christ. This kind of association is perfectly fine to do, of course, but it can get tiresome. It is theologically grounded in the more common Thomistic view of nature based on the theory of analogy of being. According to this theory, true being exists only in God, and all other being is derivative, pointing toward true being, but only weakly and indirectly.

What fires Hopkins–though he only comes to articulate it through reading Scotus–is that the sand-grain, by being/doing itself, directly and immediately *does* God, who is incarnate, Christ. And it does that quite well without my having to sit and cogitate about "small" or "humble." Here is Hopkins painting this perception in a sonnet:

> As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;...
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves–goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
> Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

> I say more: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is–
> Christ–for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
> Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
> To the Father through the features of men's faces (#34).

What is "Christ-y" is the sand doing sand: it is noun-verbing and not adjectiving. And the sand-grain sanding is doing *all* of Christ, not just this or that aspect of him, smallness or humility or whatever.

This expresses the profound notion of Scotus known as the "univocity of being." This subject has been explored by several scho–

lars.[6] We might say that this perception, common to both Scotus and Hopkins, allows for a direct connection between our awareness of a thing and our awareness of Christ. J. Hillis Miller explains this more precisely:

> The idea of the univocity of being leads to a different view of nature (from that of Thomism), and therefore to a different kind of poetry. In this view natural things, instead of having a derived being, participate directly in the being of the creator. They are in the same way that he is. Each created thing, in its own special way, is the total image of its creator. It expresses not some aspect of God, but his beauty as a whole. Such a view of nature leads to a poetry in which things are not specific symbols, but all mean one thing and the same: the beauty of Christ, in whom they are created.[7]

In his journals Hopkins makes the following entry that renders this idea rather well: "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it."[8] And he expresses it, as well, in his poem, "The Windhover, To Christ our Lord":

> I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
> Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
> High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
> In his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on swing,
> As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
> Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
> Stirred for a bird,–the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!...
>
> No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
> Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
> Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion (#13).

It seems to me that such a perception requires a different kind of discipline of the observer/participant of Nature (me or Hopkins or you.) The job is not to get lots of ideas about stuff that can then be lined up with ideas about Christ. The job is to observe closely, attentively, carefully that things are/do themselves. That doing/being is their doing/being Christ. Again, in Hopkins's own words:

> ... the just man justices;
> Kéeps gráce: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
> Christ (#34).

Haecceitas

It is each particular thing which does this being-Christ. This grape be/does Christ in dark purple on the left-hand side as I face it and in more crimson mixed with mauve on the right side where it has a fine dusting of gray-brown near the stem where the mold is. Put simply, it is/does only its own grape, not the one next to it or above it in the bunch. We notice its uniqueness when we look at it carefully.

Elisabeth W. Schneider gives an example of this minute observation from Hopkins's journal:[9]

> Oaks: the organisation of this tree is difficult. Speaking generally no doubt the determining planes are concentric, a system of brief contiguous and continuous tangents, whereas those of the cedar would roughly be called horizontals and those of the beech radiating but modified by droop and by a screw-set towards jutting points. But beyond this since the normal growth of the boughs is radiating and the leaves grow some way in there is of course a system of spoke-wise clubs of green — sleeve-pieces. And since the end shoots curl and carry young and scanty leaf-stars these clubs are tapered, and I have seen also the pieces in profile with chiselled outlines, the blocks thus made detached and lessening towards the end. However the star knot is the chief thing: it is whorled, worked round a little, and this is what keeps up the illusion of the tree: the leaves are rounded inwards and figure out ball-knots. Oaks differ much, and much turns on the broadness of the leaf, the narrower giving the crisped and starry and Catherine-wheel forms, the broader the flat-pieced mailed or shard-covered ones in which it is possible to see composition in dips etc on wider bases than the single knot or cluster. But I shall study them further.

Schneider tells us that he did exactly that, and in a journal entry eight days later declared, "I have now found the law of the oak leaves."[10]

Here we touch the Scotistic notion of *haecceitas*, being *this* thing and not *that* next thing that looks a lot like it. In the more common

Thomistic view, things have two fundamental components, matter and form. The form of a grape, for example, is "grapeness" and the matter includes the physical attributes of sweetness, roundness, sugar and skin. Scotus adds a third component: being *this* grape: *haec*, "this."

Here is the corollary of the incarnation–God became *this* Jewish carpenter: this unique, unrepeatable, specific creature is the incarnate Creator. From this belief one can conclude that things are God-like in their specificity. Things deserve the respect of our attention, for whatever is is because of Christ.

Some Observations and Questions

Instead of any further description of Scotus's Christology of Nature seen through the lens of Hopkins's poetry, I wish at this point to make some suggestions about what this Christology might look like in practice.

1. Close, even minute, observation and attention to *things* is revelatory, is a truly contemplative act. A deep gazing *into* things can allow glimpses of Christ. The close analogy is that of traditional Eucharistic devotion–gazing on the consecrated bread of the Eucharist, pondering the invitation, "Ecce Agnus Dei." Behold (that is *look* and *see*) Christ: wheat flour baked, juice of grapes crushed. Here in ordinary Near Eastern food see the Creator of the universe.

In a similar way, gaze on this leaf, this stone, this molecule, this hand, this shadowy light streaming through this window–and behold! (Hopkins would say *inscape*!) *Ecce*: *look* and *see*: creature and Creator marvelously 'oned,' co-present, with no less of identity for the creature or the Creator.

**A brief excursus. There may come to mind the intuition expressed by another Jesuit, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in his work entitled* Hymn of the Universe. *Teilhard developed his scientific-mystical intuition without any conscious reference to Scotus. And he, like Hopkins, was much misunderstood, eventually silenced by his superiors, for his views. Yet there was for Teilhard also a direct and happy meeting with the work of Scotus. While in Hong Kong after a period of research in China's interior, he met the Sicilian Franciscan Father Allegra, a devoted Scotist.*

Allegra listened to Teilhard's description of his growing awareness of the "cosmic Christ." He then mentioned the strong affinity he noted with Scotus's Christology. Teilhard, as Allegra reports, exclaimed, "Voilà! La théologie de l'avenir!" ["There it is! The theology of the future!"] His conversations with Allegra on Scotus began on that note and continued during Teilhard's stay in Hong Kong.

*It is hard to avoid the observation that two of the most innovative Jesuit authors of the late 19th and early 20th century had such strong affinity with the theological intuition of Scotus even before discovering his works. This suggests to me that there may be many in our own day, as in the past, who perceive the creation in a way very similar to that of Scotus, without ever having read Scotus. *End of excursus.*

Whether we consider the work of Hopkins in literature, or that of Teilhard in paleontology, it seems clear that a careful examination of nature, poetically or scientifically, is theological and Christological. This confirms the strong assertion of Roger Bacon, one of Scotus's Franciscan predecessors at Oxford, that studying the natural sciences was important for a proper understanding of theology. In fact the Oxford Franciscans for centuries held the natural sciences in a place of special honor in their *studium*. We might ask ourselves: "What honor do we pay to scientific work as Franciscans today?"

We speak often enough of experience as the starting point of Franciscan theology. Do we include the experience of natural-scientific work in this view? Or is it only the experience included in the human sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology)? These are certainly important and not to be neglected. But what honor do we render to biology, zoology, botany, environmental studies, geography, physics, chemistry? Are these perceived as important to our mission of evangelization, pointing to the presence of Christ among us?

2. What importance do we give to the creation around us? In the places we live and work what message, what Good News, about the creation do we communicate? Is each *thing* reverenced? Are *things* used eucharistically? Do we create things and places of beauty that call attention to the importance of things — or are our places a hodge-podge of things tossed without thought to fill up empty spaces?

3. Some sustained contact with nature needs to be a fundamental component of our Franciscan life. A trip to the ocean, a walk in the hills, working in the garden, working with wood or stone or metal or glass–manual labor–these are important not primarily for what they *produce*, but for their inherent Christ-contact. This could imply that many activities considered "hobbies" or "avocations" among our brothers and sisters should be given more careful attention and encouragement, whether photography, painting, poetry, or flower-pressing. These are not "trivial pursuits." As Hopkins wrote to a friend, "I think that the trivialness of life is, and personally to each one ought to be seen to be, done away with by the Incarnation ...."[11]

Work with people and the experience of loving community are essential, but not sufficient. Close, regular, even daily attention to the wider world of creatures is fundamental to our spiritual life as Franciscans. Without it, we begin to lose living contact with Christ in his most widely-extended body, the universe. Obviously, much more could be said. But the saying of it may be better yours than mine. Let me close with words from our Franciscan brother, the Jesuit, Hopkins:

All things counter, original, spare, strange
Praise Him!

Endnotes

[1]Jnl 161, quoted in Maurice B. McNamee, S.J., "Hopkins: Poet of Nature and of the Supernatural," *Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Norman Weyand, S.J. (NY: Sheed & Ward, 1949) 228. (The word "inscape" is a Hopkins's invention, meaning "more than what you see" or "that which makes a thing what it is"; "its particularity" [author's note].) Poetry selections from *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner (NY: Penguin Books, 1985) with corresponding numbering.

[2]Humphry House and Graham Storey, eds., *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) 408, quoted in J. Hillis Miller, "The Univocal Chiming,"*Hopkins: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966) 89.

[3]Miller 111.

[4]House 254.

[5]House 207.

[6]See Allan B. Wolter, OFM, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1946) 31-57. See also Cyril L. Shircel, OFM, *The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1942) and Etienne Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot* (Paris: 1952).

[7]Miller 113.

[8]House 199.

[9]Elizabeth W. Schneider, *The Dragon in the Gate: Studies in the Poetry of G. M. Hopkins* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).

[10]House 144-46, 364n. Quoted in Schneider 116. In his study of "The Dialectic of Sense-Perception" in Hopkins, Geoffrey H. Hartman gives another example from Hopkins's journals about this kind of close observation. He notes, "Even when, as in a snowfall, it seems least possible to remark the individual forms of things, Hopkins still manages to do so":

It tufted and toed the firs and yews and went to load them till they were taxed beyond their spring. The limes, elms, and Turkey-oaks it crisped beautifully as with young leaf. Looking at the elms from underneath you saw every wave in every twig...and to the hangers and flying sprays it restored, to the eye, the inscapes they had lost (123).

[11]Quoted in Claude Colleer Abbott, ed., *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) III, 19. In Miller 111.

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The Cord, 45.3 (1995)

The Franciscan Doctor*

Philotheus Boehner, OFM

To intellectual honesty and obedient faith, John Duns Scotus adds the Franciscan spirit. Understanding cannot be the last goal, high though its value is in the hierarchy of values. The highest value is Charity. Scotus shows that the opponents of the primacy of love claim the authority of Aristotle, who thinks that the acts of the intellect and not the acts of love dispose to Wisdom. But Scotus has in his favor a much better and higher authority....

What use is speculation, to enjoy deep insights into the highest truths, if it does not lead to the highest act of the human personality, loving surrender to God as revealed in Christ...? Hence, Scotus does not consider theology a speculative science. Its highest purpose is not to inform about truth and to know God only in a scientific way; theology is a practical science, and its purpose is to instruct us about and lead us to the highest "praxis," to Charity, that is the Love of God....

It follows that man [sic] has to know, above all, that he is a creature, and that, as a creature, he comes from nothing and tends toward nothingness. Even in reasoning, he tends toward nothingness....

From this, humility in reasoning and the necessity for prayer follow naturally. Human effort is certainly necessary. Otherwise we would wrong God, the Creator of our powers. In this...Scotus dignifies human nature;...but human nature...has its limits and consequently man has to turn to the Father of Lights in prayer. Scotus, the knight of truth, is also a great fighter and a man of great prayer. If we open his *Treatise on God as First Principle*, we see an impressive picture. The knight of

truth first lays down his weapons and, kneeling down and folding his hands, he prays;...and then he puts on his armor, takes his weapons and fights the struggle of truth in painstaking logic. Time and again he does the same, praying for help from God, until he reaches his highest point in the last chapter where his fight and struggle for insight transform themselves into a long prayer of great beauty, strength and ardor. Here metaphysical speculation and religious fervor are harmoniously united. His charity, humility and spirit of prayer, therefore, authorize us to call Duns Scotus a *Doctor Franciscanus*.

If we may be allowed to compare St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, at first sight two quite different types of mind, we shall find that in spite of all their differences, they are both true Franciscans. St. Bonaventure, the *Doctor Seraphicus*, is an intellectual personality who does not reason without emotion,...circulating around the object of his intellect in a restless love until the fulfillment of this love is reached in the highest mysticism. Duns Scotus, the *Doctor Subtilis*, is an intellectual personality who, with strictly objective reasoning and a rigid asceticism of the intellect, gives his *placet* to a statement *only* if his logic is satisfied. At the same time, however, Scotus is a humble scholar, a prayerful theologian, whose ultimate goal is the love of God. Both Scholastics may have different ways, but both have the same goal. The one calls it *unctio*, the other *charitas*. Therefore, their ways cannot be in opposition. On the contrary, their different ways are integrating parts of a real Franciscan philosophy and theology. It would be a loss to Franciscan science if it should lack the Seraphic Doctor's *pie et alta sentiendum est de Deo* [devout and profound feeling toward God]. But, Franciscan science would be in perpetual danger of falling into an uncontrolled mysticism if the Subtle Doctor's intellectual asceticism were wanting.

* From: Philotheus Boehner, OFM. "The Intellectual Personality of Duns Scotus." *The History of the Franciscan School*, Part 3, *Duns Scotus*. Unpublished lecture notes (St.Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, 1945) 123-24.

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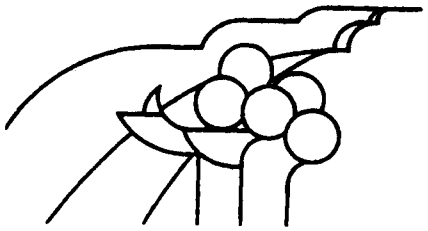

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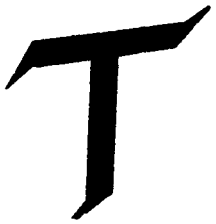

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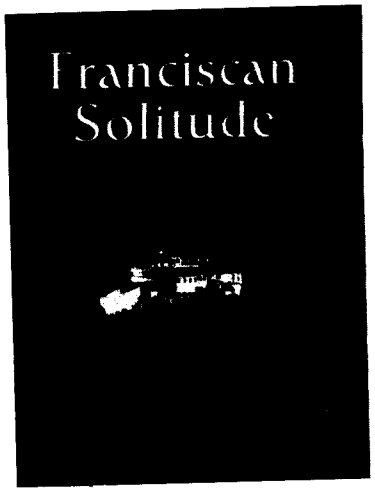

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Fourth Enrichment Program of the Franciscan Federation (see p. 47 for detail).

Sunday, July 16 -Thursday, July 19, 1995

Formators' Conference, **"Connecting at the CROSSroads."** Contact: Br. Edward Coughlin, OFM, Director, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778, ph. (716) 375-2105; FAX (716) 375-2156.

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Contact: Ann Carmen Barone, OSF, 6832 Convent Blvd., Sylvania, OH 43560-2897, (419) 882-7912.

Saturday, August 5-Friday, August 11

Nonviolence: A Core Element of Evangelical Life (see p. 42 for detail).

Sunday, August 6-Saturday, August 12

Franciscan Woman, a retreat on the Franciscan charism as lived in the lives of Franciscan women today. Presenters: Colette Rhoney, OSF and Dolores Cook, OSF. $225. At Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora ,NY. Contact: Marilyn Hoffman, Christ the King Seminary 711 Knox Road, East Aurora, NY 14052, (716) 652-8900.

Monday, August 14-Monday, August 18, Friars' Retreat

(see p. 45 for details.)

Monday, August 21-Wednesday, August 23

Annual Federation Conference and joint meeting of First and Third Order Regular Franciscans (see p. 43 for details.)

Wednesday, October 4-Wednesday, October 11

Praying with Franciscan Women Mystics (see p. 42 for detail).

Saturday, October 14

Contemplation and Compassion, Caring for the Charism, 9:30-5:00. Keynote by Michael Blastic, OFM, Conv. Breakout sessions. $15 advanced registration. At Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. Contact: The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure, NY, 14778, Phone: 716-375-2105 FAX: 717-375-2156.

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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 [St. Francis] 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 masterpiece,... he brings into sharp relief the supreme ideas of the Gospel revelation" (Paul VI in *Alma Parens*, 1966).

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy
EpCust	Letter to the Custodians
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful
2EpFid	Second Letter to 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 Peoples
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies
ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
VPLaet	Dictate on True and Perfect Joy
1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
LaudDei	Praises of God
LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
OffPass	Office of the Passion
OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB	Later Rule
RegNB	Earlier Rule
RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
Test	Testament
TestS	Testament written in Siena
UltVol	Last Will written for St. Clare

Writings of Saint Clare

1LAg	First Letter to Agnes of Prague
2LAg	Second Letter to Agnes of Prague
3LAg	Third Letter to Agnes of Prague
4LAg	Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague
LEr	Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges
RCl	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCl	Blessing of Clare

Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
3Cel	Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
AP	Anonymous of Perugia
CL	Legend of Clare
CSD	Consideration of the Stigmata
Fior	Fioretti
JdV	Witness of Jacque de Vitry
LM	Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LMin	Minor Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LP	Legend of Perugia
L3S	Legend of the Three Companions
Proc	Acts of the Process of Canonization of St. Clare
SC	Sacrum Commercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

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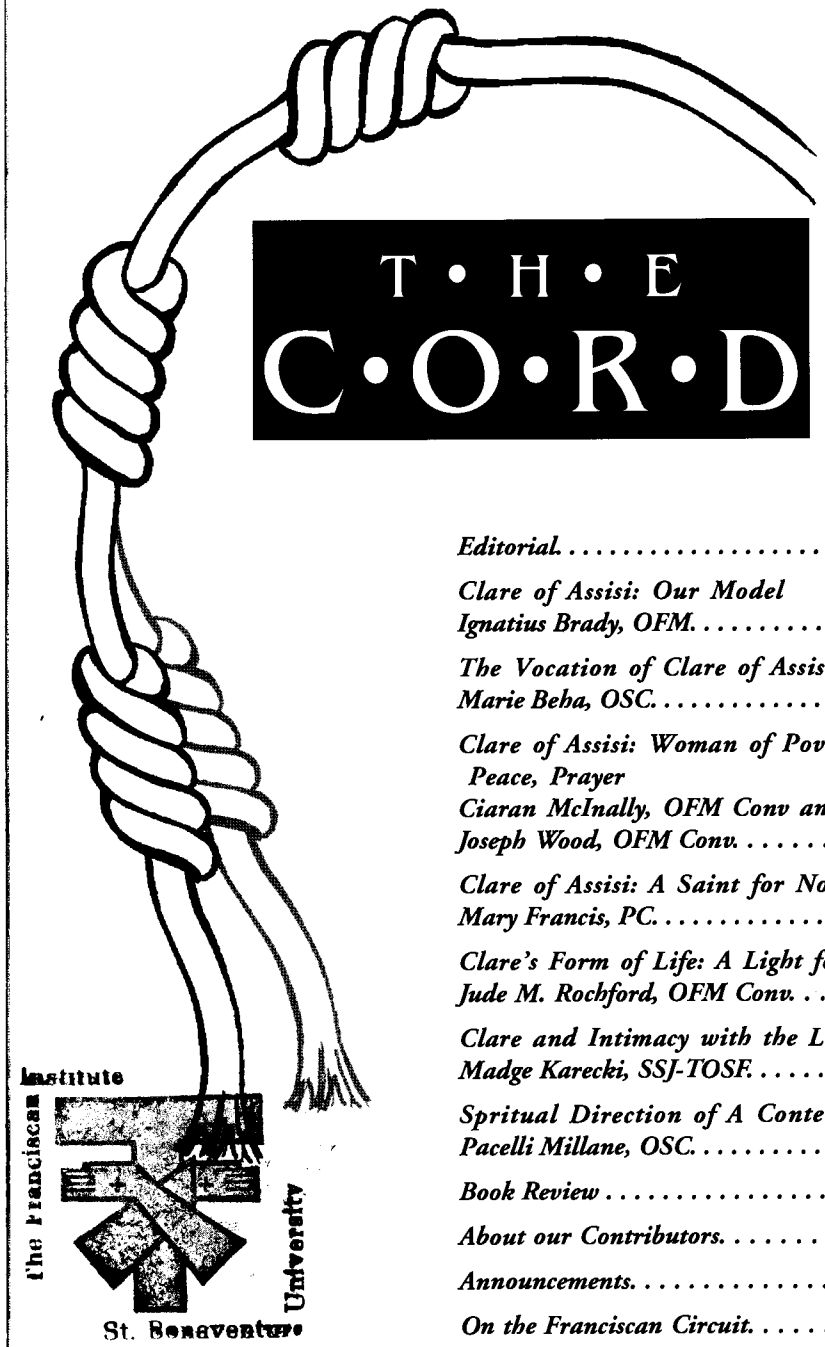

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual **Review**

Editor: Elise Saggau, **OSF**

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To save unnecessary delay and expense, contributors are asked to observe the following directives:

1. MSS should be submitted, preferably on disk, or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced.
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
   Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
   (1Cor. 13:6).
   (RegNB 23:2).
   (2Cel 5:8).
   (4LAg 2:13).

   A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. The edition of the Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss.

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Editorial

Traditionally *The Cord* devotes a summer issue to Clare of Assisi. Two years ago the Church celebrated the 800th anniversary of her birth. This event occasioned an intensification of writings about her, as well as updated translations of her own writings and of the earliest sources for her biography. Today we have unprecedented access to fine and authentic materials that help us to know better this outstanding medieval woman who, with Francis of Assisi, began a movement in the Church that has affected innumerable lives over the centuries.

In *Virgin Time*, Patricia Hampl expresses her impression of how Franciscans seem to know their founders personally. "They [speak] of Francis and Clare as of people who had just left the room for a moment."[1] There is something in the character of these "beginners" that transcends time and makes them seem not only still alive to us, but as intimate and accessible as our own brothers and sisters. It has been asserted that no other founders of religious orders are remembered by their followers with so much genuine affection and familiarity as Francis and Clare.They themselves laid claim to no special honor; their preference for humility, littleness, poverty and servanthood makes them seem to us, as they seemed to their contemporaries, very approachable. While they were highly respected by their followers, Clare and Francis nevertheless made others feel as though they were walking side by side with them, not on higher ground, not ahead. While they are called "Father" and "Mother," and rightly so, we know from their own writings and witness that they themselves aspired to be "brother" and "sister." They repeatedly held up, as the ideal of community life, brotherhood and sisterhood—what Clare called "the unity of mutual love" (RCl 4: 22; 10:7).

The charm that surrounds our memories of them may have been affected to some extent by a certain medieval Italian romanticism which attends the hagiographic process. But this cannot account for the full effect of this charm down through the centuries; a charm which continues to attract followers from all walks of life, all social stratas, all nationalities. The universal attractiveness of Francis and Clare has

within it the very charm of the Spirit of God, which continues Its holy manner of working in all times and places.

In this issue of *The Cord*, we meet Clare again in and through the reflections of Franciscan persons who, in our time, claim special relationship with her. Some are "Poor Clares" themselves, and their writings reveal the kind of intimacy which comes from walking closely in Clare's footprints in the very way of life she established 800 years ago. Some are friars whose personal spirituality has been enriched by this sister. One is a member of the Third Order Regular, who has found in Clare a luminous guide in the challenging work of living the Gospel way. Two of our contributors are "voices from the past": the reflections of Ignatius Brady, OFM, and Mary Francis, PC, were published in *The Cord* in 1953, on the occasion of the 700th centenary of Clare's death. Their messages continue to be "good news" for us today.

Endnote

[1] Patricia Hampl, *Virgin Time* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992) 117.

The Cord, 45.4 (1995)

Clare of Assisi: Our Model

Ignatius Brady, OFM

Frederick Ozanam says somewhere that there seems no great movement in the Church of God in which a woman does not share. How true this is even a momentary reflection on history will convince us. Planted by Francis in the "garden" of San Damiano, Clare of Assisi fast became the purest expression of his ideal, his greatest rival in the pursuit of Gospel perfection. All her life was a struggle to hold fast to that holiness of life and highest poverty which he had taught and had, at the end, exhorted in his "final will" for the Poor Ladies; and when Clare died on August 11, 1253, the world lost its purest witness to the true spirit of Saint Francis.

We may know her story; yet we must rehearse it again for ourselves, not to know the facts, but to love and to imitate her example. Unless we imitate what we celebrate, our festivals have a hollow ring and are without purpose. To know and love Clare, to imitate her, to celebrate her, we must know what Francis meant for her and what therefore he means for us. She must be our teacher in the ways of Francis, our model in our approach to and in our imitation of him and of the Christ in whose footprints he walked.

Her Vocation

When Clare lay dying in the first days of August 1253, her agony intensified by her inability to take food, Brother Reynaldo (perhaps

her confessor) approached to exhort her to patience in the midst of such sufferings. Clare answered his kind words quite pointedly: "Dearest Brother, from the time that I learned of the grace of God through His servant Saint Francis, no suffering has ever troubled me, no penance has been too hard, no infirmity too great." One divines that on her bed of pain her thoughts had gone back to those early days when God had given her the grace of her vocation through Francis, for it was in that vocation that she found strength to bear her sickness.

Such a remark reveals to us the role Francis played in her vocation. She had heard him preach at Assisi's cathedral of San Rufino, and the good ground of her heart opened to receive his words. She had gone to him at the Portiuncula and revealed what God had already inspired in her, a desire to serve Him alone. As the bridesman of Christ, Francis was quick to react (cf. CL 5-6), exhorting her to contempt of the world, showing her in vivid words the emptiness of earthly hopes and the deceptiveness of earthly beauty, portraying for her the sweet espousals of Christ, persuading her to keep the pearl of her maidenly purity for that blessed Bridegroom Whom love had made human. As she consented, God gave her a glimpse of heavenly joys, and earthly delights paled into insignificance, while her heart became afire with longing for the wedding of the Lamb.

Forthwith she committed herself wholly to the guidance of Francis, taking him to be, after God, the director of her new life. Henceforth her soul was guided by his holy teachings, and with warm and ready heart she took to herself whatever he told her of the good Jesus.

How she carried out their mutual plan, fleeing from home and being received at the Portiuncula and installed at last at San Damiano with her sister Agnes (who also followed her in death in November 1253), we know full well. But can we truly say that we have known and received the grace of our vocation through Saint Francis? When we entered the Order, was it under the inspiration received from the Poverello and with the conscious desire to follow what he taught by example and word of the imitation of Christ? Or did we "just happen" to join the sons and daughters of Francis? Does he now occupy such a place in our thoughts and desires that we constantly turn to him for instruction in our way of life, searching his Rule and Admonitions and other writings for the pattern we must follow? Do we above all turn to him in prayer, to thank him for our vocation, to ask him to be for us the leader of our way?

Her Model

Again, toward the end of her life, before her final illness, Clare

looked back over the forty or more years of her life of poverty and sacrifice and wrote her *Testament*. Francis had been dead for a quarter of a century, long since inscribed in the canon of the Saints and buried deep down beneath the great basilica that crowned Assisi. Yet, for her he lived, lived in her mind and in her heart and in her life. "The Son of God has been made for us the Way which our Blessed Father Francis, His true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example" (TestCl 5).

Then, like Francis in his *Testament*, Clare delineates the growth of the Poor Ladies, always under the guarding eye and guiding hand of the blessed Father. "Through his wonderful life and teachings, . . . [he encouraged us] . . . to the love of holy poverty and its observance. . . . Francis was our pillar [of strength] and, after God, our one consolation and support" (TestCl 26,34, 38). What she learned from him on the Way, the path of Christ, she would pass on to others, and in the end warn, admonish, and exhort them to follow: "Strive to follow the way of simplicity, humility and poverty, that upright and holy pattern of life, as we were taught from the beginning of our conversion to Christ through our blessed Father Francis." She teaches her sisters to love one another as members of one household, to have the spirit of prayer and devotion, to pursue poverty to the extreme, to live in unity and community. She addresses superiors (though neither Clare nor Francis use such a high-sounding word!). They are to fulfill their office by virtue and example before all else, knowing they are appointed or elected not for the dignity but for the burden, the good of others (TestCl 61-66). She addresses subjects (this word they will use!). They are to remember that for God's sake they have given up their own wills (TestCl 67-70).

This, very briefly, was the pattern of life which Francis had given his sons and through Clare his daughters. For Clare, as later for Bonaventure, the grace of God our Savior had appeared in Francis to all truly humble and lovers of holy Poverty, for these are taught by his example to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, to live conformed to Christ and to thirst with unwearied desire for the blessed hope held out to them. God raised him up to be a true follower, leader and herald of Gospel perfection, a light to those who believed, that he might prepare for the Lord the way of light and peace in the hearts of the faithful.

Clare our Model

In the Providence of God, every Founder gives to his little flock a

certain way of following Christ, a certain *nota*. Pius XI called it a character which must be impressed on the community. Need we then stress the obvious: that this is precisely what Saint Clare tried to impress on her own daughters? For them Francis was their model and example in the footsteps of Christ, so that they must look to him if they would be faithful to the graces of their vocation. Is she not, then, our teacher also, showing us how we are to approach Francis and what we are to find in him to imitate?

Following her lead, let us make the following practical conclusions on the basis of her approach:

First, do not let Saint Francis be a hazy figure of the distant past. There is always a danger that we think of him, as indeed of Christ Himself, as an historical figure of long ago and not as someone alive and present and important in our life, our daily life! Of course, seven hundred years separate us from Francis; whereas Clare knew him face to face and had to live but twenty-five years apart from him. Nineteen hundred years separate us from the earthly life of Jesus Christ. God grant we do not look on the Gospels and the Gospel life as ancient history! Christ is timeless, as is his teaching and his example; and so must Francis, in his own human way, be alive for us today, our teacher, leader, herald of the perfection of the holy Gospel, our channel, our mirror of Christ.

Secondly, stay close to the path pointed out by Francis. Do not neglect this fountain of life for other sources of spirituality. While indeed there is basically but one Way, with no substantial differences, there are, in the providence of God, diverse schools of spirituality based on particular approaches to Christian piety. These are often embodied in the spirit of an Order, its Rule and customs, its spiritual writers, its general outlook—and these incorporate the spirit of the Founder. Yet, how often, unfortunately for the individual and the community, do religious look elsewhere for guidance.

Thirdly, with Saint Clare, hang onto the words of Francis! It is all well and good to read the life of Saint Francis, provided we do not use some superficial, slanted version. But it is much better, more enriching and more rewarding to read and re-read, to ponder and to "chew" (as the medievals often said) the writings, the words of Francis himself. Here we go straight to the clear fountain, not to the rivulets. And if our reading is preceded and accompanied by devotion and prayer, his words cannot fail to take hold and shape our lives.

Lastly, we need a greater devotion to Clare, a love and appreciation of her, the purest mirror of Francis's ideals. May she help us to be little but vigorous and flowering plants of our God-given gardener!

The Cord, 45.4 (1995)

The Vocation of Clare of Assisi

Marie Beha, OSC

Introduction

Clare of Assisi was no theologian, no Scripture scholar. Though better educated than most women of her period and articulate above average for any century, Clare was first of all a realist. She lived what she believed; her faith was eminently practical. Perhaps that is one explanation for contemporary resurgence of interest in this saint who lived eight centuries ago.

We propose to examine her experience of vocation, not only her own contemplative Poor Clare call, but that invitation to personal response which God gives to each individual. We will do this by examining her writings and then suggesting some of the applications which can be made of her insights. We will consider:

Clare's understanding of being called;
her description of response to God's gracious invitation;
her guidelines for vocational discernment.

Clare's Understanding of Being Called

At the very heart of Clare's lived theology of vocation is the belief that call comes from God. The initiative is divine; even our response is only possible through God's enabling power. Clare is very clear on this and states her belief strongly: "The Lord Who has given a good beginning will also give the increase" (TestCl 77). And in her Rule,

written at the very end of her life, she returns to the same theme: "If by divine inspiration someone comes to us desiring to embrace our life. . ."(RCl 2:1). Vocation is always a work of the Spirit, "inspiring" our minds and attracting our hearts.

As a consequence, vocation is not a pious project, something we think that we ought to do "to save our soul." Nor is it only a pious idea: "I think religious life is more perfect." It is too personal to fit into such abstract categories. Nor is it something we determine, a desire we seek to fulfill. No matter how strong our wanting or our willing we cannot simply decide on a call, nor set careful boundaries around our response. As Clare says, vocation is gift: "Among the other gifts that we have received, there is the gift of our vocation" (TestCl 2). All we can do is receive it gratefully or refuse and suffer the loss.

Since vocation is God's inspiration we cannot perceive it directly. There is no special divine revelation with attendant thunder and lightning. All that we perceive immediately are its effects in our lives. God's call manifests itself in such good fruits as peace and happiness, a certain sense of "rightness," of having found a home. Over time we also grow in freedom and in self-knowledge. The latter, of course, can be a kind of two-edged sword. We want to know ourselves better, but we also fear what such self-knowledge might reveal about ourselves.

Some of the most authentic signs of a divinely inspired call wear just such negative faces: self-knowledge that humbles us, growing freedom that uncovers deeper layers of unfreedom. Feelings of repugnance and resistance are paradoxical evidences of God's action in our lives, since we do not resist what we do not experience as demandingly real. These may be even more relevant than the more enjoyable fruits of joy and peace, just because they are less likely to be counterfeit.

Vocation is a present reality calling for immediate response. It changes our here and now. But vocation also points beyond itself into that future which will be eternal. This is its excitement, as Clare points out to her friend, Agnes of Bohemia: "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" (RCL 8:4). Our God-given call is infinitely great; enough to last forever. No surprise that we presently experience it as beyond us.

Clare speaks of "holy vocation" (TestCl 17), "lofty profession" (TestCl 37), "the path of the Lord" (TestCl 74) and of "being called to such great things"(TestCl 21). No wonder she was always grateful for the work of divine love in her soul.

As gift, vocation is first and foremost given to the individual person. We are called in our uniqueness. Our vocation is "handmade," as it were, to express God's preferential love for us. But to recognise this and respond with appropriate gratitude requires the vision of faith. What may be first apparent is the element of sacrifice. We experience fear of the unknown. Unlike the apostles, we'd prefer to go on with whatever form of "fishing" was previously our livelihood. We may grow into gratitude only with a life-time of experience. So it is worth noting that Clare's own expressions of giftedness come from her Testament, written toward the end of her life.

This gift of individual vocation is incarnational, expressed in every detail of our lives. It is also communitarian, coming through others who articulate God's call, who exemplify it in ways that speak to our hearts. That was certainly the way in which Clare heard God's call. She proclaims in her Testament: "After the most high heavenly Father saw fit in His mercy and grace to enlighten my heart, that I should do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Father Francis. . ." (14). Francis was God's "voice" and Clare was eternally grateful to him.

This mediation of others often follows the paths of ordinary human relations, networks of grace among families and friends. In Clare's case, it was probably through her cousin Rufino that she was first introduced to Francis. And Clare herself, later on, exerted the same kind of familial influence, inviting her sisters Catherine and Beatrice and eventually even her own mother to join the Poor Sisters. Receiving our vocation through others and passing on what we have received is our vocational geneology. We could trace it with the same desire to learn more of our roots that prompts us to trace our family trees.

The gift of personal vocation becomes increasingly specific over the course of a lifetime, as we see in Clare's case. Even before her birth there were hints of her future call. A story, testified to by witnesses during the Process of Canonization, recalled how her mother knew that her daughter would someday be a "great light" which would illumine the world" (Proc 6:12). Similarly Francis, working to repair the church of San Damiano, prophesied that someday it would house a group of Poor Ladies who would "glorify our heavenly Father throughout His holy universal church by their celebrated and holy manner of life" (TestCl 14).

Moving from prophecy to realization, Clare's vocation unfolded in her home under the careful nurturing of her mother, Ortulana, and the pious women who joined with Ortulana to form a group of penitents. During her adolescence, Clare freely choose to respond to the gospel's challenge to sell her goods and give to the poor. She went so

far as to give away her patrimony and some of what belonged to her sister Catherine. Her practice of prayer and piety was such that she already had a reputation for holiness before she ever meet Francis. Having refused marriage, she was ready and waiting for God's further call. It was not long in coming.

On Palm Sunday, 1212, she left her home and joined Francis and his band of brothers. She knew she would be Franciscan. But did she know that God was inviting her to found and lead a whole new movement for religious women? Did she have an inkling of how her vocation would continue to unfold for 40 years? No; like us, all she could do was be "awake" and ready for each coming of the Lord. Hers was a life of faith's unfolding. The mystery of her vocation became increasingly clear as the years went on, just as ours does.

Though vocation is first of all a gift of increasingly specific invitation given to an individual person, it is also a gift given in a particular community context. No one's call is ever realized apart from others. It affects most those who are closest to us. For Clare these others were first her family and relatives, who responded, some with opposition, others with admiration and imitation. But that was only the beginning. Over the years, her vocation unfolded within the growing community of Poor Sisters with whom she lived. Together they grew in holiness, learning how they were to be for each other as the Spirit worked in each of their hearts. It could not have been easy, as Clare testifies, recalling "deprivation, poverty, hard work, trial, shame, contempt of the world"(TestCl 28). Over the years there were added the misunderstanding and even opposition of church authorities, the seeming lack of support even from Francis himself, the loneliness of the vision of her vocation, shared by few. In the end, however, it is all "mercy" and "kindness," as we read in her Testament (15), not only for the herself, but for others.

Vocation is also a gift given by the community which receives the individual. Clare spoke of the sisters whom the Lord had given her (TestCl 25) and describes their vocation as the mutuality of sisters. She also prescribed in her Rule that whenever an aspirant asked to join the Poor Sisters, all the members of the community would have equal vote as to whether she would be received among them (RCl 2:1). In this way she expresses the life-long mutual responsibility for individual and community to nurture vocation, to grow in it and to give thanks for it. Specifically it requires community to welcome newcomers, to be patient with their introduction into community, willing to make the sacrifices that will undoubtably be part of the adjustment process, as well as be part of their formation by the power of their example.

Finally, vocation is gift given to and for the whole Church. So Clare speaks of the sisters not only being an example to each other but of living in such a way that they build up the whole Body of Christ (TestCl 58-60). Clare saw her Poor Sisters' vocation as firmly rooted in the Church; so she struggled all her life for confirmation of the way of life she professed, obtaining approval of her Rule only on her deathbed.

She wanted candidates to be examined "concerning the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the church" (RCl 2:3), and she desired that all the sisters realize that, hidden as they were in the very heart of God, their fidelity or infidelity carried consequences for others greater than they could imagine.

With typical practicality, Clare understands that this life of living the gospel with its attendant conversion is to be realized in a particular monastery where each is to be "a mirror and example" for all her Sisters and for whole world (TestCl 1:9).

Vocational Response

As we have already seen, Clare's theology of vocation places special emphasis on call as gift. But gifts are gifts only if received as such. So her equal stress on gratitude: "Among the other gifts that we have received and do daily receive . . . and for which we must express the deepest thanks to the Glorious Father of Christ, there is our vocation"(TestCl 2). Note that gratitude is not a once in a while sort of thing, saved for anniversaries or jubilees; it is something that rises daily in our hearts. We give thanks each day because our call is new each day, i.e., renewed as we experience this day the liberating love of God in ways we have never known before. Ingrid Peterson, in a lecture given in Tampa in 1994, spoke of vocation as a "gift that keeps on giving." Clare would have agreed with such a dynamic understanding.

None of which rules out an honest expression of reluctance. Though in our better moments we experience call as treasure, at other times we are reluctant, even resistent to its demands. We would rather remain where we are, safe and secure, than attempt to cross desert.

To go beyond this very human fear of the divine, Clare stresses vocational response as "choice" (TestCl 16). No one can choose for us; not our family; not some well-meaning advisor. We must say our own "yes," repeating it deeply and often, in good times and in bad, as well as in the ordinary times that make up most of our days.

But we choose only what we know. Clare requires that the "tenor of our life be thoroughly explained to her [the candidate] so she can

make a knowledgeable choice" (RCl 2:6). This responsibility of informing newcomers falls, first of all, on the abbess and the novice director, as Clare points out (RCl 2:20). But ultimately it is a concern of the whole community, since it is their life together which will be the most formative of all. What we live is what we see lived. And we are especially vulnerable to being formed by the words and example of others in our beginnings.

Informed choice, important though it is, is still not enough. We must respond with all the freedom that is ours. We must choose and choose strongly. As Clare reminds Agnes of Prague: "You have rejected all those things and have chosen with your whole heart and soul a life of poverty and destitution" (1LAg 6). This choice of ours must be repeated often, surely daily, and in all the various circumstances of life. It needs to be professed in whatever way this can be done: written, spoken to others, and, most of all, affirmed before God.

One of the paradoxes of vocational responsibility is that freedom is combined with a certain "existential necessity," as Sandra Schneider terms it. God invites our response, waits upon it, but never forces our compliance. Though we experience God's exquisite courtesy we also know we "must" answer . . . now . . . and in this way, not for God's sake but for our own.

We also perceive God's freedom and our own as we experience our repeated "delays" in response, our compromises, even our refusals. We can say "no" . . . and we do! But God never says "no" to us. There are always more gifts to be given, different ones, depending on our response. Even though we are unfaithful, God remains faithful and generous. It is this unfailing generosity of God which helps us continue growing in freedom and responsibility. The answer we give to God makes a difference, an eternal difference. Yet our choice should not be a nervous one. God does not play a pea-under-the-shell game with us: one choice and we had better get it right. If we search for our vocation, we will find it, because we will be found.

The third element of vocational response that receives special stress in Clare's lived theology is that of perseverance. She reminds Agnes of Prague: "Always remember your resolution and be conscious of your beginning" (2LAg 11). And "If anyone would suggest something contrary to your divine vocation, even though you must respect him, do not follow his counsel" (2LAg 17).

Life-long perseverance despite opposition is more than we can do. It too is a gift of God. "The Lord Himself, Who has given a good beginning, will also give the increase and final perseverance" (TestCl 78). But like vocation itself, perseverance calls for a corresponding response on our part. We choose, as definitively as we can, as specifically as we can. Then we can safely leave the burden of proving something to others; first of all, to God who cares for us so much and then to the members of our community.

This commitment, once made needs to be incarnated in all the various circumstances of our life. We need to find ways to live out our call here and now. As Clare says, if someone decides to enter the Poor Sisters, then: "Let the words of the holy gospel be addressed to her that she should go and sell all that she has and take care to distribute the proceeds to the poor" (RCl 2:7). It was a response that Clare had given even before she joined Francis, when she sold her patrimony as witness of her desire to live as a poor woman.

In summary, committed response is validated in life changes. Conversion remains a staple of Franciscan vocational response. "After the Most high heavenly Father saw fit in His mercy and grace to enlighten my heart to do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed father Francis, a short while after his conversion, I together with a few sisters whom the Lord had given me after my conversion . . ."(TestCl 24). Perseverance, then, does not just mean holding steady; more realistically it means changing in the light of our call. Unless we do that we cannot expect to receive the gift of perseverance. So it is relevant to ask: Do we know what needs to be changed in the light of God's invitation? Can we be told by others, by life circumstances? Are we able to change or are we too old, too unwilling? Can we risk asking for the gift of persevering in conversion of life for all the days of our life?

Discerning Vocation

Discernment has been described as "having a noticing heart." Clare certainly did. She relied on this gift of the Spirit at work in her own life and in the lives of her Sisters and imbedded its practice in her Rule. Here we will concentrate on a few of the suggestions she makes relevant to vocational discernment in a contemplative community.

In the section on formation in her Rule, she describes both positive and negative signs indicative of a candidate's capacity for Poor Clare life. She speaks of the abbess's responsibility to see that there is no "impediment to her [the candidate's] observance of this life" (RCl 2:5). She goes on to list some of these, beginning with "advanced age." In Clare's day, as in our own, the question of how old is too old was a more complex issue than simply chronology. We know that Clare received her own mother among the Poor Sisters so could not have ad-

mitted only young women. Then, as now, the issue is capacity to adapt, to change, along with sufficient health to sustain the transition to a radically different life-style. Today the tendency is to accept older candidates into religious life and to raise serious question about someone being too young. In her day, Clare, according to the custom of the time, received young girls into the monastery, provided for their needs and only admitted them to the novitiate if they freely chose to enter. This emphasis on the maturity necessary to make a free and deliberate choice remains a relevant criterion.

Clare also speaks of ill health as an impediment. What kind of health is needed for monastic life? In cases of doubt, for example those raised by a chronic illness, it is probably better to give someone an opportunity to try the life and see how she responds to it. Some may even grow stronger in the steady rhythm of the monastery; in other cases illness may make it impossible for an individual to get beyond sickness and so enter into the life.

As a third impediment, Clare speaks of "mental weakness." The term is apt for what today we would call mental illness or a personality disorder. Again the discernment focuses around how this affects the individual's capacity to live our form of life; especially how it affects relationships. Such illness can be far more crippling than a life-threatening physical sickness. Here one must distinguish lack of emotional balance from passing problems caused by stress or associated with the emptying of the unconscious that is part of growth in prayer.

Finally Clare reiterates church teaching that a candidate must be unmarried, or, "if married, her husband has taken a vow of chastity." We know that, in practice, Clare admitted widows. Today we face the complicated questions of divorce, annulment, homosexual relationships and having had children outside of marriage. Some questions are so delicate that only the most general policies can be made; both the individual and the community must be considered. Hard as it may seem, in cases of doubt, the benefit must be given to the community in view of the greater good..

Negative criteria clearly indicate that a vocation is lacking; the candidate should not be received. But lack of impediment does not equal a call; positive signs must be discernible and with equal clarity. In this section of her Rule, Clare only indicates one positive criterion: the candidate must "profess and believe the Catholic faith (RCl 2:3-4). It is a discernment question equally important today when so many are unchurched or, while baptized, have never practiced the faith. Ours is a period of religious confusion, much like Clare's own. Like her we live in a post-conciliar era and experience the special stress of religious

upheaval. Some who seek admittance have only recently come into the Church and are in their first fervor of conversion. However they lack the balance of mature practice. Others have channeled all their spiritual energy in one direction; for example into the Charismatic or Cursillo movements, and now confuse a desire to go deeper with a call to religious life. Still others are cradle Catholics but with very limited instruction in their faith, knowing little of how it affects daily life. There are no easy answers; the focus of concern needs to be whether this person has a solid enough foundation to support the building which she is being call to build.

Always the fundamental discernment criteria are: can this person live the life she is considering? does she desire it enough to make the necessary sacrifices? Neither question can be answered with absolute certitude. We can only make a rough estimate of ability; we can never judge motivation. We must concern ourselves with prioritizing the required dispositions, as Clare herself does for those wanting to become Poor Sisters.

Naturally enough she places the ability to live in poverty as one of her first priorities, along with a capacity for obedience and chastity. The vows are radical renunciations; they require a bedrock of maturity. Otherwise an individual may be fixated on fulfilling security needs, working through adolescent rebellion against authority or seeking the apparent safety of a single-sex environment.

Along with a capacity for living the vowed life, there is the even more radical requirement of desiring to do so in this particular community at this particular time in its history. Living in close community is always demanding; doing so in an enclosed community requires some very special ways of relating to others. One must be capable of close interpersonal relationships as well as the solitude necessary for growth in contemplative prayer. And this with the same people for all the days of one's life. It is a large order for discernment. Unless solid evidence of growth in these directions can be observed in concrete behavior, a vocation is not present; the candidate should not be accepted.

As if this were not enough already, Clare goes on to add some other criteria: contentment with simple work; ability to preserve the spirit of prayer and to find nourishment in the liturgy; above all one must be willing to sustain continued conversion. It is the work of a lifetime. That is the promise and the challenge of God's call inviting our free response. It will fill our life, be fulfilled in our death and give glory to God for all eternity.

The Cord, 45.4 (1995)

Clare of Assisi: Woman of Poverty, Peace, Prayer

Ciaran McInally, OFM Conv. and Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.

On January 10, 1993, Pope John Paul II observed the 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Clare with an address to the Poor Clares commending her as a role model of poverty, peace and prayer. The Papal visit to the Clares of Assisi was a providential event, coinciding with a gathering of international religious leaders in Assisi to pray for world peace. The immediate focus of their attention was the tragic situation in former Yugoslavia.

It was shortly after these notable events that the Italian-American artist, Mark Balma, a long time local resident of Assisi and a student of the late Pietro Annigoni, approached Bishop Sergio Goretti with the request to fresco new art in the barren nave of the Basilica of Saint Clare. Balma's intention, supported by the benefactors of the Saint Paul Foundation in Minnesota, was to reflect the Papal admonitions, reminding all people that prayer and simplicity of lifestyle are our only secure defense against evil and self-destruction.

In August, 1994, after developing preliminary sketches in collaboration with the Poor Clares themselves, Balma began the actual frescoing. On October 3, 1994, the official closing of the Clare celebrations, the Italian Ministry of Art dedicated the three new panels and the Bishop of Assisi blessed them.

Balma thoughtfully adapted the very style and movement of the three frescoed episodes to the structure which would house the art. The Basilica of Saint Clare, though patterned after the Basilica of Saint Francis, is a narrower structure, more supple in form, quiet of stature. A softness of embracing light envelopes the pilgrim in calm and peace. The overall feeling is a sense of giving, of the darkness of impending birth, of a womb nurturing life in others. We are invited to stay awhile, to reflect and meditate on the life of this woman from centuries past who still speaks so profoundly today.

Woman of Poverty

In the first panel on the left, we see Clare receiving alms from a young woman. Although the friars were the official beggars for the Poor Ladies (as they were titled during Clare's lifetime), what we see here is that many of the townspeople also brought food to the sisters. In this instance, a young woman, perhaps impressed by the lifestyle of Clare, may be considering entrance into the community. The artist's intention to subdue the work in monochrome coloration, serenely blending the story into the stark walls of the nave, directs our attention to this young woman's soft and radiant expression, thoroughly absorbed in the face of the Mother Abbess. Although just the slightest profile of Clare's face can be distinguished, she appears fatigued. Clare, we must remember, was severely ill, even bedridden, for many years. In this first panel Clare is shown as a woman who is not an ethereal saint. She struggled with the day-to-day routine of caring for others and praying for a suffering world. Although interiorly at peace, as ever attested by her biographers, she was, like us, a human person who became tired. It is the glow on the face of the young woman which

offers new hope, new life. We may even say, using her own spiritual imagery, that Clare's face, far from being hidden, is mirrored in the face of the young woman. This bond of young and old speaks of the sacredness of the cycle of life. Others will take our place. Ours is but a short moment upon this earth. The two women have become one, past and future.

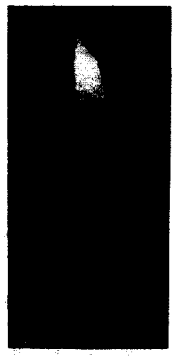
The very starkness of the cloistered walls, a striking element of the entire triptych, might suggest that Clare's hidden life was a barren existence. Yet this primary encounter of young and old reminds us of the paradox of the Song of Songs, which speaks poetically of sojourning in the desert in order to meet God. Only there does the Divine bridegroom encounter his bride, Israel. This primary encounter of desert, enclosure, wedding, expectant fertility—the young woman and the elderly Clare—is again metaphorically mirrored through the doorway in a reinforcing secondary meditation. In the distant countryside we see the cypress trees rising in dignity on the right, imaging Clare's constant prayer, reaching ever toward the heavens. In ancient times the cypress was linked with the cult of the dead, representing immortality. The ark of Noah and the interior decoration of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem were paneled with cypress wood. In Christian usage, the ark of Noah and the Ark of the Covenant housed in the Temple have always symbolized the womb of the Virgin Mary. The womb offers new life and hope to the world through continual recreation. The lives of Clare and her contemplative sisters were no less fertile because they were virgins. We are all called to bring life into the world, to renew and to recreate life. Through the doorway the ancient olive trees appear on the left. They are proudly displaying their weathered years of struggle and growth, yet are still able to bear an abundance of fruit.

The elder Clare is willingly accepting the gift of food from the young woman through an expression of humility. In ancient liturgical traditions, the superior would offer the junior sister an embrace of peace by a reach from above. In this instance however, Clare, a woman who breaks the mold on so many religious traditions, is receiving the act of charity by extending her embrace of welcome from below. Clare, the virgin bride, is ever receptive to love incarnate.

The bundle of bread being offered is actually pieces of bread. This is not a fresh-baked loaf, but bits and pieces gathered from many houses. The young woman has learned from Clare's example and has humbled herself through begging. She even comes to the door barefooted in imitation of the Ladies whom she wishes to honor. We could say that the bundle is Eucharistic, incarnational. Her tender handling of the offering is reminiscent of the infant Christ. Again, in her writings, Clare

often reminded her sisters that each of their virginal wombs was the tabernacle of the Risen Christ. The contemplative was to give birth to Christ in every action.

Woman of Prayer



The panel on the right has Clare bowed down in humble prostration, acknowledging her nothingness before God, who is represented, yet barely seen, in the upper left corner, in the risen Christ of the San Damiano cross. The commission of the voice which spoke to Francis from this cross in the spring of 1204 is a constant theme for the Lady Clare: " Go and rebuild my house." She, like Francis, rebuilt the Church with spiritual stones. In her sufferings, in her penances, she became Christ crucified for the salvation of others. Although enclosed, she was ever receiving visitors for spiritual counseling and medical treatment.

Unnoticed by the prayerful figure, a gentle breeze blows through the window reminding us of the prophet Isaiah's admonition that God speaks in the delicate zephyr, not in the storm wind. Christ is present in an enclosed convent through the life of contemplation, no less powerfully than in the active life.

The small sparrow, a plain and common bird of central Italy, often referred to as a " Franciscan bird, " perches on the windowsill, unafraid of the quiet world of this convent nest. It is safe; it speaks of home. In the same window, the olive branch appears, as in every panel. The fruit of the olive, so much a part of the staple food of the region, again reminds us of Clare's fertility. Her life is nurturing as oil for cooking, as fuel for light and warmth, as ointment for healing, as balm for anointing and commissioning.

Woman of Peace

The central panel represents the peace of Clare. She is engulfed in the rich lapis blue, so common in the background of Renaissance art. It is the blue of timelessness, the blue of marriage between heaven and earth. Clare' s gaze is peaceful but intent. She is not staring blankly in ecstasy, but she is portrayed in active listening. We have trespassed into a moment of pure attention. In this central panel, Clare herself is radiant. In the other two panels the light radiates from the outside. Within Clare the light is that of the Beloved on whom she has gazed for so many years. Her active listening is a witness to her life of obedi

ence, a word deriving from the Latin root, *audire*, to hear, to listen. The added prefix makes it *ob-audire*, signifying attentive listening, so that the mind and the heart are given to the action. It is by being attentive to the will of God that we go forth to serve the needs of others.

Clare's hands and feet are overly large. As a woman of noble heritage, Clare has willingly descended from her station to ascend into nobility of soul. She has lived the life of a hard-working peasant, making herself an example for all, earning her livelihood by the labor of her hands and relying on the generosity of others. Her pose directs the viewer's attention to the cross, two branches bound together, which in Clare's hands have become a scepter of royalty and a staff of shepherding. As in the other two panels, a fertile olive branch appears, blossoming forth from the stem of the cross. Clare's perseverance and confident trust in the providence of God have allowed her to be crowned with an aureole of olive sprigs, an ancient mythological symbol of Hercules crowning the winners of the Olympic Games, commissioning them to serve the gods. In a Christian adaptation, the saints are commissioned to serve the Son of God.

Although the eighth centenary of the birth of Saint Clare is officially over, this new artistic creation will help keep alive the spirit of this noble woman.

Addendum: The three new frescoes were displayed in the Basilica of St. Clare for six months. They are now permanently housed in the museum of the Cathedral of San Rufino.

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CLARE OF ASSISI: A SAINT FOR NOW

Mary Francis, PC

Many persons have been impressed by the new perspective on hagiography given in the currently popular, *Saints for Now*. The fact that none of the gifted authors represented in the collection thought that Clare of Assisi was a saint-for-now may be a tribute to the obscurity she fostered, but it is also a judgment on the blindness of our age. The saints whose lives are sketched in the engaging collection can all ably prove their claim to belong to our "now;" but their company would certainly have been enriched by a certain barefoot nun with little laughter wrinkles around her beautiful, illness-hollowed eyes, and lips shaped as well for singing as for compassion. Two of the writers chose our Saint Francis as the saint-for-now. Did no one think of the utterly lovely lady whose life was the incarnation of his ideals?

To recognize Clare of Assisi as a saint-for-now, we need first to clarify the needs and to study the complexion of our times. Who was it said, so deliciously, that the hero of whom he wrote was "born in a troubled age—just as everyone else is!" It is easy to subscribe to the dour philosopher's view, crediting our age as the most desperately wicked of all epochs. Perhaps it is. We have managed to systematize cruelty beyond anything our forbears did in that line. We have com-

mercialized sin and made it a paying enterprise. We have also, however, proved that our wells of charity and goodness are far from dry, and have manifested a compassion far more vast than its antithetical cruelty. Our age is probably no more diabolically evil than the age which ignited Christians' bodies for lamps in its Roman parks; probably no better than the age when craft workers spent whole lives perfecting a turret of a cathedral, or kings marched to the Crusades. But it has its particular deficiencies, the first of which seems to be a lack of thorough-going courage. This is particularly evident in our own country where the vast majority are content to compromise with evil rather than to fight a clear-cut battle for the truth they own and the ideals they profess. Compromise is often a sin against courage, and we have become adept in its practice. Compromise and expediency are the watchwords taken up to silence the small clamor of consciences. And we like to forget that it is supernatural prudence which is praiseworthy, and that human prudence often gives insult to God.

Clare of Assisi was incapable of compromise where there was no room for alternative. We can all dream over the romance of her elopement to Saint Mary of the Angels, her investiture in the rough robe of poverty, her adamant stand against all and whoever opposed her ideals. Can we likewise rouse ourselves to a vital concept of what courage a girl of eighteen, wealthy, lovely, cherished and pursued, required to become the first daughter of the Poverello? Francis was an enigma to those to whom he was not an object of suspicion. His little ragged band of friars had no official status in the Church at that time. He had no security to offer the beautiful young Clare, not even to the extent of the next day's dinner (and one wonders where he contrived to get the shabby habit he threw over her fine gown)—nothing, in effect, but a dream as mad as the Gospel and his personal guarantee that, as his daughter, she would always be entitled to nothing at all.

Clare was no more a "dreamer" in the modern accepted sense of that word than was Francis. G. K. Chesterton has said that most of us are so "offcenter" in our mediocrity that we juxtapose our position with that of the true "centrics" and arrive at the remarkable conclusion that truesighted geniuses and literal-minded saints are the eccentrics. Francis and Clare were so centric that the world could defend its own pathetic dullness and cowardice only by calling them eccentric dreamers. Such courage as Clare had, to take absolutely everything on a principle she knew to be sound and true, is the antidote for our age poisoned with pusillanimity and the small, crawling fears for our comfort, our false security, our cultivated lethargy. The courage of a young girl who thought true values worth the highest stakes is the draught of

fresh air needed in our hothouse world of today. And, if we tend to dwell only on the beauty of the act of humiliation when Clare gripped hold of the altar with one hand and snatched off her veil with the other to uncover her shorn head before her raging relatives, we might also find there a trace of Clare's delightful humor, the humor that true courage always begets. The shorn lamb of Francis, facing those fulminating Italians, says the equivalent of: "And that, my dears, is that!" If we have forgotten how to laugh, it is because we have lost courage.

Thirty years later, ill and worn, this same brave woman could issue calm orders above the hue and cry of the fast-approaching barbarian invaders, and then face them with the serenity of faith, whispering to her Lover that sweet quasi-reproach of a sublime courage: "Deliver not, my Lord, to beasts, the souls of them who praise You." There never was a situation nor a person to daunt Clare. When some of the first friars lost heart and courage for the ideal of their Father, Francis turned his sad steps to San Damiano where there was one heart that never knew any diminution of faith in him or courage to cling to his ideal. Meditating on the overwhelming griefs of Francis in those day of "too many friars" and too little courage and on his humble turning to his first daughter for comfort and support, we feel a sense of warmest gratitude for Clare's constancy and the loyal courage of her Poor Ladies at San Damiano. The lines of Chesterton's exquisite carol might have been written as the cry of Francis's anguished heart as it healed at the monastery of his daughters: "O, weary, weary is the world; but here is all aright!" It was all aright because Clare had the courage of faith and taught it to her daughters. Not even the Pope could persuade her to turn a least left or a merest right from the straight path of Francis's teaching. Again, there is a trace of Clare's quiet humor in her sweetly humble but calculatedly adamant reply to Pope Gregory IX: "Holy Father, absolve me from my sins, but not from my vow of poverty." Courage like Clare's could remake the face of our wavering society today.

The breviary has astonishing comments to make on Clare. The same childlike calm boastfulness of: "Our God is in Heaven and does whatever He pleases" asserts that Clare is "more shining than light." God created light as the first miraculous diffusion of divine splendor. Holy Church lets Clare's daughters claim that God made in their Mother something to outshine light itself. Each August on her feast day, Poor Ladies throughout the world take up their breviaries and sing out, in how many hundreds of bare little choirs, that: "The brightness of Clare has filled the whole earth."

If we quote Chesterton again, let us lay the blame on his own

surpassing love for Francis and Clare. It was G. K. who insisted that "Chastity is not mere abstention . . . it is something [positive and] flaming." It was in Clare. Her purity was a white flame yearning up towards Love. It was radiant. It blazed. Only the pure really know how to love. And Clare, who was fashioned for loving, made no apologies for the rugged measures she took to preserve that wisdom. The thousands who endure tortures to effect a semblance of physical beauty in themselves shudder at the notion of a perpetual fast, a continual silence, an endless cycle of vigils and the other means Clare used to insure the beauty of her spirit and that of her daughters. With her, it was always a question of penance, yes, but penance for 1ove's sake! She knew that without love, penance is as meaningless as turns on a trapeze.

Belief in the Communion of Saints, the Mystical Body of Christ, was the second living principle actuating Clare in her life of penance. She knew that, on the mysterious scales of Divine Justice, the penances of the Poor Ladies would avail for the impenitent in the world, that their purity would weigh against the impurity of others. A return to the humble paths of Clare, who was "purer than light," could rekindle the blaze of youth in modern hard young faces, could release incredible vials of fragrance down the odorous streets of our stale age.

It is the nature of goodness to diffuse itself quietly. It is the nature of evil to defend itself, and most often noisily. We have called Clare of Assisi the candle in Umbria, because that seemed the truest symbol of her life and of her soul. She who was brave against the dark as candleflame is brave, pure in her flicker of life as candlelight is pure, was also quiet in her sanctity as the constant candle is quiet in giving up all that makes it a candle. The real office of a candle is to cease to be a candle. And the basic business of one aspiring to perfection is to become Someone Else. It is an extremely difficult business, for one does get so attached even to the unpleasant person one is!

It has been said that the predominant evil of any age ultimately manages to scale cloister walls. If the world has found that a constant racket will, in time, fill in its thought chambers and outcry its consience, religious need likewise to be careful that they do not camouflage a great lack of being with a great deal of doing. The hero of the hour is the one who can do the most things in the shortest possible time, but such a one may make a sorry religious.

In her century, when abbesses were more often than not women-of affairs with huge temporal holdings and immense households, enjoying the prestige of worldly queens, Clare quietly shut herself up in dilapidated old San Damiano. And, at once, it was a monastery. Not

because it was grand or picturesque or thriving, but because it was a house of prayer and a haven of silence, where souls devoted themselves to the most intense of all activities: passivity. Most of the first Poor Ladies were noblewomen; one was a princess royal. To all of them, Clare offered nothing in substitute for the trumpeting and adulation they had known in the world, except prayer and solitude and poverty. She herself has left us not even one colorful statement on the political character of her times. And if some Popes have sought temporal counsel from certain saints, three Popes sought at San Damiano the spiritual counsel of one whose only concern with the world was for its soul, a concern of quiet prayer and self-immolation. When the aged Innocent IV found himself prostrated by temporal tragedies as well as by spiritual anguish, he came to his "daughter and mother, the Lady Clare," not for a plan of action, but to renew his own soul in the quiet of her holiness. It has never been claimed that Francis asked Clare what to do about recalcitrants or schismatics; it is known that he found his own answers in her serene loyalty.

We learn nowhere so quickly and yet so profoundly as we learn in quiet. Because the world cannot bear to learn about itself or to look in on its own wizened soul, it fears and hates quiet. It hustles, because it cannot afford to think. It rivets and blares because it dare not be still. Ours is an age of accomplishment, but one draws in the breath to think of what real and lasting accomplishments could spring out of a return to the silence of contemplation. The very word, contemplation, ought to be the most companionable of words for any soul, since it is the term of our eternal destiny. Yet most persons are ill at ease with it. Action and noise are less demanding companions. By modern standards, Clare of Assisi's life was wasted. She built no hospitals, introduced no system of pedagogy, made no speeches, wrote no books, did not even proclaim a new way of sanctity. The Gospel was her way. Francis was her guide. And her destiny was the quiet of utter union with God her Lover

Clare had a taste for solitude and a talent for quiet. By indulging the one and perfecting the other, she learned the very secrets of God and gained open sesame to God's heart. Her first spiritual daughters have told us of their Mother's increasing hunger for hours of companionship with her Divine Spouse in the quiet of private prayer. The Poor Clares' prayer schedule would probably seem staggering to most persons. For Clare, it was never sufficient. When her daughters slept, Clare remained before the Blessed Sacrament, lost in the quiet of her perfect union with God. How many times her daughters saw flames or rings of light about her head when she knelt in quiet prayer, oblivious of

earth! Her quiet, "useless" life brought her to such intimacy with Christ that when dying she could say to him with a sweet simplicity that brings tears to our own eyes: "I thank you for having created me." Hers was the true courtesy of Francis. One is reminded of Mother Janet Stuart of our own times who died, not with a protest of *her* love for God on her lips, but with a Franciscan cry of simple wonder: "Oh, how He loves me!" In the simple song that was Clare's life, the ictus was always on God.

Clare is the saint of silence. She has left us no autobiography, no guidebooks, no "accomplishments." Like Mary herself, she left us the legacy of her quiet. We need it so acutely, we poor, noisy, busy little people. Her courage, her blazing purity, her perfect quiet are her claims to twentieth century veneration. Her valor sweetly rebukes our pusillanimity; her exquisite purity pleads for our stale generation; the great, missionary heart that beat for all the world in the silence of her cloister sends its throb across seven centuries to us now. If we look for light in these dark days, let us hear Francis's simple directive, uttered over and over again to sufferers of his own age and confided to our age from Heaven: "Go to the Lady Clare."

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Clare's Form Of Life: A Light For Us

Jude M. Rochford, OFM Conv.

Did you ever receive an unexpected letter? Some days ago I received such a letter. It was addressed to the Poor Clares and others who love Francis and Clare. The letter, "Clare of Assisi, the New Woman," was written by the Ministers General of the Franciscan family on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Clare (1193-1993). It has since reaffirmed my form of life. This letter could touch your life. Let me explain more completely the precious treasure I found.

Can a Franciscan friar have a cherished, brotherly relationship to Clare, a cloistered woman of the 13th century? How can this letter refresh and transform our way of living? Questions such as these may be yours too!

For those in the Franciscan way of life this letter can be a source of encouragement to continue the journey begun on profession day. For anyone who loves Clare it gives strong medicinal remedies for spiritual aching muscles and deep wounds. It uplifts the healthy, athletic Christian to continue the fight against evil.

Repeated again and again in this letter are six refrains which help us re-examine our religious lives. They are: charity, the spirit and letter of the law, work, self-development, poverty versus materialism, and contemplation. It is in these noble virtues that Clare excelled.

Charity

The theological virtue of charity (Col 3:14) is to be practiced not only by talking about it but by gracious acts of love. We are to love as God loves, ourselves and all God's creatures. In what ways do we fail in loving our brothers and sisters? The lived example of Francis and Clare can help. The letter admonishes and condemns such sins against charity as murmuring, detraction and calumny, which are caused by envy and vainglory. These acts are "odious" to God. They are wounds inflicted on the Spirit of the Lord and mutual charity. Francis said they are the ruin of the Order (Adm 14).

The Ministers General say that these offences against charity are found in our communities. They cause many sad experiences. How often have we divided and separated community members simply by deliberate reciprocal negative judgements about others. We often do this by insinuations and misunderstandings about matters that are in themselves unimportant. We exaggerate and "make mountains out of molehills."

The Spirit of the Lord should make us fully alive. In our loving obedience to the ever merciful God as found in the bountiful act of creation, we assist God in rebuilding the Church. By petty fault-finding we remove the mortar and stones of God's edifice. Working toward unity in a variety of ways in interpersonal relationships enriches our Christian, evangelical way of life. Francis and Clare emphasize mutual charity again and again. They remind us that we should follow the example of Christ and his mother Mary.

Spirit and Letter of the Law

Today, as in the past, there continues to be much questioning and dialogue, within the Franciscan Order and the Church, about the meaning and application of the words, "spirit and letter of the law." Consideration of these words moves us to determine what is primary and what is secondary in our unique, Christian, evangelical form of life. The interpretation of spirit and letter can either help or obstruct fidelity to our vowed life.

Clare, in her interpretation of "spirit and letter of the law," insisted on total fidelity to Christ and Mary. This was her only concern—unity in the bond of love lived in the service of her espoused Lover.

In her Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges she writes:

> Love God and Jesus, His Son, who was crucified for us sinners... Do not be afraid.... Pray to God for one another, for by carrying each other's burden of charity in this way we will easily fulfill the law of Christ (LEr 4-17).

Clare did this in the enclosure—in silence, in prayer, in poverty and in unity with the sisters. Such love was healthy and respected a holy pluriformity in the context of a consensual model of living together. It dealt with interpersonal relationships among the sisters, with the community and with the Church's leaders. It held no esteem for privileges and particular human friendships.

Clare discerned the priorities in her life and distinguished the primary from the secondary. Following Christ via the way of Francis, who was her comforter in body and soul and who established her in God's grace, she held in highest esteem the charity, the spirit of prayer, the privilege of poverty, the Spirit of the Lord and unity in human love. Of less importance for her were names and titles, which she accepted only as permissible and useful.

It seems entirely foreign to the spirit of Clare to engage in controversial discussion over matters undefined in the Rule or in the doctrinal life of the Church, be they spiritual or literal interpretations. She always urged a spirit of unity and charity, as opposed to dissension and division. For her, "mutual love is the bond of perfection" (RCl 10: 7).

A spirit of peace resulted from Clare's sharing of responsibility and insisting on the participation of even the least one within the community. She remained faithful to God, to the Church, to Francis, to her sisters and to all creatures.

Clare's trust in God's goodness and in other human beings confronts us with the need to reexamine our own attitudes toward faithfulness to the Word of God and the word of the Franciscan Rule. Conscientiously reflecting on the Gospels, we allow the life of Jesus to be made more vibrant in our own lives. Our daily recitation of the psalms, private prayer and meditation, our compassion and willingness to forgive others help us realize that fidelity to God and the Church embraces everyone—yes even our enemies, "those who trespass against us."

Work

What is our attitude towards work: manual, spiritual or educational? According to the Ministers' letter, work is essential to our religious lives. Work, according to Francis and Clare, is a special and beautiful grace of the Lord. Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Work, however, must never extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion, but

strengthen it. It is the Spirit of the Lord that gives life to every good work. Any human activity, if not inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, risks degenerating into self-love (cf. Adm 6, 14). Clare served at the feet of everyone in the monastery enclosure. She served the poor and the sick with the greatest charity and humility in imitation of the Word Incarnate.

Self-development

Our hearts grow within our own bodily "enclosures." Personal development takes place. Faith matures. Grace draws us out of darkness. For this we need within us silence, solitude, space and penitential practices. We need to live our lives intensely and intimately with the Lord within our corporeal enclosures. It is neither Christian nor Franciscan for us to allow our hearts to remain outside where charity and the Spirit of the Lord are neither valued nor fostered, while our bodies remain inside an enclosure, sheltered by the letter of the law. This leads to a hypocritical, pharisaical double life.

Poverty

The letter emphasizes, too, that we need to avoid secular materialism and paternalism. What should be stressed is the Spirit of the Lord and of Mary. Our models are Jesus Himself, the poor and humble Christ, and Mary, who is "virgin made Church."

Contemplation

Clare's contemplative life, especially her desire for holiness, is within reach of our own spiritual vision. It was within her nature to respond to God's grace. Nature and grace formed a unity within her life as grace builds on and perfects nature.

Clare had a strong spirit, both as a child and as a woman. She was decisive, resourceful and reserved. She did not seek admiration nor marriage, since she had espoused herself to the Lord. As a girl she fed the needy from food taken from her own plate. She wore rough and cheap garments. Penitence was part and partial of her life. She was drawn by the example of Francis and just as enamored of Christ as he was. She fell in love with the divine Spouse, who became the Way for her as he was for Francis.

Her love for Christ was as intense as the burning flames of a new Pentecost. She found that, in love, any suffering or trial could be endured. Like Francis she became a "lover and imitator" of the Lord.

This love made her trials and sufferings a joy. As Christian and religious, we, too, can take Clare of Assisi as an example when trials and tribulations come.

A Model for All

The letter of the Ministers General and its message is not just for the Poor Clares, but for all of us who belong to the Franciscan family and for all God's people. Together we look forward to a universal, cosmic community, freed from all calumny, envy, hatred, jealousy, murmuring, prejudice, self-assertion and unfriendliness—a big moral and political challenge in the world today and, with God's help, attainable.

Clare and Francis. Francis and Clare. One cannot be without the other. Pope John Paul II, visiting the monastery of St. Clare in Assisi in 1982, said that there is a deep union between Francis and Clare, understood in faith only by a Christian, Franciscan and evangelical spirituality. We cannot use human criteria for an explanation. Francis espouses Christ and, in his sister Clare, he finds the image of the most perfect spouse of Christ, Mary the most holy.

Francis was a man of evangelical peace. Clare was a woman of contemplative prayer. One complements the other. Francis called her a Christian lady, rather than using her name, Clare, recognizing how completely she lived the Gospel life. In 1986, Pope John Paul II, at a Day of Prayer in Assisi, recommended that all men and women read the writings of Francis and Clare and imitate their lives in order that the whole world might live in universal peace, justice and charity.

Can we, as Christians and Franciscans, do less?

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Clare and Intimacy with the Lord[1]

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF

Over the past few years a number of books and articles have been written about Clare and her writings, but it is her writings themselves which continually hold my attention because her whole preoccupation was the Lord. Her biography, too, provides insights into her relationship with the Lord. She was absorbed in the person of her Beloved Lord Jesus. In her biography we read that even as a child she was taken up with prayer. The author of that text wrote: "She held the pursuit of holy prayer as a friend"(CL 4).

What an unusual expression! Clare's biographer is saying that just as we hold on to our friends to help us through life, Clare clung to holy prayer as a friend, as a way to Christ. Perhaps Clare's biographer had in mind this text from Ecclesiasticus 9:10: "Do not desert an old friend; the new one will not be his match. New friend, new wine; when it grows old, you drink it with pleasure." He applied it to her. At any rate, we know that prayer was an important part of her life, because it was in prayer that she was able to express directly her love for Christ, her Beloved One. Prayer was for her a friend, a friend of hers and of the Bridegroom, Christ the Lord.

Still another passage from her biography speaks of the work of the Spirit in her heart:

> When she began to feel the first stirrings of holy love, she judged that the passing scene of worldly pride should be condemned, being taught by the unction of the Spirit to place a worthless price upon worthless things (CL 4).

This text is important because it gives us very succinctly the motivation for her choice of poverty. She placed "a worthless price upon worthless things." Like St. Paul, once Clare met Christ, everything else counted for nothing. She wanted nothing to get in the way of her freedom to love. Her biographer tells us that this happened early in her life, even before she met Francis. This accounts for the generosity out of which she shared food and other things with poor people. It is a fact that is also attested to by some of the witnesses in the testimonies for her canonization. Then there is the phrase "unction of the Spirit." She was taught to value things according to the inspiration of the Spirit, from the perspective of faith.

Her biographer tells us that after settling at San Damiano:

> She had already focused the most fervent attention of her entire desire on the Light and she opened more generously the depths of her mind to the torrents of grace that bathe a world of turbulent change (CL 19).

We know that, after Clare joined the friars, Francis took her to the monastery of San Paolo and then to the community of Beguines at Sant' Angelo in Panzo. Neither of these places, though, provided what Clare was looking for, namely to keep focused on the Light. They were too well-provided-for, too secure. San Paolo was in a lovely setting with woodlands and streams and a variety of flowers. This monastery was endowed with papal privileges and severe penalties were issued to anyone who tried to interfere with their life. Sant' Angelo, located on the slopes of Mount Subasio, was also prominent in the Spoleto valley, but its setting was dry and desolate, hard and rocky. Clare was not at peace at either place. She wanted a place where the Light could illumine her more fully so she could reflect that light more clearly. She was not able to settle just anywhere; the place had to be right. The place where she was able to focus was indeed San Damiano; poor, small, near the city, accessible to the people.

Further on in Clare's biography we are told also that she spent long periods of time in prayer.

> After the others went to their hard beds to rest their tired bodies, she remained in prayer, thoroughly vigilant and invincible, so that she could then secretly receive the divine whispers (Job 4: 12) while sleep occupied the others (CL 19).

This text reminds us of Celano's account of Francis's long hours of

prayer. Francis and Clare's prayer was *prayer of long duration.*

Another text tells us the posture she assumed while at prayer:

> Very frequently while she was prostrate on her face in prayer, she flooded the ground with tears and caressed it with kisses, so that she might always seem to have her Jesus in her hands, on whose feet her tears flowed and her kisses were impressed (CL 19).

We need to give special notice to the expression "her Jesus." It suggests the kind of intimacy that was characteristic of her relationship with the Lord. What a marvelous phrase: "her Jesus." While aware that the Lord wants to be known and loved by all, she was profoundly aware that Jesus loved her personally and deeply. She was in love with Christ and she belonged to him and He to her.

Perhaps more than any source, her *Letters to Agnes of Prague* reveal the depth of the intimacy she shared with Christ, her Jesus. Those of us who try to take spiritual development seriously understand the importance of spiritual direction. We also realize that directors direct out of their own experience, and the more attuned they are to the ways of God the more they can help to guide others. From Clare's letters to Agnes we are able to get a glimpse of her relationship with the Lord and see that it was indeed the center of her life.

In the first *Letter to Agnes* Clare gave a description of Christ as she knew Him through prayer:

> Whose power is stronger,
> Whose generosity more abundant,
> Whose appearance more beautiful, whose love more tender,
> Whose courtesy more gracious.
>
> In Whose embrace You are already caught up;
> Who has adorned Your breast with precious stones
> and has placed priceless pearls on Your ears
> and has surrounded You with sparkling gems
> as though blossoms of springtime
> and placed on Your head a golden crown
> as a sign of your holiness (1LAg 9-11).

Clare's description of Christ is mystical and ecstatic. She wrote to Agnes out of the abundance of her heart where she had experienced the love of Christ very personally. She is entirely caught up in him. Clare's language is similar to that of the Song of Songs. We will find her using texts from this piece of Wisdom Literature throughout her

letters. She also paints this picture of Christ in contrast to the other suitors which she knew Agnes could have had. None of them could compare with Christ.

In the third *Letter*, after some advice about how to pray, Clare described for Agnes the experience of intimacy with the Lord. It is a passage that could have only come out of Clare's own prayer experience. She urged Agnes to be faithful to meditation upon the scriptures so that she might know Christ deeply. She put it this way:

> So that you too may feel what His friends feel
> as they taste the hidden sweetness
> that God Himself has reserved from the beginning
> for those who love Him. . . .
> [That] you may totally love Him
> Who gave Himself totally for your love,
> Whose beauty the sun and the moon admire,
> Whose rewards and their preciousness and greatness
> are without end;
> I am speaking of Him
> Who is the Son of the Most High,
> Whom the Virgin brought to birth
> and remained a virgin after His birth (3LAg 14-17).

Perhaps the most telling line is the one which says: "Who gave himself totally for your love." Knowing and experiencing Christ as the one who is totally lovable and who is always willing to give himself, Clare had been captivated by Christ and she was totally taken up with his person, totally devoted to Him because he had given himself to her so completely. We might ask ourselves if we are so moved by the totality of Christ's redeeming love for us. Are we captivated by his person? Are we willing to give of ourselves as completely as Clare urges? This is very hard, especially if we have been badly hurt by someone or betrayed, or if we do not feel loved for ourselves.

In the fourth *Letter* there is another description of Christ as the one "whose beauty all the blessed hosts of heaven unceasingly admire" (10). But this letter is known for its mirror theology in which Clare advised Agnes how to meditate on Christ in the scriptures. After this advice she concludes:

> As you further contemplate His ineffable delights, eternal riches and honors, and sigh for them in the great desire and love of your heart, may you cry out:
> Draw me after you,

we will run in the fragrance of your perfumes,
O heavenly Spouse!
I will run and not tire,
until You bring me into the wine-cellar,
until Your left hand is under my head
and Your right hand will embrace me happily,
and You will kiss me with the happiest
kiss of Your mouth (4LAg 28-32).

Here Clare is at her best, totally taken up with Christ. She stressed what was necessary on Agnes's part if she was to be transformed by the love of Christ: desire and love. Love always seeks love; that's why Francis lamented that "Love is not loved!" Clare taught that only when we are willing to love Christ totally will the love be given. The more one loves, the greater his or her capacity to love becomes. But there has to be within us a great desire to love as Jesus loves. We have to allow ourselves to fall in love with the person of Christ. This is a major theme in the writings and life of Clare. It holds everything else together and creates a context for her form of life.

Clare responded to an initial grace given to her by divine inspiration; her response opened her to love and a to growing desire to be like her Beloved Lord, her Jesus. Each of us in the Franciscan family has also been called by divine inspiration. Clare is for us a "wisdom figure," who has provided us with sure guidance for the journey within which we can find "our Jesus" and be transformed into his likeness.

Endnote

[1] Originally presented at the Annual Franciscan Convention in South Africa, September, 1994. All quotations from the *Legend of Clare* and the *Letters of Clare* are taken from *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. and trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM, Cap. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1993).

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Spiritual Direction
of a Contemplative According to the Meditations on the Life of Christ and Clare's Letters to Agnes of Prague

Pacelli Millane, OSC

Clearly the twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a shift in spirituality. The Cistercians brought into new focus the affective dimension of the spiritual journey, and the Franciscans opened the way for emphasis on the humanity of Christ. A text such as the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* gives evidence of this new emphasis in the spiritual life.

According to scholars today, the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, an illustrated manuscript of the 14th century, was written by a Franciscan Friar for a Poor Clare. Francis and Clare are mentioned twice in this work. However, there is little clear evidence in the text that the author knows the spirituality of Clare through her own writings. He never quotes Clare at all. There are, however, interesting references to Cecilia,[1] in which he describes her way of meditating on the Scripture "with pure and undivided heart and single-minded and fervent intent" (MLC 1).

This paper will focus on the manner of spiritual direction in the *Meditations* and in the four *Letters of St. Clare to Agnes of Prague*. By

"spiritual direction" here, we mean a process of walking with another person through the active pursuit of virtues and the movement of contemplation towards union with God. The *Letters* stretch over a period of time beginning when Agnes entered the monastery (1234) until Clare's death (1253). Although we do not have any of the letters written by Agnes to Clare or a response of the Poor Clare to the Franciscan Friar in the *Meditations*, there is, nevertheless, much that we can glean from these texts in regard to the journey of prayer.

I will try to point out some similarities and differences between these two texts regarding the active pursuit of virtue and the passive movement towards mystical union, in order to accent two important moments in directing another person within the contemplative or Poor Clare tradition. The great volume of quotes from St. Bernard in the *Meditations* raises the question as to whether this Poor Clare is being directed within the Franciscan tradition of the Second Order or in a Cistercian tradition.[2]

Spiritual Direction in the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*

The author's manner of meditation is that of a storyteller as he allows his own mind and heart to reflect on the life of Christ from the Gospels. He presents these meditations to the Poor Clare as a way of entering more deeply into the life of Christ. They are unique and creative and would nourish her own creative imagination. He tells her that when she finds the phrases, "This was said and done by the Lord Jesus," it is to be read, "Suppose that this is what the Lord Jesus said and did." Clearly these meditations move beyond the Gospel texts, but "they might have occurred according to the devout belief of the imagination." He goes on to say that these are written in such a manner "as not to contradict the truth of life and justice and not to oppose faith and morality." These various meditations are written to bring her into devout contemplation on the humanity of Christ and should not be taken in the literal sense. Intermingled in the text are a number of references to the virtues and invitations for incorporation of these virtues into her life.

Not only does he outline these meditations for her, but he gives her a glimpse of the vision of God to which she is called. He is an excellent director in the sense that he gives her very practical steps to take here and now as a beginner in contemplation and then creates in the text a progression of the spiritual journey including the final vision of God. In order to persevere lovingly in daily meditation, it is important for her to have an understanding of the magnitude of God's love

and to desire a deeper relationship with Him.

He gives her an understanding of the classical movement of contemplation through the use of the Martha/Mary image, which is so strong in the Christian tradition.[3] He does this within the Gospel story and prepares her for watching and waiting upon the Lord, urging her to see how these women disciples gently served Jesus (MLC 245-46).

Next he gives her a treatise on the active and contemplative life through the writings of Blessed Bernard, assuring her that this is most useful and necessary for her to know. This part of the text is clearly much more Cistercian by the simple fact that each point is supported with quotes taken directly from Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, but it is valuable to a contemplative of any tradition (MLC 245-90). After he has painted for her the panorama of the whole spiritual journey towards union with God, he returns to the meditation on the life of Christ. This time the meditations move toward the suffering of Jesus in his ministry and some miracles, but it is clearly oriented towards the Passion of Christ (MLC 302-58). This is followed by meditations on the resurrection (MLC 359-74), the ascension of the Lord (MLC 374-84), the mission of the Holy Spirit and the desire for the fullness of eternity (MLC 384-87).

Lastly, he gives her very practical advice about how she is to divide these meditations into a one week period: Monday, the flight of the Lord into Egypt; Tuesday, the opening of the Book in the Synagogue; Wednesday, the ministry of Mary and Martha; Thursday, the Passion; Friday and Saturday, the Resurrection; Sunday, the Resurrection to the end (MLC 387-88). This is to be repeated each week in order that she familiarize herself with the texts and that she begin to speak freely with the Lord Jesus as well as carry the texts within her heart. This is to inflame her desires for the Lord.

Spiritual Direction Given by Clare of Assisi

The four *Letters of Saint Clare of Assisi to Agnes of Prague*, written over a span of approximately twenty years, give direction to a noble lady in her endeavor to follow a mode of religious life similar to the Poor Ladies of San Damiano.

The introductory part of the first *Letter* indicates that Clare is speaking to a mature woman who has just made a clear choice to follow the Lord Jesus Christ by dispossessing herself of all material possessions and honors (1LAg 5-6). In many ways this letter is about the exchange that Agnes has made by choosing the Lord Jesus. Clare describes the qualities of Agnes's new Spouse in contrast to the worldly spouse whom

she could have married. This Spouse has "stronger power, more abundant generosity, a more beautiful appearance, more tender love, and more gracious courtesy" (1LAg 9). Clare focuses likewise on the exchange of goods. Agnes has chosen to "leave the things of time for those of eternity" and "a blessed life" (1 LAg 30). Clare gives her the praises of poverty (1LAg 15-17) and through the use of various scripture texts exhorts her to move "from virtue to virtue" (1LAg 32). Clare is clearly emphasizing poverty, understanding that many of the other ordinary virtues are already in place in Agnes's life.

The second *Letter* seems to be much more one of encouragement and acknowledgment of the virtue that is already present in Agnes. The emphasis is on "living always" in this mode of life as a poor virgin (2LAg 2, 18). Thus Clare begins to lead her into deeper contemplation through the desire to imitate Christ. She exhorts her to "gaze upon, consider, contemplate as you desire to imitate" (2LAg 20). She orients Agnes to focus more completely on the life of Jesus in His suffering, and she couples this with the rewards that will follow: "You shall share always and forever the glory of the kingdom of heaven in place of earthly and passing things" (2LAg 23).

In the third *Letter*, Clare notes that Agnes has overcome pride and vanity and that she has reached out to the "hidden treasure" of the Gospel through "humility, the virtue of faith and the strong arms of poverty" (3LAg 7). She directs her to begin to turn her entire being, "mind, soul, and heart," towards transformation "into the image of the Godhead Itself through contemplation" (3LAg 12-13). Clare brings in the example of Mary and seems to be leading Agnes into deeper humility, faith and love.

The fourth *Letter* invites Agnes into a deeper relationship with and desire for the Lord. Clare exalts the virtues of poverty and humility, but not so much in the prosaic sense of the active endeavor to incorporate them into one's life. Rather she sees their place in the life of Jesus and how they lead one deeper into identification with Jesus. It is the movement into the ineffable love of God. Clare invites Agnes to enkindle this great desire through sighs and cries that are written in the language of the *Song Of Songs* (4LAg 30-32).

This is clearly about transformation. It is the time of deep, intense desire and the inflaming of charity. Note the profound understanding of the poverty and humility of Jesus (4LAg 20-23), which could only be attained by one who had incorporated these virtues into her own life and who was in deep communion with the incarnation and passion of Jesus in her inner soul.

Comparison between the *Meditations* and the *Letters of Clare*

The *Meditation on the Life of Christ* and the *Letters to Agnes* differ both in life situations and in modes of spiritual direction.[4] Agnes appears to have had considerable spiritual experience by the time Clare wrote to her; in fact, she had become the abbess of a monastery.

The *Meditations*, on the other hand, were written for a person who had perhaps only begun to pray seriously with a contemplative type of meditation on the life of Christ. The director is teaching her to use her creative imagination and to become more fully conscious of her relationship to Christ through meditation. She seems to be at a neophyte stage of the spiritual life.

We will now examine two themes more closely: the virtues to be incorporated into one's life and the movement into the mystical life.

The Lord of Virtue

In the beginning of the *Meditations*, the director says that contemplation of the life of Christ does three things: fortifies and steadies the intellect against the trivial and transient; fortifies against trials and adversity; and teaches one to avoid enemies and vices which lead to deception and thus open one to the perfection of virtue. He points out that the most important source of examples and teachings about charity, poverty, humility, wisdom, prayer, meekness, obedience and patience is the life of the Lord (MLC Prologue). He goes on to note that it was by "conversation with and contemplation of his Lord Jesus that Francis would have attained such abundance of virtue" (MLC 3).

In his overall schema of the contemplative journey, the first part of the "active life," epitomized by Martha, has to do with the acquisition of virtue. "Everyone exercises himself and wearies himself in prayer and in the study of the holy writings and in the other good deeds and services in common conversation, rectifying vices and acquiring virtue" (MLC 246). There is need to acquire virtue, but always in relationship with the Lord.

Purity of Heart

Jesus goes into the desert to pray. The emphasis here moves toward virtue and strength in time of temptation. Through solitude, fasting, praying or watching, sleeping on the bare earth, humbly conversing with the beasts or corporal suffering, one is led to purity of heart. Purity of heart includes charity, humility, patience and all virtues, as well as the removal of vice, which can destroy prayer. Prayer after over-

eating results in softness and laziness and is worth little. Prayer requires fasting and corporal affliction coupled with discretion. Within the temptations of Jesus, one discovers the humility, benignity and patience of Jesus. The director adds a very touching account of Jesus' love for His Mother. According to the *Meditations* the angels asked Jesus what he would like to eat after fasting so long. Jesus replies, "Go to my beloved mother. If she has something at hand, let her send it, for I eat no food as gladly as hers" (MLC 125). The author uses this story to show the humility of Jesus, who gives food to others, but must also acknowledge his own need of physical food. In the *Meditations* one is always oriented to see the life of Jesus as a model for one's own.

Poverty

In the meditation on the sermon preached to the disciples on Mt. Tabor, the director does an exposition of the Beatitudes. He points out how the Lord "instructed the disciples on the Beatitudes, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and many other things belonging to virtue." In this meditation is a treatise on poverty. "Poverty is the prime foundation of all spiritual exercise" (MLC 152). There are many quotes in this chapter from Bernard and from the Gospel, but, interestingly enough, neither Francis nor Clare is mentioned.

The director gives another summons to poverty in the meditation on the disciples taking the ears of corn when they were hungry. After noting Jesus' poverty, he gives practical advice about the life of the Poor Clare in the monastery. He points out that poverty is rooted and established in the heart and that virtue is to be in the soul and not simply affecting the exterior of our person. If not rooted deeply, it leaves room for cupidity, concupiscence and other desires (MLC 233-45). Poverty from necessity produces shame and contempt, but voluntary poverty, embraced for the love of God, is virtuous and honorable.

The author again makes no reference to Francis or Clare as models of poverty, nor gives any examples from their lives as lovers of poverty. He continues to quote Bernard, using the same text to exhort against gluttony. John the Baptist, Francis and Clare are here shown to have served "abstinence rigorously." Bernard indicates that abstinence should be moderated in some cases. It does not seem that the director has access to the Rule of Clare (RCl 3:7-10), which expresses quite simply the practice of fasting with discretion. The third *Letter* clearly states, "I beg you . . . to refrain wisely and prudently from an indiscreet and impossible austerity in the fasting that you have undertaken" (3LAg 40).

Poverty and humility are coupled in the incarnation (MLC IV-XI).

The director exhorts the Poor Clare to "look at the face of Jesus" and to look at the disciples "as they gaze on Him with reverence, humility and all intentness of mind, listening to those marvelous words and committing them to memory" (MLC 154). This idea of gazing on the Lord as into a "mirror" is important in the *Letters* of Clare (2LAg 20, 3LAg 19-23).

Other Virtues

There are many other examples of virtues woven within this text of meditations. Chapter XVI is a beautiful text on humility taught within the journey of Jesus to His Baptism. All of these meditations follow a similar pattern: giving a concrete event in the life of Jesus, expanding it through creative imagination and meditation and then drawing attention to the various virtues involved. The director teaches this Poor Clare to pray for these virtues, that they might be incorporated in her life.

We see the contrast in Clare's *Letters* where she is much more affirming of the virtue already present in Agnes's life. In the first *Letter*, she gives Agnes the hymn of "poverty," which is one of the most important virtues to be incorporated into one's life. Clare uses Scripture quotes to strengthen her praise of poverty and to encourage Agnes to continue making an exchange of the things of time for those of eternity.

In the second *Letter*, Clare urges Agnes to go forward securely, joyfully and swiftly on this path in pursuit of the perfection to which the Lord has called her (2LAg 12). Clare is orienting Agnes to gaze on Jesus, contemplate Him and desire to imitate Him. Just as in the Meditations we saw the young sister being directed toward focusing on the life of Jesus so that she might actively work to acquire the various virtues, so in Clare's *Letters* we see Agnes being directed to focus more clearly on the Lord. The third and fourth *Letters* encourage Agnes to turn her full attention to the Mirror which is Christ and call her to be attentive to the reality of His incarnation, passion and death. She is being drawn more and more into an attentive, passive stance before the mysteries of God. Reading these *Letters*, we feel the progression of love.

Agnes is at a much deeper point in her spiritual life, and there is no need for creative storytelling to direct her life to Jesus, no need for enumerating virtues for incorporation into her life, because this has already taken place. Agnes is already advanced in the spiritual life, which Clare recognizes by a special gift of wisdom (3LAg 6). Clare knows through this gift how to direct Agnes to enkindle deeper desire

and to long for the Lord with the passion of a lover.

The *Meditations* taught the young sister the way of virtue through daily meditation on the life of Christ. At the same time, the director saw the need to direct her attention to two other kinds of contemplation which would be necessary to bring her into deep unitive intimacy with God. He was careful, also, to point out some of the obstacles that could cause problems.

Clare's *Letters*, on the other hand, are addressed to a woman who is already steeped in virtue, and Clare reinforces poverty because it is so essential to her understanding of the life of Jesus. Her mode of direction is clearly focused and to the point. Clare invites Agnes to place her attention unreservedly and without words on the mysteries of the Lord. She tells her to allow herself to be transformed through loving attentiveness to the relationship between herself and God. Jesus, Himself, is the way for her into loving union with the Father.

Conclusion

We have looked at two different texts, each of which gives spiritual direction to a Poor Clare, one at a more advanced stage of spiritual development than the other. The Cistercian influence in the *Meditations* makes one wonder how much the life and writings of Francis and Clare were known by the author.

We have looked at purity of heart, which encompasses all the virtues, and at poverty, which was central for Clare. Even though Clare saw Agnes as a woman advanced in virtue, she saw the need to assist her in incorporating the virtue of poverty at a deeper level, because it is a fundamental internal attitude for a contemplative relationship with God.

These two different sources reflect the importance of recognizing the particular stage of growth in a person's spiritual journey. They reflect the need for the spiritual director to help the person image an encounter with the majestic and eternal God. Each text uniquely sets out to prepare the person to move steadfastly in this direction and to desire ever more fully to follow Jesus in His humanity. Most of all, both texts reflect the truth that it is Jesus, in and through His humanity, who leads us into the fullness of the glory and splendor of the eternal vision of the Trinity.

Endnotes

[1]Cf. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) 1, 2, 133, 388. Hereafter this reference will be noted as MLC. There is no other information about this woman other than that he lists her as St. Cecilia. However, in Endnote 1 on the Pictures, the translators refer to two very similar phrases in a manuscript legend of St. Cecilia in Florence. They suggest that the Poor Clare was probably named Cecilia, which one of the manuscripts seems to verify. It is the virtues of St. Cecilia that he is urging her to imitate.

[2]In 1296 two decrees were issued by Cardinal Protector Matteo Rossi putting the ministers under an obligation to give total assistance to the Poor Clares. In 1336, Pope Benedict XII, a Cistercian, issued Constitutions for the Sisters Minor, the Clarisses and the Damianites. According to Iriarte there was much Cistercian influence in all of these new decrees. Perhaps this explains the use of Bernard's authority in this text of the *Meditations*. These Poor Clares were probably following the Urbanist Rule and not that of Clare, because Colette's Reform, which restored Clare's Rule, was not approved until 1434 and confirmed by Pius II only in 1458. Cf. Lazario Iriarte de Aspurz, OFM Cap., *Franciscan History: The Three Orders of St. Francis of Assisi.*, trans. Patricia Ross (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 452-455.

[3]Cf. Paul-Marie Guillaume, "Rachel et Lia," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique*, 1987 ed.

[4]We are encountering two different modes of spiritual direction here. One is a series of letters written to a person, whom she has never met personally, but with whom there is a very close identification of ideals. The second, which comes to us in book form, is written by a Franciscan friar to a Poor Clare or a Community of Poor Clares. Though it seems the former, there is no clear evidence.

Book Review

This Living Mirror: Reflections on Clare of Assisi. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995. 144 pages. Paper. $10.95. By Sister Frances Teresa, OSC.

The past few years have seen an outpouring of writings about Clare of Assisi. The enthusiasm surrounding a "re-discovery" of this remarkable medieval woman has been strong and infectious. An aspect especially attractive for our times is the contemplative, even mystical, quality of her life. In her Testament, Clare cuts through the idea that contemplative, enclosed women should be hidden and obscure, invisible to the eyes of the world at large: "If we have lived according to this form of life, . . . we shall leave a noble example to others" (TestCl 6).

This book celebrates Clare's visibility as an example and a source of spiritual energy for us today. In a fine and readable style, Sister Frances Teresa, vicaress of the Poor Clares at Arundel, West Sussex, England, not only gives us a survey of Clare's life, but mines both the events of this life and Clare's writings to offer us an original and effective spiritual guide. In a classical "triple way" format, the author journeys with Clare through conversion, contrition and communion and invites us to do the same.

Part 1, "Conversion," translates for us the fundamental attitude required of any seriously religious person: "The process of conversion [penance] . . . begins in the moment when we first turn our mind and heart to God—and what is that but the simplest . . . definition of prayer?" (p. 1). The author portrays a young and inexperienced Clare who needed to pass through the suffering and uncertainty of the purifying process as she followed her call into the unknown. The romantic quality that characterized this time of Clare's life is refocused: "We tend to link the powerfully romantic aura about her life to her relationship with Francis, but this is a mistake. . . . It was God . . . who was the overwhelming passion of Clare's life. Francis was what her biographer calls him, a marriage broker!" (p. 15). But this passion of Clare's did not give her clarity in the beginning of her spiritual journey. As all beginners, she needed to wait and wonder, to trust unreservedly, to let go of control.

In Part 2, "Contrition," the author presents the "long, slow process" by which Clare gradually matured and came to understand ever more clearly the meaning of a life lived completely in, with and through Christ. In this process Clare comes to know Christ as the one crucified for the sake of others. This is the journey from passion to compassion, the holy work of the Spirit of God.

In Part 3, "Communion," we see Clare coming to the fulness of her own unique human life. "Clare gave herself so generously to this love that she was led into a fully restored humanity, characterised by balance and harmony. . . . All this was no easier for Clare than it is for us" (pp. 113-114). It is little statements like the latter which draw the reader into the message of this book. The author has a fine capacity to make one feel that what happened to Clare really mattered for her and for us. She convinces us that we have only to *look* and we will be able to see Clare. Seeing her we will be able to see ourselves more clearly and understand that her journey is our journey.

This refreshing book would be a helpful companion for a retreat or for daily spiritual reading, taken in small bits and digested appreciatively in the best tradition of *lectio divina*. It is well-written, a pleasure to read, catching one off guard frequently with original and creative insights. The author brings to her work the fine touch of a woman who has learned from a woman and who mirrors for others the holy workings of God's Spirit.

Elise Saggau, OSF
The Franciscan Institute

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Mark Balma - An American painter of Italian descent. A specialist in fresco art of the Medieval and early Renaissance periods. Frescoed the ceiling vaults of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. With his wife, Louise, promotes through his art the spirit of the Franciscan tradition.

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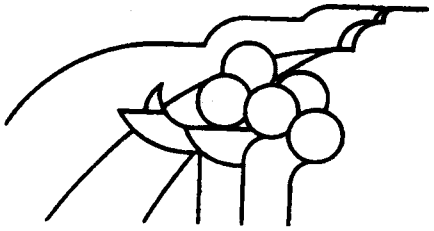

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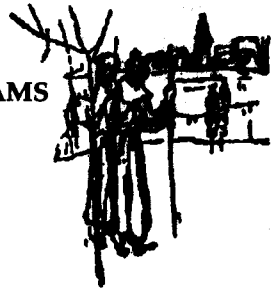

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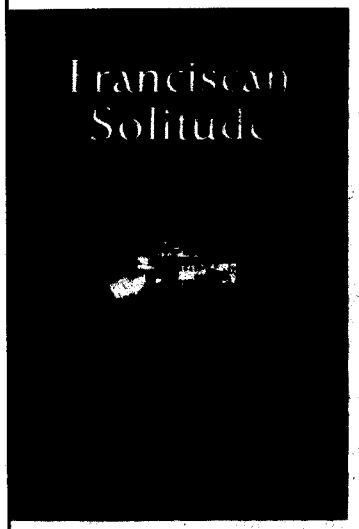

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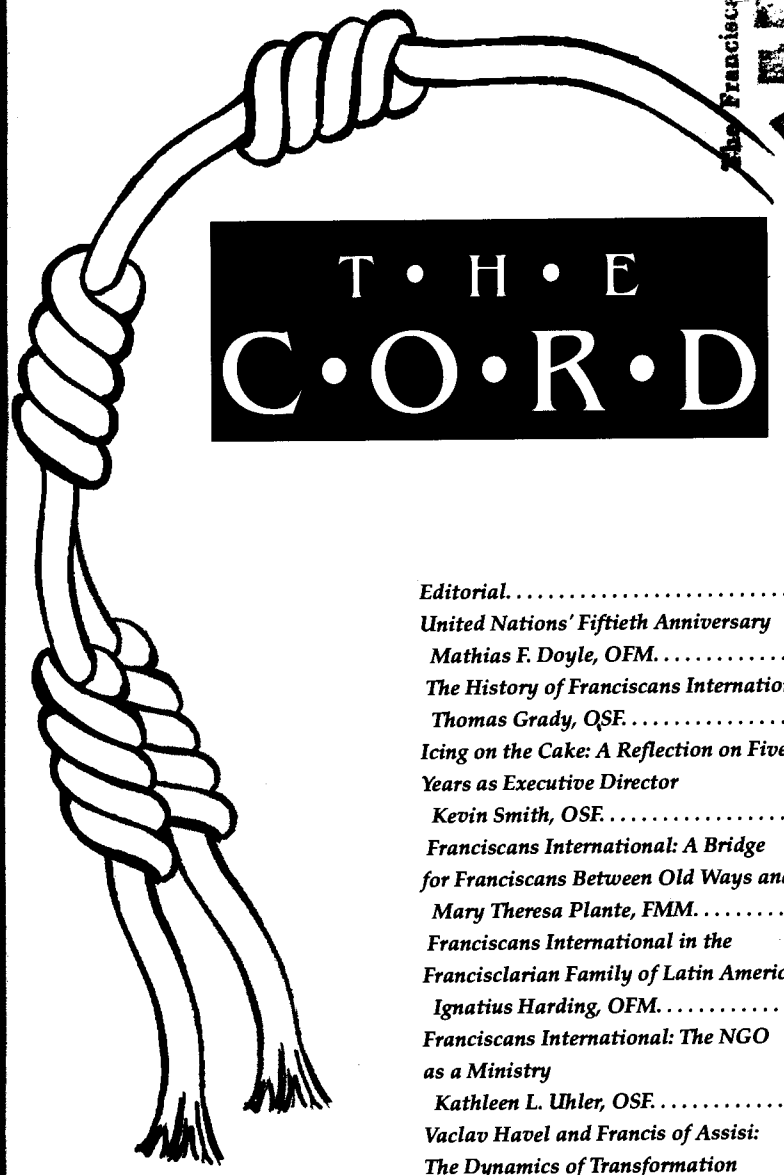

The Franciscan Institute
St. Bonaventure University

THE CORD

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

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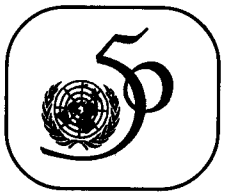
Editorial



Certainly Francis of Assisi was a humble man. He cherished in his life the virtue of "littleness" and the role of being "subject to all." Nevertheless, his penchant for the servant role did not make him unduly modest in terms of his dreams and hopes. Not only was the world his cloister, it was also his forum, and he did not hesitate to address himself to all people indiscriminately—the great and the small. Somehow it is not difficult to imagine Francis standing before the assembled members of the United Nations, doing his little excited dance and preaching with great intensity, calling all to "persevere in the true faith and in penance:"

> All clerics, all religious men and all religious women, all lay brothers and youths, the poor and the needy, kings and princes, workers and farmers, servants and masters, all virgins and continent and married women, all lay people, men and women, all children, adolescents, the young and the old, the healthy and the sick, all the small and the great, all people, races, tribes, and tongues, all nations and all peoples everywhere on earth who are and who will be. . . (RegNB23:7).

We are not surprised to notice that in his lifetime Francis actually addressed a letter to the "Rulers of the People," in which he admonished them to hold in awe their terrible responsibility. In an interesting little ecumenical note, Francis, impressed no doubt by the practice of the Muslims, bade the Rulers to see to it that "every evening an announcement be made by a town crier or some other signal that praise and thanks may be given by all people to the all-powerful God" (EpRect 7).

With a leader of such vision how could Franciscans today do less than participate in a global forum? 1995 marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations organization, an anniversary which coincides with the end of World War II and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Watching news these days, one is necessarily aware of the latter two anniversaries, which have had much media coverage. While many of those who remember speak of healing and reconciliation, nevertheless the reportage tends to have a tinge of nostalgia, betraying the attitudes of "the victors."

Perhaps a much more significant, hopeful and humble anniversary is that of the United Nations, founded at the very time that the last World

War came to an end. From such global calamity and unleashing of destructive power came an act of hope in the human future. The UN has struggled and continues to struggle. It has failed many times to achieve its visionary goals; yet it has survived for fifty years as a witness to its belief in what is possible for human beings who recognize the trust that is theirs.

And for the past five years the Franciscans have been there—as a Non-governmental Organization (NGO)—encouraging, supporting, witnessing, preaching by their lives; doing what Francis did in his times, speaking to the Rulers of the People a message of hope.

In this issue of *The Cord* we are happy to record the story of Franciscans International as told by those who have been at the helm of the organization. As a companion piece we offer an article by William McConville comparing Francis with Vaclav Havel, a ruler whose basic values accord with Francis's own dreams for the world.

CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

We the People of the United States determined

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these ends

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

VISION STATEMENT
of
FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

We are Franciscan men and women
who are followers of
St. Francis of Assisi.

We believe that all creation, from the smallest organism to human beings, is in interdependent relationship on planet earth. We are aware that this relationship is threatened by a refusal to admit this interdependence, by exploitation and by domination.

We commit ourselves to encourage awareness of this interdependence so that all creation may live in harmony. We will do this by service to our own members and to United Nations personnel as well as other non-governmental organizations through collaboration, education and action regarding:

Care of Creation
Peacemaking
Concern for the Poor

We see these concerns as congruent with the goals expressed by the United Nations in its *Charter* and in its *Declaration on Human Rights*.

The Cord, 45.5 (1995)

United Nations' Fiftieth Anniversary

Mathias F. Doyle, OFM

> We the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . (Lord make me an instrument of your peace.)
>
> . . . To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human persons, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small . . . (Where there is hatred let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon.)
>
> . . . To promote progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. (Where there is despair, hope; . . . where there is sadness, joy.)[1]

On the twenty-fifth day of April, 1945, in Assisi, the city of St. Francis, representatives of fifty nations met to draw up a charter for world peace, justice and unity. In October of that same year the charter was put into force. On it rests the very future of us all. Its aims seem so much the embodiment of the ideals of St. Francis. Is it any wonder, then, that Franciscans throughout the world feel drawn to participate in this the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations?

Those familiar with the life of St. Francis can readily recall the occasion when Francis, kneeling before the crucifix, heard God's call to "go forth and rebuild my house."[2] At first he took the call literally and began to rebuild the simple churches in Assisi brick by brick. Francis soon realized that God's call was to the more demanding challenge of rebuilding the whole of God's house, i.e., to rebuild not just the church of Assisi, not just the church of Rome nor of Christianity, but of the entire people of God.

It would be easy to point out the shortcomings, even failures, of the United Nations in its founding and in its progress to date, just as it would have been easy for Francis to dismiss the church of his day as undeserving of God's love and concern. It is tempting to plead that as much as we might like to respond to God's call, the world is just too corrupt, its people too materialistic, for anyone to be able to rebuild. The survivors of World War II surely must have felt the same, but they were too close to the awful consequences of a world divided not to try at least .

Many Franciscans, mindful of our tradition and seeking to be faithful to the spirit of our founder, have sought a place at the forefront of those working for a more peaceful and a more just world. Our Franciscan presence in every part of the world and amongst every strata of society, from the poorest to the more well to do, makes us uniquely qualified to aid in this work. Our identification with the poor and with indigenous peoples gives us a voice in making their needs known, their rights respected. It is this that motivates Franciscans to work within and alongside the United Nations and its related institutions for the cause of peace, of justice, and of respect for the environment.[3]

Again, those familiar with the life of Francis will recall his desire to write a letter to all the leaders of the world.[4] He seemed to know instinctively that his own best efforts and those of his brothers and sisters would never of themselves be sufficient to his mission. If he could speak to the leaders of the world, and through them to all the world's peoples, he could hope to see his mission move forward. Can anyone doubt that Francis was there in spirit when the representatives met for the first time in the city of San Francisco? That he was there with Paul VI as he pleaded before the world's leaders for "no more war, war never again"? That he was there with John XXIII as he placed before this world his agenda for "justice and peace"?[5]

Anniversaries are commonly acknowledged as important events not only for the accomplishments which they celebrate, but for the promises which they hold for the future. The opportunity to chart a course for the world's peoples is a rare event indeed. It is generally recognized that the world as we knew it prior to World War II was charted by the principles of the "Peace of Westphalia" in 1648 and the refinement of these principles through the "Concert of Europe" in 1814.[6] Two world wars marked the failure of this system and set the stage for the effort to restructure world order in the post-war period.

The almost immediate emergence of the cold war with the clash between the two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, quickly overshadowed this effort. But even during this period so dominated by constant tension and frequent confrontations, the realization of our growing interdependence and the work for greater justice in order to insure peace continued. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the movement of most of the world's population toward more open and democratic

societies sparked new hope in the hearts of us all.[7]

The United Nations, while not without failures, has achieved remarkable successes over the past fifty years. World conflict has been avoided. Nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction have been contained and even reduced in number. More important, the emphasis of the work of the United Nations has shifted ever so gradually from the issues of peace and security, dominated by the Security Council and its five permanent members, to the General Assembly and its Economic and Social Council. Here, nations deal with one another as equals and focus their attention on issues of human rights and human dignity, of economic and social justice and of respect for the environment.

It is too early to determine how successfully we are responding to these challenges. But, it is a unique opportunity for us to rebuild. Some would have us turn back to the principles of the past that guaranteed the powerful a privileged place. But this approach has proved incapable of guaranteeing a lasting peace. We choose to continue building on the principles of the United Nations' universal Declaration of Rights and the so-called "International Bill of Rights." Acknowledging our interdependence and working together, we seek to extend the recognition of human rights and human dignity, to promote truly "sustainable development," to foster economic well-being and economic justice without destroying our common environment, to join together to eliminate poverty and recognize and respect diversity and to promote principles of international law as a way to assure lasting peace without the threat of mutual destruction.

Franciscans International attempts to serve as a bridge for those Franciscans who see in the work of the United Nations a unique opportunity to respond to God's call to rebuild God's house today.[8] In joining or jointly sponsoring projects to "eliminate poverty," to "foster peace" and "to respect the environment," are we doing anything less than that? No doubt some will scoff at these efforts. But what would Francis say or do? What would Francis ask us to do?

It is important that as Franciscans we take note of this fiftieth anniversary, that we celebrate what has been accomplished, that we help correct what needs correction. And most important, in the spirit of St. Francis, we must anticipate what is promised—a world rebuilt, without poverty; a world peace based on justice and mutual respect, rather than on mutually assured destruction; a world where the environment is respected as something with which we have been entrusted for our common good and our common future.

While all Franciscans have an important part to play in these endeavors, it is especially appropriate that the Secular Franciscans lead the way. They are the ones best qualified and best situated for carrying this work forward. In a world filled with so much cynicism and which witnesses so much pain and suffering, it is not easy to sustain a positive and optimistic attitude. The Secular Franciscans counter our hesitations with Jesus' own

words: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice." They apply these words to those who work to protect the environment. "Environmental desecration," they argue, "stems from an absence of love . . . plus a lack of political will to make difficult and unpopular choices."[9] The same can be said of those who work for peace and for the elimination of poverty.

The "Earth Summit" in Rio in 1992 set out an agenda which would promote development based on social and economic justice. The recently completed world summit for social development saw the world leaders for the first time address the issues of poverty, respect for diversity and the right to meaningful employment for all. While much has been done, there is still so much more to be done.

As the Secretary-General has stated:

> In these past months a conviction has grown, among nations large and small, that an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the Charter—a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights and of promoting, in the words of the Charter, "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom"[10]

The symbol of the recently held world summit for social development shows three people, hand in hand, standing in the world while reaching for the sun. As Franciscans do we not share this vision of people working side by side for a common goal? Such work begins and remains in the world while striving for the heavens. It is in this spirit that we as Franciscans can readily join others of good will in noting this fiftieth anniversary and working for even greater success in the future. As the Secretary General reminds us:

> This is a time to rekindle the ideals of the charter, to spread the spirit of cooperation among the peoples of the world.[11]

Endnotes:

[1] Baehr, Peter R. *The United Nations in the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 159; "Peace Prayer."

[2])2Cel 6:10. All quotations from and references to the writings of Francis are from the *Omnibus of Sources*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983).

[3] "Franciscans International: A Non-governmental Organization," *Mustard Seed* 5/12 (June, 1933): 1-8.

[4]Cf. Letter to the Rulers of the People.

[5] Paul VI, "Never Again War!" Address to the United Nations, Oct. 4, 1965 (New York: United Nations Office of Public Information) 31-43; John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* , Encyclical Letter (New York: United Nations Office of Public Information) 85-124.

[6] Miller, Lynn H., *Global Politics* , 3rd. ed (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994) Chapter 2.

[7] Baehr Chapter 8.

[8] "Franciscans and the UN: Vision Statement, *Mustard Seed* 8/2 (Mar./Apr, 1991).

[9] "The Guardian of Creation," National Ecology Commission, Secular Franciscan Order, USA (Winter, 1995) 1.

[10] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping," Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the summit Meeting of the Security Council on Jan. 31, 1992 (New York: United Nations, 1992) 1-2.

[11] Boutros Boutros-Ghali 48.

In these past months a conviction has grown, among nations large and small, that an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the Charter—a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights and of promoting, in the words of the Charter, "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" (Boutros Boutros-Ghali).

The Cord, 45.5 (1995)

The History of Franciscans International

Thomas Grady, OSF

"What took you so long to get here?" asked members of the Secretariat and non-governmental organizations when Kevin Smith, OSF, the first executive director of Franciscans International, arrived at the United Nations in 1990. The truth is that no one had thought of it before 1982, when two Franciscans, unknown to each other, suggested to their Justice and Peace Committees the idea of a Franciscan presence at the UN.

By 1984 the idea was a priority for the Justice and Peace Committees of both the English-Speaking Conference of the Friars Minor and of the Franciscan Federation of the Brothers and Sisters, Third Order Regular, of the United States. As chairperson of the latter committee, I became involved at the initial stage in 1982. By 1984 the Friars were exploring the same UN dream. When our paths crossed we all realized that this project would be most effectively served by creating one interfamilial Franciscan committee.

We first met jointly in 1984. We called the project "Franciscans at the United Nations" and ourselves the "Preparatory Committee." Our membership included at least one representative from every branch of the Franciscan family. Our strength was that we were interfamilial; our weakness was that we were not yet international.

Ann Carville, OSF, Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, convened our first meeting in Pittsburgh and a second in Chicago in 1985, during which we surfaced numerous questions and multiple tasks. Bernadette Sullivan and I became co-chairs of the committee. We were both

in New York and able to arrange at the United Nations the meetings required to complete the application process to become a non-governmental organization. This process would take four years.

From 1985-1989 our meetings grew longer and more frequent. They were held in Cincinnati and hosted by John Quigley, OFM, a committee member. We engaged the services of George Wilson, SJ, to facilitate our work.

Our primary task in that period was the creation of a vision statement. We studied what the United Nations needed and wanted, and we reflected on those needs in the light of Franciscan values. We put our focus on three areas: peacemaking, concern for the poor and the care of creation. These three areas would determine the spheres of UN activities on which we would collaborate with the Secretariat and other non-governmental organizations.

To see if we were on the right track, we circulated the vision statement for endorsements, which we received from organizations like the International Franciscan Conference, the Conference of Ministers General, the Franciscan Federation of the US, as well as from such noted individuals as Dom Helder Camera and Cardinal Ars of Brazil, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who is a secular Franciscan, and from one of our most enthusiastic supporters, Robert Mueller, former Assistant Secretary General of the UN.

With the affirmation of the vision statement completed, we established subcommittees as a way of including grassroots Franciscans with different areas of expertise. Franciscan sister-attorneys helped us to become incorporated in the State of New York as a not-for-profit organization and to create statutes acceptable to the UN. Development directors helped us solicit funds from Franciscan institutes and to explore other funding sources. (As of yet the appeals to outside sources have been unsuccessful.) A young Franciscan intern at the UN, Mike Surufka, OFM, helped us work on models of membership and participation that were appropriate for NGOs.

We worked on all these tasks simultaneously from 1985-1989, while we continued to dream of the end result and to identify existing Franciscan networks around the world who might participate in the project. We created printed materials to promote the Franciscan NGO, began enlisting individual members and sought financial support from major superiors. Their generous responses kept us optimistic about eventually having a staff person to coordinate all the work. In the meantime, a volunteer, Mary Theresa Plante, FMM, came in once a week to computerize the data arriving from every continent.

In 1989, after submitting all of our materials to the UN, we were accepted as a non-governmental organization with the Department of Public Information (DPI). Our ultimate goal remained becoming affiliated with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) because of the consultative status attached to that recognition, but we celebrated the achievement

of being listed on the wall of the UN as an NGO and began attending the DPI weekly briefings.

In 1990 we were able to open an office. By that time John Quigley was at the OFM Curia in Rome, and Bernadette and I were major superiors of our respective congregations and, coincidentally, headquartered in the same building of the Franciscan Brothers in downtown Brooklyn. Happily, we could donate office space and, thanks to generous pledges in the US, felt financially secure enough to hire staff. That's when Kevin Smith, OSF, became the first executive director and, shortly thereafter, Jeanne Glisky, SFP, the first associate director. With Jeanne able to do most of the internal organization, Kevin was able to be actively present at the United Nations, working on committees, collaborating with the Secretariat and other NGO's. That's when they said: "What took you so long to get here?"

Since 1991 we focused on internationalizing our committee. We were no longer "Franciscans at the United Nations"—the UN doesn't let people use their name in corporate titles—we were now "Franciscans International." And we were no longer a preparatory committee—the preparations having been completed—but an executive committee who saw ourselves coordinating the project until we could be formally replaced by an interfamilial, international board. This is a goal toward which we are still striving.

The history of the 1990-1995 phase of Franciscans International is recorded elsewhere in this issue in Kevin Smith's article. Kevin and Jeanne were both elected to leadership positions in their congregations. The current staff consists of Kathleen Uhler, OSF, and Ignatio Harding, OFM, who serve as co-directors. They continue the work at the UN and at UN Summits, such as Beijing in August. A priority for Franciscans International in the next phase is forming active regional groupings of members around the world.

The dream has become huge, occasionally overwhelming! It continues to grow. The hard but rewarding venture of interfamilial collaboration shows that we all share the dream of effectively bringing to fruition the Franciscan commitment to Gospel values in the midst of the world's struggles. This has so much more possiblity when the family works together. And the United Nations knows and needs that.

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Icing on the Cake: A Reflection on Five Years as Executive Director

Kevin Smith, OSF

The cake was finally iced on June 14, 1995, at about nine o'clock in the evening when the NGO (non-governmental organization) Relations Committee of the Economic and Social Council voted to grant Franciscans International full consultative status—Category I.

This significant event was the fruit of five years of service to our Franciscan NGO! I had the happy privilege to be the spokesperson for our UN organization before the committee and to be in the supportive company of Kathleen Uhler, OSF, and Ignacio Harding, OFM, our new co-directors, and Mary Theresa Plante, FMM, our long-term representative at UN Headquarters in New York. On that evening we became the forty-third non-governmental organization to be accorded Category I consultative status, which means that we are privileged to make written or oral interventions at all sessions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), have our own name plate and sit behind the member nations. We enjoy special relations with other UN bodies and are able to have additional representatives at UN headquarters in New York as well as at UN centers, such as Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

Our status calls and indeed imposes upon the Franciscan family the privilege and the responsibility to bring Franciscan values into the global agenda at the United Nations. However, such action is not new to the members of our family. We were granted this status only because the governments are fully aware of our 800-year legacy and our current efforts around our planet Earth in caring for the environment, in peacemaking and in

serving all our brothers and sisters in need. They recognize our potential and welcome us as collaborators.

In five years we had come a long way from our beginning efforts, when the United Nations looked to us like an alphabet soup of initials. Everyone used acronyms and it took time to get accustomed to the "UNese." With the help of many who became good friends over the years in both the nongovernmental and United Nations community, we mastered the language and became involved in activities and committees addressing the areas of concern contained in our Vision Statement.

As friendships developed we became partners with others striving to improve the quality of life on our planet Earth. Some, most especially the "civil servants" of the UN Secretariat, kept asking: "What took you so long to get here? After all, are not the goals of Franciscans akin to those expressed by the United Nations in its charter and in its Declaration on Human Rights?" And others added: "Franciscans are the 'heart' people and you can bring that caring spirit to the work of the United Nations."

We attempted to respond to these challenges and others presented to religious non-governmental organizations by both Mission and UN personnel: "The UN has all the facts on many current world problems. You have an obligation to raise spiritual and ethical dimensions to our interpretation of and response to these issues." In our efforts here we often collaborate with other Catholic NGOs with whom we meet regularly as well other religious NGOs.

And the dream expressed by many since the early history of the Franciscan UN project moved to reality. The early dream invited all Franciscans to *imagine*:

Just imagine: Franciscans walking the halls of the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna. *Just imagine* Franciscans working on UN committees, . . . regularly transmitting information on critical international issues, . . . communicating concerns about and offering possible solutions to pressing social problems, . . . operating an international office to help channel the energy of the Franciscan family and respond to the needs of the powerless and marginalized on a global basis. *Just imagine!*

Just imagine: Franciscan men and women, secular and regular, old and young, Franciscans from many nations—speaking different languages—representing many cultures contributing to a concrete, unmistakable Franciscan presence at the United Nations, the world's foremost forum for conflict resolution. *Just imagine!*

Just imagine: Franciscans proclaiming to all their commitment to peacemaking, their concern for the poor and their care for creation. *Just imagine!*

Just imagine: (adapted from John Lennon) imagine there are no boundaries, it isn't hard to do, nothing to kill or die for and no one starving too; imagine all the people living life in peace. Perhaps we are but dreamers—though not the only ones—come join us so the world will live as one.

Franciscans participated in Preparatory Committee sessions, regional

consultations and United Nations Conferences. Our first efforts were in the area of Environment and Development (the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio). In preparation for this event, members sponsored think-tanks addressing, in particular, the spiritual and ethical issues addressed in the conference documents and developed position papers on some issues. At Rio, Franciscans sponsored fasts and prayer vigils, held press conferences and worked diligently to realize global agreements for sustainable development. Since the Earth Summit, Franciscans have brought Agenda 21 (the conference document) to educational, religious and environmentally concerned audiences around the world through sponsorship of workshops, conference and educational programs as well as participating in the follow-up programs sponsored by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Rio was just the beginning as our efforts moved along with the United Nations agenda and saw similar action by our membership in the conference processes for: Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); Small Island Developing States (Barbados, 1994}; Population (Cairo, 1994); Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); Women (Beijing, 1995); UN Fiftieth Anniversary (1995); Human Settlements (1995-96).

Simultaneously, our membership roster expanded, area and regional groups developed, liaison people surfaced and members shared information about their activities and their working relationships with United Nations programs and agencies.

Our international office began as a one-person operation in Brooklyn (New York), ably assisted by Mary Theresa Plante, FMM, serving as a UN-NGO representative. Gradually we grew, and over the years we added an associate director (first Jeanne Glisky, SFP, and then Kathie Uhler, OSF), volunteer religious support personnel, student interns, office volunteers, and global family participation in non-governmental and United Nations Committees, programs and events in New York. Just to use one example, in our preparations for the World Social Summit this past March, we actively participated with an interfamilial delegation numbering fifteen people at each of the three preparatory meetings and made two significant interventions at the August, 1994, and January, 1995, preparatory sessions. In addition to the international office staff, our delegation included representatives from Brazil, France, the Philippines, Slovakia, Spain and the United States. And we had for the first time people who participated throughout the entire preparation and at the Summit—most notably, Mike Surufka, OFM, and Francis Matthews, OFM, who lent us their time and talents and were a tremendous asset.

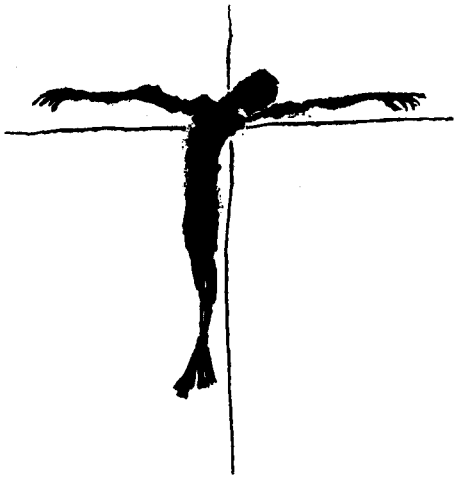
We also moved from Brooklyn to office space in Holy Family Church, which is just a few steps from United Nations Headquarters. This move, plus the evolvement of a truly international Executive Committee and the personal support over our brief history, enabled us to become a more effective nongovernmental organization.

We have worked closely with other nongovernmental organizations

in sponsoring events, in lobbying, in proposing statements to various UN agencies.We have collaborated with UN personnel and brought speakers (e.g., Tom Grady, OSF, and Ken Himes, OFM) into the United Nations to share our Franciscans values.We have served on and chaired NGO and UN committees and boards. And we have worked with the missions of Member States with whom we are in regular communication to improve the quality of life for all our sisters and brothers.

Just as St. Francis did not hesitate to address himself to the rulers of the world in his day and through them to the peoples of the world, Franciscans International has attempted to share the greeting of Francis's "Peace and All Good!" with the world community.

Yes, brothers and sisters, you have brought us to this moment through your prayer, action and support. It has been a unique privilege to witness the global recognition of the charism that Franciscans incarnate. Thank you and *ad multos annos*.



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Franciscans International: A Bridge for Franciscans Between Old Ways and New

Mary Theresa Plante, FMM

Peace is not something you can buy or sell. We know that we need it but we don't often know how to possess it. It cannot be produced instantly. The same is true for the environment. We can see what is happening around us and in our own country, but to be able to realize the vast destruction of our planet is often beyond our ability to understand.

Perhaps that also is what happens when we are involved with the poor. We see people who are poor, but how do we comprehend the billions in the world lacking even basic necessities and without any possibility of changing their situation?

Three core values of care of creation, peacemaking and concern for the poor emerged as concepts around which a Franciscan agenda was organized within the purview of the United Nations.

Robert Muller, former Assistant to three United Nations Secretaries General, has said: "There are many groups and people who help the poor but rare are those who like the Franciscans have an integral, spiritual vision of humanity, of all life, of nature, of our planet and of our place and role in the universe and in time."[1]

It becomes a challenge to the Franciscan family to see beyond our immediate environment and be concerned for all peoples. As individuals we have this experience, but we need to see that collectively we have an opportunity to speak out as the Franciscan family and be witnesses and

prophets on a different level in our society.

Franciscans International provides this bridge between old ways and new. Brother Hermann Schalück, OFM, Minister General, has said: "We must pass over from a mentality which looks at our ministry as solely service to the 'Church' community to one which sees Franciscan ministry as a collaborative service to and within the larger family of the United Nations."[2]

Rose Fernando, FMM, International Peace and Justice Coordinator for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, stated a similar message in a different way: "For too long we have failed to see the global interconnectedness in local problems, with little attention given to the structural and systemic causes of many of the ills we seek to alleviate. Our mission has suffered in the process."[3]

Since 1989, I have been privileged to be on this journey with Franciscans International in a new way of seeing the universality of mission, a mission without borders. During the first months as I walked along the halls at the United Nations, attended conferences, interacted with people from various cultures of the then 159 countries that made up the United Nations, I pondered, what we were doing there. Gradually, I saw the worldwide concern of the United Nations for many of the same issues that concerned Franciscans.

The UN was willing to listen and invited input. This then became a new challenge. Did we have something to say? Could we offer some practical solution to the issues concerning women, children, education, child labor, human rights, environment, family, housing, cities, youth, debt, trade, refugees, unemployment, freedom of religion on a world level? These are problems that no one country can solve on its own. Global problems need global solutions which require the integration of spirituality, ethical and moral values. Could our input be expressed in a way that valued life, all life?

The empowerment of people of every age is taking place rapidly around the globe due to networking through telecommunications, fax, E-mail and Internet. Local people are organizing themselves to deal with local issues and gathering support from international organizations.

The signs of the times call us to look at the world with missionary and contemplative eyes as we work locally and globally. We need to seize the moment wherever we are, to join with others, to participate where we can, to be willing to take the first step and to bring a missionary spirit to our work. We are seen as a religious people with no hidden agenda, looking out for the good of people everywhere.

There are simple things we can do. Preparation for the United Nations Environmental Conference held in Rio (1992), inspired Franciscans International to start the Plant-a-Tree Project with more than 70,000 trees planted in over fifty countries. At the FMM Neuville Nursery School in Pakistan, children between ages three to five participated in the project.

They planted five trees, and their teacher, Minda Valencia, FMM, asked them: "Have you thanked a green plant today?" This brought enthusiastic responses. From Mexico came a story of how the FMM's planted fruit and shade trees. All were given different names in the English, African and Asian languages whereby the "godmothers" took a greater interest in their continued well-being.

Since the FMM's are located in seventy-six countries, a very real sharing of mission experiences is beginning to focus not only on the work they do but on the more g1obal connections that cause the problems. A recent meeting of FMM's in Jakarta, Indonesia, focused on the injustices suffered by poor farmers and proposed an appeal to Franciscans International to work for the restructuring of the UN.

From France came a "Message to Franciscans International" from a meeting of FMM's considering Peace and Justice which "condemned exclusion, violence and degradation of the environment, " They requested Franciscans International to collaborate with other NGO's in following developments in the countries of the southern hemisphere, their educational needs and problems with AIDS.

Some FMM sisters in Italy have joined with the group ACAT (Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture), an international ecumenical movement. Dina, another FMM working with the Jesuit Service for Refugees in a camp in Burundi, sent a long letter to Franciscans International pleading the case of the refugees there.

The UN International Year of the Family, 1994, provided an opportunity to study family structures in Pakistan, Italy, Australia, Peru and India, among others. Consciousness was raised and experiences were shared.

Another issue of international concern taken up by the FMM's has to do with land mines and the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines. This has provoked Franciscans International to join others at the United Nations in drawing attention to the millions of land mines still in the ground. Long after the wars are over, the killing goes on. In 1995, the United Nations will convene a Review Conference aimed at improving landmines protocol.

Now, Beijing and the International Women's Conference beckon to a new depth of awareness. The problems of women of various countries are amazingly similar. We learn that violence against women is the most common problem world-wide; illiteracy is also high on the list. The Ethiopian/Kenya FMM journal has just published the concerns of the African women given at the United Nations regional meeting in Africa. It is their statement of what is important to them in the global plan of action that will come out of the Women's Conference in Beijing.

Franciscans International is a bridge with the United Nations that helps deepen our understandings of the desperate needs of our planet, the destruction of our environment, the billions of people without proper housing, food and basic necessities of life.

We now not only work with members of our own congregation in serving refugees, migrants, and persons with AIDS, but also intercongregationally. We collaborate as well with other groups, whether Christian or not. Sometimes we join groups that work internationally, but wherever we go we bring our religious beliefs and spirituality with us.

The prophetic dimension of both the missionary and religious aspects of our lives and our personal journey of faith leads us to consider the "passover," which Father Hermann speaks about and the greater necessity of "changing the structures and systemic causes" of injustice as stressed by Rose Fernando, using the "bridge" of Franciscans International to help us do this.

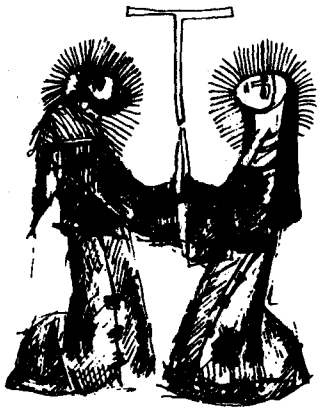
Let our prayer be: Lord what do you want us to do together?

Endnotes:

[1] International Franciscan Conference, Assisi, May 14-20, 1989.

[2] Hermann Schalück, OFM, in a talk to OFM International Peace and Justice meeting, NY.

[3] *International Journal of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary* (May, 1994) 21.



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Franciscans International: The NGO as a Ministry

Kathleen L. Uhler, OSF

> The Franciscans belong at the United Nations as an NGO (non-governmental organization) because they have a deep concern and reverence for creation, they are involved in peacemaking, and care enormously about the poor. The Franciscans would make a vital contribution to the ongoing debate about these issues. (Desmond Tutu, SSF [Anglican Society of St. Francis], Archbishop of Capetown, South Africa.)

Tremendous enthusiasm is easily generated for the presence of Franciscans in an official capacity at the United Nations. But just what this means, "being an NGO," often remains obscure and much beyond the inner circle of UN-related personnel.

The Relationship of NGO's to the United Nations.

Historically, the non-governmental organization and its members, both known as "NGO's," have enjoyed a special relationship with the United Nations. The drafters of the United Nations Charter foresaw the necessity of a non-governmental balance over against the preponderance of governmental delegations at the UN. Article 71 of the Charter ensures the existence of NGO's under the aegis of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

> The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are con-

cerned with matters within its competence.

Most of the nearly 1,700 NGO's are international in their membership and, because of this, bring to bear an important balance vis-a-vis the Member States—the scope of NGO concerns cross national boundaries. NGO's are not bound by the agendas and politics of individual nations. "Relationship" is a key word to describe the purpose of an NGO. Through accreditation with either ECOSOC or the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), NGO's become integral parts of a global action network, providing channels through which information concerning the UN, its related agencies and programs, reaches the public around the world.

NGO's have launched the international years for the family, peace, the child and disabled persons; they have convened world conferences and parallel NGO events on the environment, youth, women, the aging, population, shelter and food. More and more, the UN is becoming dependent upon the human and material resources of NGO's to implement its relief and rehabilitation programs, to monitor elections, to clear landmine fields and to facilitate peacekeeping operations.

The Franciscan NGO as Ministry.

> Our cooperation with the United Nations has . . . a very practical logic. It gives us the opportunity to link people of good will to overcome injustice and suffering. We have to do together what nobody will be able to accomplish alone or as one branch of the [Franciscan] family" (Hermann Schalück OFM, Minister General, "Address to International OFM Council for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation," United Nations, New York, Oct. 27, 1993).

The spirit of Francis of Assisi permeates the Franciscan movement through the ages, so that today it is possible to view the characteristics of our patron saint operative within the membership and work of Franciscans International. The values embraced within its aims and structures and modeled by its governance and members testify that "being an NGO" can be an authentic form of Franciscan ministry. Some Franciscan values that stand out in the NGO context are inclusivity, and its related values of ecumenism and "family-feeling"; evangelization; and propensities for direct service and peacemaking.

Membership in Franciscans International includes persons from every continent and from 137 countries (as of 1994). Current individual, active members number over 17,000 with the potential of 1.2 million, the worldwide Franciscan population.

The membership reflects the familial nature of Franciscanism: men and women from the Secular Franciscan Order; men and women religious who follow the Third Order Rule; the Poor Clares of the Second Order; the First Order Capuchins, Conventuals and Friars Minor, the Anglican Society of St. Francis and other Franciscan communities. There are clerics and laity, married and single persons, active and contemplative lifestyles. The membership is ecumenical, inclusive of Franciscans from Episcopal, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches.

The work of Franciscans International is evangelical, attempting to model for the United Nations a way of being community that transcends national boundaries and sovereignties and, of greater importance, that regards every human being of equal worth and the earth a common good. As NGO's with a spiritual formation and an evangelical mission, Franciscans minister by their presence and collaborative witness.

This orientation suits exceptionally well the expanding range of peace operations undertaken by the UN. The following is an excerpt from the UN Secretary General's Report of September, 1993, on preventive diplomacy:

> Once an elusive and undefined concept, preventive diplomacy is now becoming understood as a vital field for practical action. New forms of preventive diplomacy have evolved in the course of the past year; it incorporates efforts designed to prevent the occurrence of armed conflict, such as factfinding, good offices and goodwill missions, the dispatch of special envoys to tense areas, and efforts to bring parties to a potential conflict to the negotiating table. Today, the variety of challenges faced by the United Nations has led to a more intensive and creative use of such familiar techniques (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Report, page 97).

Franciscans are found "on the ground" in every "hot spot" on the globe. Examples of Franciscans International members' activities in collaboration with UN peacekeeping operations include:

> In 1993-1994, small groups of adult Franciscan students of Zaire were organized to work with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on educational development projects and with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on its work with Angolan refugees.
>
> A lone, European friar member transported food and relief supplies three or four times a week from Burundi to 40,000 refugees in Kabgayi, Rwanda throughout the months of May and June, 1994.
>
> Franciscan friar and sister members have worked extensively in recent years with UNHCR in Jamaica, Bosnia, Iraq, Zaire and other countries.

Franciscans International, a Prophetic Voice

> It sounds incredible, but Lenin himself once said: "It would have taken only ten Francises of Assisi to save Russia." Let's multiply the saints and the whole world will be saved (John Paul I, *Gente Veneta*, 2: 38

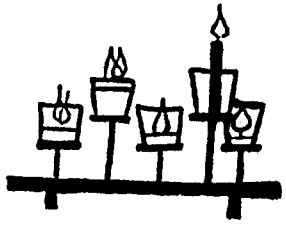
[1976]).

As the twenty-first century approaches, the longing becomes more acute for a better world, one that is united, reconciled, healed, and made whole once more. Through its NGO ministry, Franciscans International is called and empowered to participate in shaping the agenda for this new world order. The Franciscan worldview exalts simplicity, humility, charity and joy. The UN community challenges Franciscans to be its internal critic and prophet; to confront the control and exploitation of peoples and of the earth's resources; to call for just and loving relationships among nations; and to discern and interpret God's evolutionary plan for the universe.

In the words of Robert Muller, Chancellor, University for Peace, Costa Rica, former UN Assistant Secretary-General:

> This is the plane on which the Franciscans can make their greatest contribution to the mission of the United Nations, by proclaiming the centrality, the beauty and the immense riches of spirituality for the healing of the wounds of this world. There are many groups and people who help the poor, who promote and advocate peace and disarmament, who defend and help save the environment and nature, but rare are those who like the Franciscans have an integral, spiritual vision of humanity, of all life, of nature, of our planet and of our place and role in the universe and in time (International Franciscan Conference, Assisi, May 14-20,1989).

The Testament that Franciscans International bequeaths to the United Nations in 1995, its fiftieth anniversary year, and into the twenty-first century, is this: to rediscover and maintain faithfully the spirit of our founder, Francis, as the Church directs us in *Perfectae Caritatis* and to solve problems by pursuing the way of love, announcing always, as did Francis: "Peace and all good! *Pace e bene*!"



The Cord, 45.5 (1995)

VACLAV HAVEL AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI: THE DYNAMICS OF TRANSFORMATION

William E. McConville, O.F.M.

This lecture was delivered as the inaugural lecture in the Clare Center Lecture Series at Siena College, Albany, NY, on October 3, 1994.

From one perspective Francis of Assisi and Vaclav Havel could not be more different from one another. Francis of Assisi was a thirteenth century Italian who, opting out of his worldly and ambitious style of life, felt the call to live the Gospel in a most radical and literal way. This was symbolized most visibly in his embrace of poverty and the poor. Attracted by his holiness, men and women from every strata of society sought to join him in his life of humble discipleship. Thus, under his leadership, the order of little brothers (Friars Minor), the order of the poor ladies (the Poor Clares), and the third order came to be. He died in 1226, marked by the wounds of his crucified Lord.

Havel, on the other hand, is definitely a man of this century. Born in Prague in 1936, he attended school there. His first love was the theater. He began working at the Theater of the Balustrade in Prague, where he was everything from stage hand to director. He authored numerous plays, among them *The Garden Party*, *The Memorandum*, *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Mountain Hotel*. In 1977 he was arrested and jailed for four months because of his Charter 77 activities, which involved public criticism of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. In 1979 his work on behalf of democratic rights brought another conviction and a jail sentence of four and a half years. International outcry forced the shortening of that sentence. In

1989 Havel found himself at the forefront of Czechoslovakia's "velvet revolution," when he helped to found the Civic Forum that negotiated the communists' relinquishment of power. In an extraordinary reversal of fortune he was elected president of Czechoslovakia in 1989, and in January, 1993, he was elected president of the Czech Republic.

In obvious ways Francis of Assisi and Vaclav Havel could not be more different: a thirteenth century Italian Catholic, committed to the imitation of Christ and to preaching conversion to the Christians of his time and a twentieth century Czech playwright and intellectual of deep religious sensibilities but no apparent confessional commitment, now the chief magistrate of his nation. There are, however, some interesting surface similarities. Although not a professional playwright or dramaturge, Francis certainly shared Havel's penchant for the theatrical or the dramatic. Remember the manner in which he would walk through a town, provoking both sympathy and hostility. There was, of course, a pageant he staged in Grecchio, wonderfully recreating the birth of Jesus. On a deeper level, though, both Francis and Havel shared a common destiny; they began their respective life-work as charismatic "outsiders," attracted men and women to their cause and found themselves presiding over large institutions—for Francis a religious order and for Havel a national government. In both these men there is a refreshing modesty, a sense of limit and proportion. Neither is adverse to praising a virtue such as humility. Both Francis and Havel show an extraordinary respect for other human beings. Francis has often been celebrated for his "courtesy," while Havel seems to exemplify his own insistent call for civility or what he calls "public manners." They might have enjoyed one another's company.

The similarities, however, run deeper than demeanor or rhetoric. Havel explores some fascinating themes when he addresses the means by which public life can be transformed and renewed, e.g. living in the truth, interdependence, the primacy of conscience, transcendence, recognizing limits of technology and the presence of mystery. It is such a refreshing change from the kind of political rhetoric omnipresent in our society. At the same time, so much of Havel's thinking resonates with the vision, values and practice of Francis of Assisi.[1]

Havel: A Man of Our Times

One is immediately struck by the concrete, existential character of Havel's project. He is dealing with life under very specific conditions: in his earlier essays, life under the communist tyranny (post-totalitarian dictatorship), and in his later pieces, the experience of a society coming to grips with its new-found freedoms. Thus his point of departure will often be a reflection on an experience from his own life; e.g. as a small boy encountering on the way to school a hurriedly built factory soiling the environment or the action of a greengrocer who calls on the workers of the

world to unite by placing a sign in his window amidst the carrots and celery and then one day removes the sign. Perhaps this reflects the sensibilities of the playwright who is anchored in the complexity and ambiguity of human action.

This approach, however, is emblematic of his prioritizing life over system. Havel, throughout his work, paints a painful portrait of the effects on human life of the system created by a post-totalitarian dictatorship. It is a world in which the self-preservation of the system is the supreme value; it is the role of individuals to serve that system. In Havel's view this results in the profane trivialization of the human. Persons merge into the anonymous crowd where the supreme virtues are conformity and uniformity. Critical intelligence is sacrificed to ideology; in place of reality is created "a world of appearances, a mere ritual, a formalized language deprived of semantic contact with reality and transformed into a system of ritual signs that replace reality with pseudo- reality."[2] Those who participate in the system become both agents of its automatism (its taken-for-granted self-maintenance) and victims of its goals. For Havel those who dwell within this system are living in the lie, the trivialization and fallenness of their own existence hidden from them.

Life, of course, has a quite different dynamism. Genuine life expresses itself in independent self-constitution, in free self-organization. The result is an extraordinary manifestation of plurality and diversity, "infinitely and mysteriously multiform."[3] This free expression of being is intimately connected with humanity's rightful dignity, with moral integrity, with the primacy of conscience. Absolutely essential for life to emerge in its fullness is the recognition that human beings exist most radically, not as part of an oppressive structure, but as part of nature, of the universe, indeed of the order of Being. In other words, the emergence of authentic "life" in all its richness and integrity is inextricably bound up with the recognition of transcendence as constitutive of the human, a transcendence that binds human beings to one another, to nature and to the mysterious reality of God.

This rootedness in the "natural world" [*Lebenswelt*] is a consistent theme for Havel. It has the character of a "pre-reflective meaningfulness" about it: "That is the world of our lived experience, a world not yet indifferent since we are bound to it in our love, hatred, respect, contempt, tradition. . . ." Further, "In this world, categories like justice, honor, treason, friendship, infidelity, courage, or empathy have a wholly tangible content, relating to actual persons and important for actual life."[4]

Coherence in this world is grounded, for Havel, in something beyond its horizon, something beyond our grasp. Havel again: "The natural world, in virtue of its very being, bears within it the presupposition of the absolute which grounds, delimits, animates, and directs it, without which it would be unthinkable, absurd, and superfluous, and which we can only quietly respect. Any attempt to spurn it, master it, or replace it with some-

thing else, appears within the framework of the natural world, as an expression of hubris for which humans must pay a heavy price, as did Don Juan and Faust."[5] Modern attempts to do just that, such as certain forms of rationalism, technology and science, have in effect denied the importance of personal experience, including the experience of mystery and the absolute. As many have argued before and since, the diminution of God has resulted in the diminution of human beings.

But what has the greengrocer to do with any of this? One day he decides to remove the communist slogan from his window. In this simple gesture he chooses to live in the truth; he shatters the world of appearances. In effect, he declares that the emperor has no clothes. Thus living in the truth is not ordinarily a series of grand gestures, but consists in small things which shape a mood or an environment. "You simply straighten your backbone and live in greater dignity as an individual."[6] Thus the confrontation between the possibilities of life and the demands of a post-totalitarian system begins at the level of human consciousness and conscience, at the existential level. While every act of freedom in the midst of complex and subtle manipulation is a political act, such existential actions are prepolitical, because they are not part of the political process. Eventually, individuals, who have pierced through the veil of illusion and are capable of courageous acts of freedom, become part of a second culture, an alternate structure, a parallel polis.

The "parallel polis" is not a ghetto. It is, rather, a second culture with its own publishing houses, its concerts and theater performances, its religious formation. It is "an area where a different life can be lived, a life that is in harmony with its own aims and which in time structures life in harmony with those aims."[7] Far from being an act of self-absorption, the creation of the parallel polis is an act of responsibility *to* and *for* the whole. The transforming power of the alternate polis, however, resides in its unremitting commitment to live in the truth. This results in a dramatic tension with the power structure, which can respond in a variety of ways, e.g. co-option, adaptation or internal differentiation. Eventually, however, the regime will wither away, but perhaps not before some last-ditch effort at control and survival à la George Orwell. But for Havel, the political structures which emerge are less important than the renewal of the human order which grounds the political structures. These latter will always be limited and unsatisfying.

Political structures must serve the ends of life; they must enable men and women to live freely, truthfully and in quiet dignity. What is called for is a moral reconstitution of society, a renewal of the relationship of human beings to one another. "A new experience of being, a renewed rootedness in the universe, a newly grasped sense of 'higher responsibility,' a newfound inner relationship to other people and to the human community—those factors clearly indicate the direction in which we must go."[8] Yet this renewal of human order can only be accomplished through the rediscovery of God. In this connection Havel often quotes the obscure pronouncement of Martin Heidegger: "Only a God can save us now!" As he reminded his American audience on July 4, 1994, transcendence is the real alternative to extinction. Freedom can only flourish if human beings do not forget the One who is the source of this gift.

The transcendence of which he speaks so eloquently repositions human beings within a larger human and natural structure; it is a transcendence that recognizes profound "interdependence." He cites the anthropic cosmological principle which affirms that humanity is not an accidental anamoly, an unhappy bit of mildew whirling in space. Rather, we must recognize that "we are mysteriously connected to the entire universe, we are mirrored in it, just as the entire evolution of the universe is mirrored in us."[9] We remain unique and singular within the universe. At the same time, we are deeply connected with the earth, with Gaia. What we do to violate her will ultimately result in the wounding of our own humanity. Thus we must recover the dynamics of self-transcendence. He explains:

> Transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us, to foreigners, to the human community, to all living creatures, to nature, to the universe; transcendence as a deeply and joyously experienced need to be in harmony with what we ourselves are not, what we do not understand, what seems distant from us in space and time, but with which we are mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world.[10]

This is extraordinary language from a political leader!

Francis: A Man for Our Times

A bridge to Francis of Assisi is provided by Havel himself, who asserts that "any genuinely meaningful point of departure in an individual's life has an element of universality about it."[11] Permit me to expand that statement to include not simply an individual's point of departure but the journey and the destination as well. No one can deny that the conversion, pilgrimage and destiny of the mendicant preacher who spent the bulk of his life in a narrow slice of central Italy during the first quarter of the thirteenth century has captured the mind and the imagination of countless men and women from every level of society, from every culture and from every religious tradition. In an uncanny way Francis mirrors in his own context the processes for social renewal and transformation which Havel so eloquently portrays. Furthermore, Francis supports and complements Havel's more encompassing moral agenda. Both raise issues about the relationship between citizenship and discipleship.

Havel's greengrocer made the fateful move from living in the lie to living in the truth by removing the sign with the slogan from his shop window. Francis's gestures were more dramatic (he was an Italian after

all), but no less courageous. He embraced a leper, took cloth from his father's shop and sold it to finance the rebuilding of a church and, when his father dragged him before the bishop, he stripped himself naked and cried out: "Now I can truly say, 'Our Father who are in heaven.'" The direction of his journey would become clearer sometime later when he heard the words of Matthew's Gospel and felt the call to evangelical preaching and mendicancy. But wherein lay the lie and wherein lay the truth?

The young Francis had accepted the ethos of his father and of his father's class. These were the "new men" who were gradually constituting the emerging middle class. Artisans and merchants, they were flocking to urban centers and profiting enormously from the opportunities for manufacturing and trade. A new world was developing in which money, capital and credit were becoming increasingly important. Francis enjoyed the pleasures which this new world afforded and shared his father's hope that through newly acquired wealth they would someday be joined to a place among the aristocracy. He was also reared in a church in which the higher clergy were often merely warriors with miters and the lower clergy were uneducated and incapable of meeting the spiritual needs of the educated laity. Those on the margins, the truly poor, indigent and ignorant (the *minores*), were ignored and powerless.

Francis's move into the truth began when he rejected money as the source of value and meaning for a human life, recognized the dignity of the *minores*, the little ones, chose to live in solidarity with them and heard the call of the Gospel to rebuild and renew a ruined church. He saw through the ideology of money to the more fundamental reality of the dignity and goodness of persons regardless of class and penetrated through the walls of a petrified church to see the transforming possibility of living the Gospel simply and joyfully.

His discovery of the truth and his commitment to live it unleashed in an almost miraculous way the triumph of life over system. He experienced the freedom of the Gospel and out of that freedom a new and different form of religious life came to be. (Francis was not alone in this; Dominic Guzman was a companion.) The mendicant movement in the thirteenth century manifested an energy, a vitality and a creativity which was quite astonishing. In its novelty it was able to respond to the new demands of urban dwellers. The variety of ministries, the sophistication which the friars were to bring to the confessional and to development of a lay spirituality, and their willingness to engage passionately in the intellectual struggle of their age gave evidence of the depth and integrity of their lives. There were those who resented their presence and called for their condemnation because they had altered the system. To them the friars could say: Do not judge us by the patterns of the past but by what we are doing now and by what we shall do in the future.

In Havel's language all of this began for Francis as an existential transformation, as a profound change in consciousness and conscience. Francis's

language is quite simple: he says that he began to do penance. He underwent a conversion. He remained throughout his life a preacher of penance, a caller to conversion. His message was uncomplicated: Recognize the presence of a loving, humble God who chose to come among us as the poorest of the poor; be willing to dispossess yourselves of all those things that provide security and are the source of domination (e.g. money and certain kinds of knowledge); respect the dignity of every person; reject violence and be energetically engaged in making peace and effecting reconciliation. Of course, more powerful, more compelling, more attractive than any of the words he spoke was the life he lived. Men and women of every stripe chose to walk the way he walked. In effect what began to develop was a way of living and working together which was a parallel structure to both society and church, an alternative "holy polis."

Francis did not reject the contemporary structures of authority, either ecclesial or political. He was insistent on being a Catholic and had no doubt that in the preaching, teaching and sacraments of the church he received grace, spirit and life. In regard to political authority he seems to accept the admonition found in 1 Peter 2:13: "Be subject to every human institution for God's sake." And yet he shaped a fraternal life, as Clare shaped a sororal life, which was radically egalitarian, non-hierarchical. "[H]e chose to take his place with those who were on the lowest rung of the social ladder and to offer the brotherhood of the Gospel to every class in society. . . ."[12] As Celano remarks, he wanted his sons to live in amity as if brought together and natured by one spirit, one father and one mother. He wanted the greater to be joined to the lesser, the wise to be united with the simple by brotherly affection. "With God," he said, "there is no respect of persons, and the Minister General of the order, the Holy Spirit, rests equally upon the poor and simple." He wanted this thought inserted into his Rule, but since the Rule was already approved by a papal Bull, this could not be done."[13] Clare of Assisi followed Francis in basing sisterhood "on total equality under the unifying influence of absolute poverty."[14] To an encompassing society deeply stratified this was indeed a dramatic counter witness.

How did the Franciscan movement in its diverse manifestations fulfill its mission: the conversion of men and women to a deeper living of the Gospel? Havel's description of the dynamics of the parallel polis in Czechoslovakia could have been taken out of the early Franciscan chronicles. Havel gives great weight to the styles of popular culture, e.g. poetry, music (even rock music) and theater. When Francis began to live in the truth, he did not leave behind the ballads and love songs which he sang so well. According to Celano he would imitate "the troubadors of Provence, singing the melodies he had learned from them or dancing around like them while he preached."[15] He preached in the vernacular and sang in the vernacular. His "Canticle of the Creatures" is testimony to the power of his use of language. At the same time he had a marvelous sense of the theatrical. He would walk naked into a church both to demonstrate his absolute poverty

before the people and to show his solidarity with a brother he had condemned to do exactly the same. His enactment of the nativity of Christ in Grecchio changed forever the manner in which Christians celebrated the feast of the Nativity. As entertaining as all of these things were, their goal was conversion and transformation of the minds and hearts of the faithful.

Havel's contention is that life will generate the structures which are expressive of its deepest aims. Francis's emphasis on poverty, while rooted in a fresh and direct reading of the Gospel, was to insure that life lived together would not be based upon appropriation, on the accumulation of goods, but upon dispossession. The brothers were to live without anything of their own. At the same time styles of personal exaltation, also barriers to genuine fraternal life, were to be avoided. Leadership was understood in a very functional way; those with authority were referred to as "guardians" or "ministers."

Francis's polis, any more than Havel's, did not come into being as a self-absorbed enclave, concerned for its own salvation, but as reality responsible to and for the whole. Francis and the movement he began had an enormous impact on the medieval experience. This has been engagingly recounted in C. H. Lawrence's recent work on the influence of the friars.[16] Although the structures of the church were not altered, except perhaps in the separation of benefices from ministry, the friars were able to by-pass them. Thus they overcame institutional inertia, became agents of reform and were able to meet the pastoral demands of a new age. "The urban poor as well as the rural peasantry had the Gospel preached to them. . . . The devout life, hitherto regarded as the exclusive occupation of clergy and enclosed religious, had been made available to the laity. . . . The mendicant schoolmen had given fresh life and a new orientation to Western theology and philosophy."[17]

The broader societal implications of Francis's vision are difficult to discern. In the view of those considerably more competent in these matters, Francis did, in Havel's terms, bring power to the powerless. It has been noted that Francis "tried to integrate the *pauperes* and *minores* into the process of social development and growth.[18] LeGoff asserts that "the basic question to which Francis and his companions devoted themselves was that of integrating this pauper society into history."[19] Thus his social ideal was not of a pauper society, but "a leveling and a maximum of equality, marked by the same notion of fraternity which inspired his religious movement."[20] His vision was of a society, spiritually transformed and reconciled by the Gospel, where all forms of domination based on power, riches or knowledge had been put aside. He was always the peacemaker rather than the revolutionary. Did much change? His disciples, with their refusal to take an oath or bear arms, had some impact on the collapse of feudal structures. Campagnola suggests that his impact took place over a long period of time: "His religious vision accelerated the progress of human history in his time by inserting the new popular spirit into history. But perhaps he

also instilled in it a pessimistic notion of power and the powerful, together with a political pessimism, all of which would bear fruit later."[21] If he is right, Havel and Francis are kindred spirits indeed.

Permit a final comment on transcendence and interdependence. For Francis transcendence was a given. He lived in a world shot through with the presence of the all-high, all-good, all-loving God. His life was a surrender to the reality of God. Because of this he was able to live in the transcendence so succinctly sketched by Havel: to live in harmony with what we ourselves are not and with those who are other than ourselves. One thinks first of Francis's extraordinary sense of solidarity and companionship with the natural order, with all of God's good creation, "a paradise in which every creature is brother and sister to us, a 'Thou' deserving love and respect."[22] More important, perhaps, is his ability to place himself imaginatively in the world of other human beings and to treat them with profound respect, gentleness and courtesy. He moved among the highest and lowest with the same ease and humanity. His legendary encounter with the sultan, a dialogue in which Francis not only gave but received, is a memorable instance of Francis's self-transcendence.

Conclusions

We come to the end of exploring the intellectual resonances between one of the truly thoughtful men of our own time and one of the truly holy men of all time. David Tracy of the University of Chicago notes that while Havel is decidedly a modern man, "he sees with great clarity that we need to recover the premodern understanding of the link between the soul and the cosmos or the whole."[23] Some critics contend that Havel, even as president, does not have enough appreciation of the importance of institutions as bearers and transmitters of values. The validity of this view is difficult to judge, but Havel may see his own future already played out in the fate of Francis, who withdrew in frustration from active leadership of the Order. Nor did Francis live long enough to see the clericalization and bureaucratization of his community nor its splits over the interpretation of the very ideals which gave it birth.

We are faced with unanswered questions. Can the similarities, as well as the differences, between Francis and Havel shed any light on the difficult and increasingly contentious tension between citizenship and discipleship? Havel is clearly a citizen with religious and ecumenical sensibilities; Francis was a disciple whose religious vision had a deep influence on civic life. Can their shared vision help us at all to overcome what Paul Ricouer has called the differences between the "pedagogy of power (citizenship) and the pedagogy of nonviolence (discipleship)?" What does citizenship add to discipleship and vice versa? How are the needs of flesh and blood human beings to be met by those who are citizens and disciples? It remains a singularly important question for our nation as a whole and for all who

seek to educate for citizenship men and women many of whom are also disciples.

Endnotes:

[1] My sources for Havel are the following: "The Power of the Powerless" and "Politics and Conscience" in *Selected Writings 1965-1990*, ed. Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1992; *Summer Meditations*, trans. Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); and a speech given on the occasion of the Liberty Medal Ceremony, Philadelphia, July 4, 1994 (MSS).

[2] "Power of the Powerless" 32.

[3] *Summer Meditations* 62.

[4] "Politics and Conscience" 251.

[5] "Politics and Conscience" 251.

[6] "Power of the Powerless" 65.

[7] "Power of the Powerless" 79.

[8] "Power of the Powerless" 92.

[9] "Address" 7.

[10] "Address" 9-10.

[11] "Power of thePowerless" 80.

[12] Lazaro Iriarte, OFM Cap., "The Friar Minor as Penitent and Prophet," *Greyfriars Review* 1:2 (Jan., 1988):18.

[13] 1Cel 191,193.

[14] Iriarte 19.

[15] Iriarte 23.

[16] C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (New York: Longman, 1994).

[17] Lawrence 228.

[18] Stanislaus Da Campagnola, OFM Cap., "Francis of Assisi and the Social Problems of His Time," *Greyfriars Review* 1:2 (Jan., 1988): 135

[19] Da Campagnola 135

[20] Da Campagnola 135.

[21] Da Campagnola 139.

[22] Marie Dennis et al., *Saint Francis and the Foolishmess of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

[23] As quoted in *Newsweek* (July 18, 1994): 66.

Book Review

Pouring over religious book publishers' catalogs of new and forthcoming titles, one could hardly say that the interest in spirituality has crested or waned. With this surfeit of offerings it is difficult to glean the wheat from the chaff, and then devote some time to the few selections for personal reading and study. One area of the vast topic of spirituality which continues to inspire research and attracts the reader's attention is medieval spirituality. Within this sub-field, the Franciscan movement still elicits interest in its founder, St. Francis of Assisi, and the personalities of St. Clare of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Bonaventure.

In *Franciscan Spirituality: Following Saint Francis Today*, the Anglican Franciscan Friar, Brother Ramon, introduces readers to Francis of Assisi, the movement which grew up around him and its spirituality. He suggests how contemporary men and women might make application to their own situations. The author anchors his reflections in a distillation from the Franciscan sources contained in the Omnibus and primarily, though not exclusively, from British Franciscanist writers.

Each of the book's eighteen chapters averages twelve to fifteen pages of text and follows a roughly chronological order of Francis's life. The first part of the chapter describes a segment of Francis's life and then segues into an application for contemporary living. The chapter concludes with a prayer that summarizes the topic which was just presented. The central question which undergirds Brother Ramon's considerations "... is whether what happened in Palestine in the story of Jesus, and what was lived out in the story of Francis in Italy is possible . . . where we are—where I am."

For those well versed in Franciscan lore and contemporary spirituality, there is no new ground broken in this book. Its value would be for people who want to know more about Francis of Assisi and Franciscan spirituality and for those who wish a return to the sources of their attraction to Franciscan living. I would recommend this book for initiates in Franciscan life and for any Franciscan library. Perhaps the best chapter for me was the one on the Third Order, which offers common sense guidelines about formulating a rule of life for this way of Franciscan living.

Since it is a British publication, it might not be readily available in the United States. It can be ordered from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) / 7 Castle Street / Reading, England RG1 7SB / Fax: 01734 599240.

Anthony LoGalbo, OFM

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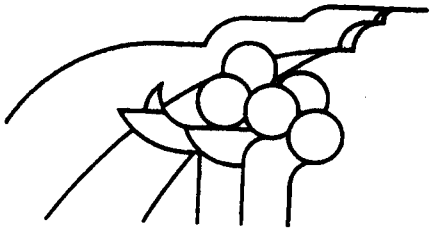

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The Teacher of His Heart: Jesus Christ in the Thought and Writings of St. Francis

By
Norbert Nguyen-Van-Khanh, OFM
Translated by
Ed Hagman, OFM, Cap.
1994

This book concentrates on the Christological dimension of Francis's thought as seen through the prism of his writings and against the background of the world in which he lived. Through this study, the profound Trinitarian foundations of Francis's relentless pursuit of identifying with Christ become clear (Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap. in the Foreword).

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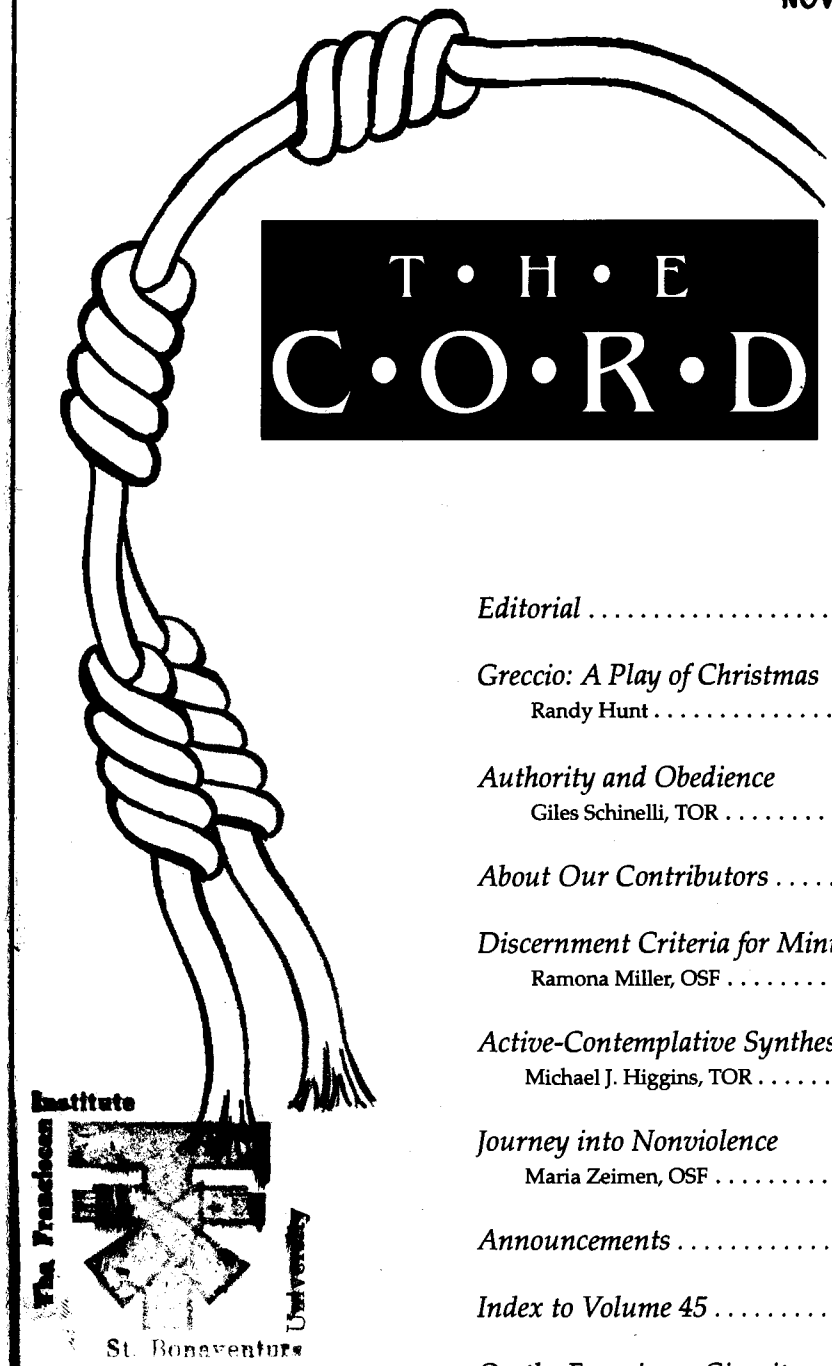

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THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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To save unnecessary delay and expense, contributors are asked to observe the following directives:

1. MSS should be submitted on disk or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced.
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 13 ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.
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4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:
   (1Cor. 13:6).
   (RegNB 23:2).
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Editorial

Today we search for the meaning of "charism" in our life, exploring our tradition for illumination and inspiration. We honor "the Spirit of God and Its holy inspiration," fully expectant that God will continue in our own times to work holy wonders, as God has done in the past. Recently the expression, "evangelical life," has captured our imaginations, as we try to articulate ever more clearly the distinctiveness of our way of living and to distinguish it from the "apostolic life." In August, 1994, Joseph Chinnici, OFM, reflected with Third Order Regular Sisters and Brothers at their annual Federation conference on "The Prophetic Heart: Evangelical Life as TOR Franciscans." This keynote address was followed by break-out sessions, which dealt with various aspects and applications of this theme. In this issue of *The Cord*, we share with our readers three of these offerings as they relate to authority and obedience (Giles Schinelli, TOR), to discernment (Ramona Miller, OSF), and to the active-contemplative synthesis (Michael Higgins, TOR). These reflections, we are confident, will speak to all members of the family and stimulate further dialog.

As the Christmas season approaches our thoughts turn especially to our human longings for peace in our world. Francis's and Clare's commitment to peace and reconciliation, to brotherhood and sisterhood, is perhaps one of the clearest qualities of their way of life and teaching. *Pace e bene!* In her article on active non-violence, Sister Maria Zeimen tells us of the journey of her congregation in realizing peacemaking as an experience. The many practical ideas she shares will undoubtedly help all of us who look for something beyond rhetoric.

In honor of the season we are happy also to present a charming little drama which tells yet again the lovable story of Francis's celebration of Christmas at Greccio. The warmth of this narrative continues to remind us that God truly comes among us as one of us because this is what God loves to do. If God so loves to be human, shouldn't we? Surely this is what Francis and Clare realized so intensely and have passed on to us as our gift, our Christmas gift. *Pace e bene.*

Look at . . . the poverty of Him Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. O marvelous humility, O astonishing poverty! The King of the angels, the Lord of heaven and earth, is laid in a manger!
(from the Fourth Letter to Agnes 19-21.)

The Cord, 45.6 (1995)

GRECCIO
A Play of Christmas

Based on Thomas of Celano's First Life of Francis
and
the Writings of Francis

Randy Hunt

SCENE 1

(We see a friar's bare cell. Downstage right is a stool at a writing desk. The desk is loaded with scrolls, letters, books, quills and ink, etc. At the desk is seated Fra Tomaso da Celano. He is a congenial, warmhearted, if impatient man, in his late thirties. He has the air of both learning and simplicity and is dressed in a friar's habit. The door to the cell is stage left. The cell is otherwise empty.
When the lights go up, Fra Tomaso is scribbling excitedly in a big book. Periodically he checks a scroll or letter, then adds more into the book. After a few moments, there is a gentle knocking at his door.)

Fra T: A moment, please! (Continues to scribble, though a little more intensely.)

(Another knock, more insistent, accompanied by a voice.)

Voice: Fra Tomaso? Fra Tomaso? (Pause.) We're waiting.

(Tomaso ignores the person at the door and continues his work. The door opens and Fra Rufino enters. He is young, tall, and thin. He is generally a quite peaceful friar, excited about the work that Fra Tomaso is doing, but annoyed now with Fra Tomaso.)

Fra R: Fra Tomaso, we are leaving in the morning. . . .

Fra T: (Interrupting, though keeping to his work.) I know, you've told me three times tonight. . . .

Fra R: (Not even noticing the interruption.) . . . and we have to have that manuscript. Have you not finished? (No response.) How can we go to Fra Elias and tell him that we have no official biography of our holy father Francesco? (Still no response.) He is being canonized in three weeks in Assisi. We must

have that biography when we arrive. (Waiting.) Fra Tomaso? (Curiosity overcomes him. He crosses DR to the desk and tries to look over Fra Tomaso's shoulder. A smile of delight comes to his face as he reads what Fra Tomaso has written.)

Fra T: You remember, don t you, that the last of the information from those of you who knew Father Francesco just arrived two days ago? (Fra Rufino nods.) Then how do they expect me to have this written? (A little pleadingly.) I need more time. Just a day more. There's so much information! (Points to the manuscripts, frustrated. He lays down the quill and stretches his hands and fingers. As he does so, Fra Rufino takes the book and begins to read. His smile grows as he reads and remembers.)

Fra R: (Very pleased.) Oh, Fra Tomaso, you've done beautifully! (Fra Tomaso smiles.) But you've messed up some of the details. (Fra Tomaso frowns, grabs the book away and puts it back on the desk.) I mean, that story took place in Greccio, not Gubbio.

Fra T: Humph!

Fra R: Well, its true. I was there. (Half to himself.) Remember?

Fra T: (As he begins to cross out his mistake.) I suppose.

Fra R: It was so cold that night. We'd walked such a long time. (Pause.) Well, I'm off. I'll tell the others that you need another day. (He crosses to the door.) Let me know if you need help with anything else. (Fra Tomaso picks up the book and pretends to be ready to throw it at Fra Rufino. Fra Rufino seems startled at first, but then they smile at each other.) The Lord give you peace, Fra.

Fra T: And you as well, my brother.(Writes for a moment, then picks up book and begins to read.) Of the Manger Francesco Made on the Day of the Lord's Birth. Francesco's highest intention, his chief desire, his uppermost purpose was to observe the holy Gospel in all things and through all things, and with perfect vigilance, with all zeal to follow the teaching and footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(As this next speech goes on, the lights dim and the writing desk and implements are removed. The lights come back up. Fra Tomaso remains seated and narrates the rest of the show.)

Fra T: The humility of the incarnation and the charity of the passion occupied his memory particularly. . . . What he did on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ near the little town called (emphasized) *Greccio* . . . in the third year before his death should be especially recalled with reverent memory.

In that place there was a certain man by the name of Giovanni, of good reputation and holy life whom Francesco loved with a special love . . . . Fifteen days before the birth of the Lord, Blessed Francesco sent for this man.

(LIGHTS DIM. END OF SCENE.)

SCENE TWO

(LIGHTS UP.)

(During this speech, Fra Francesco and Giovanni enter stage left. Fra Francesco is a little man in a very poor and shabby habit. He radiates peace and joy. The two things he allows himself to take seriously are his relationship with the Lord and his own sinfulness. Giovanni is a noble man, dressed in plain clothes of his time. The simplicity of his clothes reflect the simplicity of his life.)

Giov: Fra Francesco, it is good to see you. You've been too long away from our town. Our people would be glad to have you return to us. Perhaps for the feast of the Nativity? You could speak to us about Our Lord and your devotion to him.

(Fra Francesco stops to think a moment and then breaks into a great smile.)

Fra F: (Enthusiastically.) Giovanni, I've just had the most wonderful thought! If you want us to celebrate the feast of our Lord at Greccio, go with haste and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem. I want to set before our eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs, how he lay in poverty in a manger upon the hay, with ox and ass standing by.

(On hearing these things, Giovanni, with a perplexed look on his face, accompanies Fra Francesco to prepare the details for the day. LIGHTS DIM)

SCENE THREE

Fra T: The day drew near, the time for great rejoicing came. Francesco called the brothers from their various places. Men and women of the neighborhood prepared with glad hearts candles and torches to light up that night.

(LIGHTS UP.)

Fra T: "The manger was prepared. . . . (The manger is brought in.) The hay had been brought. . . . (The hay is brought.) The ox and ass were led in. . . . (This is up to the discretion of the director. If ox and ass are available they can be used. Otherwise they have to be suggested somehow. Actors dressed as the animals might ruin the feel of the show.)

Fra T: The people came and were filled with new joy over the new mystery. The woods rang with the voices of the crowd and the rocks made answer to their jubilation.

(A procession of friars, including Fra Rufino, and townspeople enters from the back of the theater. They carry candles or torches. The friars chant *Puer natus est* and/or *Hodie Christus natus est* or any appropriate Christmas chant. Fra Francesco brings up the rear of the procession, clothed in a deacon's vestments and carrying the

"Christ Child." The carols continue until they arrive at the manger. Fra Francesco places the infant in the hay and, filled with happiness and joy, stands in prayer throughout the next speech.)

Fra T: The solemnities of Mass were celebrated over the manger. The saint of God, clothed in the vestments of a deacon, sang the holy Gospel and then preached to the people concerning the nativity of the poor king.

Fra F: My brothers and sisters in the Lord, may the Most High God give you his peace!

Today we celebrate the birth of the holy child of Bethlehem, who came into the world poor and humble, emptying himself of all that was of his heavenly glory and becoming like us. He was not ashamed to be poor, was this babe; he was not ashamed to suffer for his little ones, the poor ones like you and me who long to serve him with all our hearts and souls. As he comes to us every day in the hands of a priest and hides himself in the little form of bread, he hid his heavenly glory and was laid in the hay of a manger.

O my brothers and sisters, let the whole of humankind tremble, the whole world shake and the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the Most High is found among us in the manger. O admirable heights and sublime lowliness! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, for our salvation, should come to us as a poor Babe, as one of us. Look, friends, at the humility of God and pour out your hearts before him. Humble yourselves as well, that you may be exalted by him. Therefore, hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, so that he who gives himself so totally to you may receive you totally. (At this point, Fra Francesco picks up the babe in the manger. As he embraces the baby, he becomes enveloped in light.)

Giov: (Excited.) My friends, don't you see? (The people gathered turn to him) The babe is alive! It is the Christ Child!

Fra F: (A little sadly.) He who is Love is not loved by all. (Happily.) He who has been forgotten in the hearts of many has been brought back to us in our celebration. Let us hold him in our hearts always and as did his Most Holy Mother, bring him to others in our love for them. (Places the Child back in the manger and then leads the procession out stage left, singing a carol. LIGHTS DIM.)

SCENE FOUR

(LIGHTS UP. Fra Tomaso is standing with the book continuing to read.)

Fra T: Later, the place on which the manger had stood was made sacred by a temple of the Lord, so that where once the animals had eaten the hay, there in the future people would eat unto health of body and soul the flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who in highest and ineffable love gave himself to

us in that manger in Bethlehem.

As it so happened, after that first Christmas in Greccio, word spread among the people of the region of the great and marvelous new graces that had come from that holiest of nights when the Christ Child had appeared to the Blessed Francesco. Now they re-enact that scene of the manger every Christmas in order to remember the love and highest humility of Our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, eternally glorious, forever and ever. Amen! Alleluia! (Fra Tomaso closes the book and exits stage left. LIGHTS OUT)

The Son of the Most High is found among us in the manger. O admirable heights and sublime lowliness!

The Cord, 45.6 (1995)

AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE IN THE SPIRIT OF FRANCISCAN EVANGELICAL LIFE

Giles A. Schinelli, TOR

The main points of this article were formulated as one of four responses to the keynote presentation delivered by Joseph Chinnici, OFM, at the August 1994 annual conference of the Franciscan Federation and entitled "The Prophetic Heart: Evangelical Life as TOR Franciscans."

As a former Minister Provincial I have had a number of opportunities to reflect on the themes of authority and obedience and to deepen my own understanding of how these values continue to shape my life as a friar. Recently two experiences caused me to return again to these themes and to engage in the work of ongoing conversion.

The first had to do with a faith sharing experience with the members of the Executive Board of the Franciscan Federation. The focus was an article by Joan Chittister, OSB.[1] With her usual flair and gift for bone- cutting commentary, Chittister suggested that the current understanding and experience of religious obedience left much to be desired. Targeting symptoms which we all know too well, she maintained that unless the concepts of leadership and authority were clearly distinguished in thought and practice, obedience would be trivialized to the point of being meaningless. While her article was by no means definitive, my own sharing was centered on her provocative remarks and my thinking continues to be shaped by the issues she raises.

The second experience had to do with a letter I received from a member of my Province shortly after our Provincial Chapter and the completion of my term as Provincial. My confrere wrote to express his concern for me as I moved into transition and a planned sabbatical. When he suggested that "leaving office" was somehow comparable to having the clothes

stripped from my body, I was prompted to answer his letter not only with gratitude for his genuine fraternal concern but with some personal reflections on both the exercise and relinquishment of authority in a Franciscan fraternity. His analogy, though far from my personal experience, continues to make me wonder about the extent of the difference between perceptions concerning authority and the actual exercise of it. In what ways does power and popular perceptions about power affect our experience and understanding of religious obedience as Fanciscans?

These currents of thought, deriving from personal experience, intersect in my mind and give birth to other questions. Primary among these are two:

(1) to what extent are our current experiences of authority, obedience, and leadership influenced by systems, both familial and congregational, which reflect a "religious life" or "church" culture rather than the Franciscan tradition? and

(2) what elements of a genuine Franciscan tradition would serve us best as we continue to develop ways and means of creating an evangelical life style?

In the first part of this article I invite the reader to reflect on her/his personal experiences of religious leadership, power, and authority. The purpose is to challenge assumptions and to attempt to move beyond what Chittister calls "trivialized expressions of a deeper reality."[2] In the second section, I will attempt to focus on the Franciscan tradition and, and by inference, to suggest ways it can serve to challenge us to develop new models of interacting when it comes to authority and obedience.

Reflecting on Experiences

The analysis of James and Evelyn Whitehead provide helpful insights enabling readers to reflect on their personal experiences of religious leadership, power, and authority. I suspect that Franciscans, like many religious, do not have homogeneous experiences of authority and obedience. Much is colored by our family backgrounds and the systems which define our congregations. Nevertheless, each of us can find points in the Whiteheads' discussion which will serve as springboards for further exploration.

In an earlier work[3] their reflections cover considerable territory. With a challenging definition they begin by suggesting that authority, power and obedience are interrelated:

> Authority is an interpretation of power. Authorities—persons, laws, customs—arise from our judgments about power. We decide together, as a social group, which persons hold final responsibility in this organization, which of these ancient writings are the word of

God, which of these directives have the force of law. It is what we make of power that determines the shape of authority. To define authority as an interpretation of power is not to suggest that it is simply arbitrary and subjective. It does remind us that we are participants in determining the pattern of authority in our civic and religious lives. We do not just "discover" the patterns of authority that we live by, we help decide them. More than children or victims, we are called to be partners in the social process of determining where power is among us and what uses of power are legitimate. We may be silent partners, reinforcing by our passivity a pattern that we hate. Or we may become active in the struggle to develop patterns more responsive to the common good.[4]

They continue with a few words about obedience:

> If authority expresses our collective judgment about power, obedience is our response to these decisions. In obedience we pledge our fidelity to certain patterns of power and authority. Authority springs from the group's insights into power; obedience springs from our convictions that this authority is legitimate. Change occurs as we revise, as we see differently how power is among us; new insights shift our view of authority and invite a fresh obedience.[5]

In an interesting discussion about the links between authority and obedience the Whiteheads acknowledge the current ambiguity many feel. Champions of autonomy warn against personal accomodation and suggest that to obey is to give up too much of the self. And there is some truth in this. Obedience, like love and friendship, makes demands on the self—demands for personal change. Relationships (intimacy) can lead to greater self-possession as well as to diminishment. Using psychological language, they paraphrase the Gospel:

> Our culture's commitment to individualism makes mature obedience suspect. But all of us who are attempting to sustain relationships of some depth—whether in marriage or ministry teams or religious life—know how necessary is the strength of obedience. Without the willingness to modify personal behavior it is difficult to deal with change as our relationship grows. Without generosity relationships remain at a superficial level that asks little of us. Without these resources of mature obedience, then, we are too fragile to face the demands of fidelity.[6]

By far the most compelling sections are those detailing common illusions about authority and the steps we all pass through as our attitudes toward authority matures.

The Whiteheads paint a picture of commonly held illusions about

authority and how one subtly leads to another.[7] Let me suggest a downward spiral as I paraphrase. The first illusion is that authority is the possession of the leader. Authority is imaged as a thing, something that someone owns. This, of course, is not true, because authority is reciprocal. A leader receives authority from the group. Authority is the bond that holds the group together.

If authority is perceived as a possession, the next illusion follows—authority is unaccountable. If it is mine I have no need to give an account of it to anyone. Power thus perceived can easily degenerate into absolute power without any reference to the community. A third illusion changes power into privilege. Those in power are holier or wiser—they are set apart from the rest. And in the process, power is more and more removed from being a function of community service exercised in pursuit of the larger good. Not only that, but when the leader is thus distinguished from the rest of us, we are literally dispossesed of our own power. The final stage is not difficult to imagine. Once authority is separated from the community, obedience becomes a virtue for followers only—it is no longer a virtue of leadership. Confusion results when the leader is no longer seen as the servant of the larger good and becomes identified as the object of obedience.

Finally, the Whiteheads describe the process by which we develop adult attitudes towards authority.[8] Essentially the process invloves moving from a vertical vision to a more horizontal one. Growing up we envision the communities in which we live in a vertical fashion. Authority is located "above"; leaders are meant to exercise authority and followers are called to be obedient. This view is reinforced by our early familial experiences and other circumstances. As we develop, we become more and more aware of our own inner authority and the need we feel to articulate our experiences and to have them heard. Gradually the vertical world begins to shift towards the more horizontal one of adult interaction. This process is not easily achieved. Often a "dethroning" of parents, rulers and leaders of all types is part of the purification involved in this development. They describe the vision of this new world in the following fashion:

> We are no longer together only as parents and children or as rulers and followers. We are, at least in our most mature vision, partners in a shared enterprise. We are not "equal" partners, since we each bring such different gifts and wounds. But we are *mutual* partners, since we recognize the need and strength that exists in each of us and acknowledge that our giving and receiving goes both ways. Maturity is not the banishment of authority but its renewal and refigurement.[9]

Some years later, the authors return to these themes, this time setting the discussion in the context of the renewal which has been taking place in the church.[10] Using the biblical metaphors of "exile" and "exodus" they

describe how notions of religious leadership, power and authority became so restricted or narrowly understood that in effect they were "exiled" from the community of faith. They celebrate and detail the activity of the Spirit in the community of faith which continues to effect a reappropriation ("exodus") of these gifts.

The discussion of power in chapter three emphasizes much of what has been said above. It is worth repeating that an alternative biblical image of power as found in the final chapter of Luke (24:29) recognizes the group as receiving power and taking form in a variety of gifts and in a new collective confidence.[11] This image encourages the recognition of power as a relationship (social) rather than as an individual possession.

The authors' experience working with groups is evident when they speak about the dynamics of power and whether these are of the Spirit or not:

> Power is essentially social. To understand social power we must look at relationships—at what goes on among people rather than at individuals alone. As the members of the community interact, power flows in many directions. As power stirs in the group, its members begin to shape this energy into patterns and rules that give order to their common life.
>
> Christians recognize the energy flow among them, the surprising and continued stimulus to pursue their best hopes and ideals, as the power of the Spirit. It is in these interactions of generosity and forgiveness that we have our most practical experiences of grace. These are the relationships that show us God in our midst. This power is not possessed only by the group's official leader or ministers; it moves and stirs among the different strengths and hopes that constitute this community.
>
> The power of the Spirit in the group moves among other forces alive among us—envy, compulsion, resentment, competition. A Christian community is continually challenged to discern and distinguish the Spirit's power from these other, destructive energies.[12]

Understanding power as a social process rather than as a possession is helpful. Acknowledging the tension between the power of the Spirit and other forces in a group enables us to maintain a healthy realism and to be honest about the human temptation to rupture relationships. But, as the Whiteheads insist, the most important insight is to understand that the structures of group life are relative. "First, because they exist in *relation* to the larger goals of the group and second, because they are also limited in scope."[13] The fact that we "author" the structures and that they must be shaped to the common goals of the group—an understanding many of us

came to appreciate by working on our documents and constitutions—is very liberating.

Two further reflections are noteworthy of inclusion in this section. The first emerges from what the Whiteheads describe as four approaches to leadership. While resisting the temptation to separate leadership from the community (and to locate it out there—one of the illusions of authority they talked about earlier), they do admit that the social sciences, in their fascination with leadership, often unwittingly did precisely that. What is significant, they report, is how these same sciences are now beginning to look at leadership in a systemic fashion. That is to say as rooted in an understanding of the group as system—a group which is composed of interdependent relationships and leadership as a dimension of the system.[14]

What is important about this discovery is that it helps to clarify more precisely the role of leadership and brings us, interestingly, in touch with one of the sources we shall examine shortly, namely, the "Letter to Brother Leo." The Whiteheads maintain that whatever approach leadership may need to take, leaders must be able to *nurture commitment* and *foster collaboration*.[15] "To nurture commitment leaders must be able to encourage the conversation about values"[16] because group identity happens around what we believe together. To foster collaboration leaders must be able to mobilize the group's resources "both generating and focusing its strengths—making more of the group's power."[17] Our brother Francis seems to have grasped these goals intuitively and exercised remarkable insight and discretion as far as his secretary was concerned!

The second and last reference comes towards the end of the book in the discussion about empowerment. Citing Elizabeth Janeway's work,[18] the authors enlarge the vision by suggesting that because persons in leadership are sometimes reluctant to undertake the difficult task of purifying the structures of power, it is often the weak who can accomplish this task best.

The Whiteheads describe the power(s) which the weak possess—the power of disbelief, the power of coming together and the power of shared action—by using very concrete examples and circumstances.[19] It is interesting to reflect on the successes which empowerment has achieved. It is humbling and enlightening to ponder the uneveness of the process as well as the failures.

Reclaiming and Reshaping the Franciscan Tradition

The previous section draws attention to certain assumptions and patterns of thinking which contextualize and influence any discussion of authority and obedience. It is an important first step because often these assumptions and ways of thinking are operative but not articulated. Without careful attention and a process of reflection which encourages articulation, focusing on the tradition might have little or no effect at all. Likewise current ecclesiological as well as sociological circumstances will most certainly

affect the ways and means by which a particular tradition is reappropriated.[20] As we are beginning to discover some twenty -years after Vatican II, the real work of aggiornamento is complex and only beginning.

I suggest that the Franciscan tradition of authority and obedience is found in two sources. The first is the written source and the second, the lived or experiential source. Let me ask the reader to keep in mind her/his own previous personal reflections as well as the comments of the Whiteheads as I attempt to highlight some of the more salient aspects of this tradition.

In terms of the written material, I would like to focus on three sources in particular: the "Letter to a Minister," the third "Admonition," and the "Letter to Brother Leo."

What has always impressed me about the "Letter to a Minister"[21] is the frankness of the Saint as expressed in the challenge which he issues to the minister. Apparently disturbed over friars who sin, the minister wishes to retire to the calm of a hermitage. Francis encourages the minister to stay in relationship with the difficult friars (2-8) and challenges him to show evangelical compassion towards them a thousand times over (9-11).

The third "Admonition" is entitled "perfect obedience."[22] The second half (7-11) treats of the practical matter of a conflicted conscience and outlines the course of action for a person in such circumstances. In the advice given, the preservation of relationships appears to be of importance. The conflicted friar is not to abandon his prelate (person in authority) nor is he to turn away from those who might misunderstand or criticize his motives for not obeying.

The striking characteristic of the "Letter to Brother Leo"[23] is its insistence on the personal responsibility of the recipient in following Jesus (3). Obedience is here linked with an inner movement of the Spirit which authority warmly encourages and, interestingly, presumes.

These three sources cast light on what is of value in terms of authority and obedience. Following the Gospel is paramount—for *all* in the fraternity. Creating a Gospel community—giving oneself over to the transformation thus involved—is the goal. To be open to the movement of the Spirit and to all that entails and to remain in relationship with the brothers (sisters)—these are the challenges. What is striking is how both ministers and friars share equally in the responsibility of building up and preserving relationships. The minister in encouraged to see beyond the sin to the person. The conflicted friar, who may feel misunderstood both by his minister and his confreres, is advised to stay in relationship with his minister and confreres. And Leo, who is enthusiastically supported in developing discretion and his openness to the Spirit, can nonetheless find support in his relationship with Francis whenever he needs it. Authority, the challenge and ability to build a Gospel fraternity, is firmly located in the community. All are responsible for its exercise.

Some might argue that the scope of these written sources, even with

their emphasis on the preservation of relationships, seems narrow and restrictive because the incidents they describe reduce authority and obedience to the interaction between a particular minister and a particular friar. It is for this reason that it is important to consider further what I call "experiential sources." This material first develops at some length in the practical order and only later finds its way into a rule of life. The Rules of both Francis and Clare are very instructive.

In the first instance, it is helpful to examine the practice of the friars of holding Chapters regularly. Esser describes in some detail this practice, which had already been followed by some orders, but which was made obligatory for all religious by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).[24] Convinced that this practice, which involved the participation of all the friars including the novices, was an important unifying element for the brotherhood, he details three elements or movements in a Chapter: (a) recounting of experiences, (b) confession of faults, and (c) instruction.[25] With great attention to historical detail, he explains how the style, purpose and composition of Chapters evolved as the number of friars increased. What is striking throughout Esser's description is the influence which the practice of Chapters had on the development of the fraternity. Not only did Chapters function as a means of "preserving the true tenor of life in the fraternity,"[26] but they also served as days of renewal and promoted the outward expression of sharing a common life and a growing sense of togetherness by treating of common needs which had arisen from the multiple experiences of preaching the Gospel.[27]

Horgan and Lanigan, in a succinct yet important monograph,[28] go over much of the same ground as Esser. Insisting that the practice of regular Chapters helped maintain the dynamism of true Gospel living, they suggest that:

> Chapters, no matter what type, had both a religious and a human perspective. They were a time for Francis' followers to be together to celebrate their friendship, their common calling, and the shared gift of Christ's fraternity to each and all. They shared their experiences, encouraged one another in their way of life, shared in the Eucharist together and had festive meals. In this way they strengthened their life together. Francis wanted his followers to leave Chapter with one heart and mind (EpOrd 41; RegNB 7:15-16; 9-10; 11:5-10).[29]

Connecting this practice with the Third Order Regular Rule and its focus of ongoing conversion they continue:

> Religiously, chapters were a time to actualize ongoing conversion which would bring Franciscans nearer to God and lead them to rededicate themselves daily to gospel living (cf. 1Cel 103). To this end they assessed their living, evaluated their religious ex-

perience and reflected on their ministries, works and services. They acknowledged their faults and failures and brought about healing through reconciliation. Finally they received instruction from the minister and from each other (cf. RegNB 11:11-13; RegB 12:1-2). The current Third Order Regular Rule (#25) sums all this up in this fashion: "Therefore in every kind of chapter they have let them seek first the kingdom of God and justice (Mt.6:33) and exhort one another to observe with greater dedication the rule they have professed and to follow faithfully in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let them neither dominate nor seek power over one another, but let them willingly serve and obey one another with that genuine love which comes from each one's heart" (cf.Gal. 5:13).[30]

What I believe to be significant in the previous passage is the goal of this type of communal pedagogy—the actualization of ongoing conversion. That chapters engendered a certain amount of familial warmth where each person had a recognized and accepted face is undeniable. But chapters also served as a "place" where there was a feeling of discomfort. Failures were acknowledged and articulated. Healing and reconciliation were pursued. Recognition of limitations and the need for instruction were highlighted. This was no "clubby" or "Monday night football" experience. Individuals belonging to this fraternity were pledged to develop their graced potential to the utmost. Nor was it, as Matura suggests,[31] a group of individuals oblivious to anything but their own self interests. "The fraternity was not to be closed in on itself .rather it had the obligation of maintaining an 'open house' attitude, at the disposition of everyone, in communion with all."[32] Such openness to surrounding needs seems to demand extraordinary personal maturity and generosity.

The second "experiential source" is the Rule of Saint Clare. This way of life, for which she won papal approval after a lifelong struggle, shows Clare's creative and innovative personality in designing a pedagogy of sisterhood in which authority and obedience are given a new slant. Elizabeth Petroff casts some interesting light on Clare's desire to "create a new kind of community for women in spite of the Church's 'deliberate restriction of female initiative.'"[33]

Claiming that Clare's vision of community is "horizontal, not vertical, and that collaboration and not hierarchy is the key"[34] to understanding this first Rule written by a woman for a female religious community, Petroff highlights significant chapters to prove her thesis. Three examples are instructive for our purposes.

The first is Chapter 2, which describes how sisters may join this community. In a surprisingly democratic innovation, the Abbess is required to seek the consent of all the sisters and, if the majority has agreed, the individual may be received (RCl 2:1-2).

The fourth Chapter of the Rule, which treats of more constitutional issues, serves as the second example. Here Clare treats of how the abbess is to be elected, the prescription that the sisters are to gather in chapter weekly for the purpose of "humbly confessing their common and public offenses and negligences and to consult with each other concerning whatever pertains to the welfare and good of the monastery" (RCl 4:15-18). Even the least among the sisters is invited into this consultation. Common consent is an important factor in these gatherings—it is required before any debts can be assumed, and it is necessary in the choice of the officers of the community.

Lastly, Chapter 7 tells us even more. When manual labor is to be assigned to the sisters, it is done in the presence of all. Likewise, when alms are received the gift is announced to all so that a prayer can be offered in common for the almsgiver (RCl 7:3-5). Seemingly small and rather ordinary events are tools helpful for creating a collective and collaborative community. It is in Chapter 8, however, that we catch a glimpse of the depth of this woman's vision. That section describes what should happen when a sister is sent a gift by her relatives or others. The sister may use the gift if she needs it or she may give it to another sister whose need she determines may be greater. And in the case of money, the abbess can use it to provide for the needs of the sisters (RCl 8:9-11). Petroff comments:

> Perhaps the most striking element in Clare's Rule is the freedom it allows to the individual. Clare had no intention of forcing her sisters to sacrifice their personality for the sake of the Order; on the contrary, it was precisely through the perfecting of their God-given personality that they could best further the interests of the Order. Reverential love, therefore, is to be the guiding spirit of Clare's Order. Like Francis, Clare has reached a deep understanding of human dignity and from this understanding was born her love and respect for the personality of each member of her community.[35]

Petroff concludes by saying of Clare:

> She is perhaps most eloquent when speaking about sisterhood. . . . She never seems to have tired in exploring this theme; it is central to her autobiographical Testament and is luminously portrayed in her letters of love to St. Agnes of Prague.[36]

In her own creative way, Clare embroiders Francis's insight that the regular coming together of the friars was a helpful pedagogical tool in their development and in the popularity of the Franciscan movement. Clare was at it longer, and the writing and approval of her way of life came at the conclusion of extensive personal experience. Her contribution serves, therefore, not as a complement to Francis's intuition but as a beacon. It can connect this tradition with the aspirations of contemporary persons which are

in many ways similar to those of the time of Francis and Clare.

Vaclac Havel, president of the Czech Republic, capsulized contemporary searching in these words:

> We have long suspected and sometimes forgotten the awareness of our being anchored in the Earth and the universe, the awareness that we are not here alone nor for ourselves alone but that we are an integral part of higher, mysterious entities against whom it is not advisable to blaspheme. Only someone who submits to the authority of the universal order and of creation, who values the right to be a part of it and a participant in it, can genuinely value him/her self and his/her neighbors and thus honor their rights as well.[37]

Authority and obedience, viewed from the perspective of the tradition, focus on the creation of a *common heart*. This was eloquently stated in the document prepared by the Franciscan Federation for the upcoming Synod on Religious Life:

> The Franciscan life includes elements from both monastic and apostolic religious life, but it has its uniqueness. The *emphasis* is on neither a common place centered on contemplation and the praise of God, nor on a common task centered on the concrete mission of service to the Church and world. It is rather on a *common heart*: a prophetic witness to Christ and the whole of his gospel.[38]

The challenge to us in terms of authority and obedience is to find ways to develop this common heart, ways which will "speak about God and connect with the human desire to be free," and ways which will transform "our vocation to be subject-to-all in such a fashion as to build up each person's call to be free within the context of his or her social unit."[39]

Endnotes:

[1]Joan Chittister, OSB, "Religious Life is Still Alive, But Far From the Promised Land," *National Catholic Reporter* (Feb.18, 1994) 13 ff.

[2]Chittister 18.

[3]James and Evelyn Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength: New Visions About Adult Christian Maturing* (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

[4]Whiteheads 166-167.

[5]Whiteheads 167.

[6]Whiteheads 169-170. For an interesting treatment of the current social scene see Allan B. Wolter, OFM, and Blane O'Neill, OFM, *John Duns Scotus: Mary's Architect* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993) chapter one.

[7]Whiteheads 172-173.

[8]Whiteheads 179-182.

[9]Whiteheads 181.

[10]James and Evelyn Whitehead, *The Emerging Laity: Returning Leadership to the Community of Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 1988).

[11]*Emerging Laity* 37.

[12]*Emerging Laity* 39.

[13]*Emerging Laity* 43.

[14]*Emerging Laity* 68-76.

[15]*Emerging Laity* 77.

[16]*Emerging Laity* 77.

[17]*Emerging Laity* 79.

[18]Elizabeth Janeway, *Powers of the Weak* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

[19]*Emerging Laity* 172-180.

[20]For an example see: Elizabeth A.Johnson, CSJ, "Between the Times: Religious Life and the Postmodern Experience of God," *Review for Religious*, 53/1 (Jan.-Feb, 1994): 6-28.

[21]*Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*. Trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 74-76.

[22]*Francis and Clare* 27-28.

[23]*Francis and Clare* 47-48.

[24]Cajetan Esser, *Origins of the Franciscan Order* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970) 71-81.

[25]Esser 71.

[26]Esser 76.

[27]Esser 80.

[28]Thaddeus D. Horgan, SA, and Karen Marie Lanigan, OSF, *Proposito: The Local House Chapter-Meeting*, undated publication of the Franciscan Federation of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular (USA).

[29]Horgan and Lanigan 2.

[30]Horgan and Lanigan 2.

[31]David Flood, OFM, and Thadée Matura, OFM, *The Birth of a Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975) 136-141.

[32]Flood and Matura 139.

[33]Elizabeth A. Petroff, "A Medieval Woman's Utopian Vision: The Rule of Saint Clare of Assisi," *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York: Oxford, 1994) 66-79.

[34]Petroff 70.

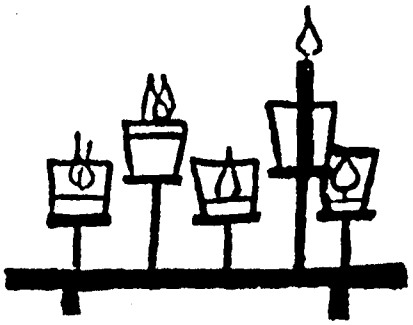
[35]Petroff 74, quoting from *Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, ed. and trans. Ignatius Brady (St.Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1953) 145-146.

[36]Petroff 76.

[37]Vaclav Havel, *The New Measure of Man*, excerpts of his address delivered on July 4, 1994, in Philadelphia, *New York Times* (July 8, 1994).

[38]Federation of Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, "Response to the Lineamenta in light of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church" (Washington, Franciscan Federation, 1994) 1.

[39]Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM, "The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States," unpublished keynote address delivered at the 1994 Annual Franciscan Federation Conference in Chicago (August 29, 1994).



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DISCERNMENT CRITERIA FOR MINISTRY
IN THE EVANGELICAL LIFE

Ramona Miller OSF

This examination of discernment criteria for ministry will include 1) an exploration of the concept of ministry in the evangelical life, 2) the necessary dispositions for the Franciscan discernment process, and 3) a consideration of the influencing factors in the decision-making process.

MINISTRY

Ministry makes goodness manifest. Consider oneself symbolized by a lit candle, a Franciscan inflamed with the life of the Holy Spirit, coming out to greet a new day of discovery of God's goodness and encountering another person also symbolized by a lit candle. The resulting additional glow of light and warmth are universal symbols for the presence of God.[1] This birthing of an increase of God's goodness among us through a mutual exchange of grace is our ministry.

Francis's encounter with the leper was such a mutual exchange, was it not? He stopped to convey a sign of goodness, a kiss, and he in turn received grace, sweetness. The ability to be conscious of the mutual exchange of goodness follows our enlightenment of heart. Francis experienced increasing degrees of enlightenment throughout his life in response to his prayer:

> Most High, Glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, and give me Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command (OrCruc).[2]

Prayer in caves provided Francis with contemplative experiences of the goodness of God so that his evangelization poured forth from his own

experience of God. Thomas of Celano wrote of Francis that at one time he had sought out a place of prayer and stayed there for a long time in fear and trembling, repeating often, "O God, be merciful to me the sinner" (1Cel 26). Little by little a certain unspeakable joy and very great sweetness began to flood his innermost heart; he was absorbed in a certain light. When this sweetness and light finally passed, renewed in spirit, Francis seemed changed into another man. He no longer was focused on his sinfulness, his limitations, but upon the gift of God's goodness that he had experienced.

Our call to evangelical life has as a commonality the experience of God. It is the experience of being called by a personal God who brought us to the sacred moment of profession when we announced to the whole world that the way we intended to find meaning in our lives was daily to live the evangelical life and, in the spirit of Francis and Clare, to "give birth to God through a holy life which should enlighten others because of our example" (1EpFid 10).[3]

Enlighten others by our example. How does that get lived out today? It requires a humble disposition of mutual exchange, a personal involvement and interaction with others that leads to an experience of joy. St. Francis taught his friars in Admonition 20: "Blessed is that religious who leads people to the love of God and gladness and joy." This apostolate of clowning around, of introducing persons to the experience of God's presence which is gladness and joy, flows from Francis's appropriation of the example of Jesus Christ who is the universal model for enlightening others.

Ministry as a way of life emanates from enlightened hearts which draw from the source of goodness all goodness, God. Our entry point into this goodness is none other than Jesus Christ. We put on the mind and heart of Jesus Christ and, out of a soul-deep level, live a compassion that is deeper than our own persons; it is a share in the compassion of Jesus for all of creation. Jesus' self-communication of love climaxed on the cross. Living consciously the mutual exchange of goodness with others will not exempt us from a share in the suffering of Jesus.

Sometimes we experience the suffering of our personal poverty in not having the capacity for mutuality with others or in knowing that our supply of light is too small for the needs we face with our weak faith. We are like Andrew, who said when looking at the crowds of hungry persons: "What good are five barley loaves and two fish for so many?" (John 6: 9). Our weak faith can hinder us from recognizing the goodness of God already at work in the situations in which we find ourselves. Franciscan ministry presumes an enlightened heart of faith, trusting in the goodness of the Creator to be forever giving bountiful blessings as we enter into mutual exchange with others.

A fast-selling book this year, *The Celestine Prophecy*, predicts a new consciousness in the human family—a sensitivity to the light in others and a respect for the uniqueness of others as grounds for empowering the sharing of truth and insights.[4] Franciscan ministry as a mutual exchange of

goodness accomplishes a great deal of the hope that Mr. Redfield's best seller articulates for the next millennium. We, Brothers and Sisters of Penance, who interact with others in a manner that opens others to the vast infinite source of energy that is God, empower others to discover this same wonderful source of joy. As Francis stated in the first form of life given to the faithful who do penance, we are mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ when we do these things. Mothers give birth. We give birth to the presence of God in our ministry. What ministry? Where does Franciscan ministry take place?

Francis of Assisi, in both his writings and his lived example, used a metaphor expressing itinerancy in saying we are "pilgrims and strangers on this earth." Ministry takes place wherever we are; journeying is a state of mind. Since the entire world is our cloister, there will always be Franciscans journeying to new places to proclaim God's goodness. Stability is not one of our hallmarks. Imitating Jesus whose mission was to reunite all of earth with heaven and who sent his disciples out to all the nations, we need not be surprised at the newness of ministries in our current time. Franciscans move to the scenes of new beginnings of evangelization as we are witnessing in eastern Europe, as well as in our inner cities in the United States.

The question before us in discernment is this: *How can we be sure that our specific ministry is really bringing forth the presence of God's goodness according to the will of God?* Or, in the words of Joseph Chinnici, how is our ministry speaking the social language of love?[5]

FRANCISCAN DISCERNMENT

Discernment, both personal or communal, is a Spirit-initiated, Spirit-led activity that supports conscious choices and commitments to do God's holy will. Discernment about a change in ministry, or clarification leading to a deeper commitment, begins with recognizing some inner movement of restlessness in the situation in which we presently find ourselves. This recognition of a need to enter into a discernment process may come from a number of different sources:

1) from inner doubts or questions of one's meaning and purpose in the present moment,

2) from the leadership of the congregation calling upon persons to consider new assignments,

3) from the membership, our brothers and sisters, calling us forth and empowering us for increased responsibilities within our corporate ministries,

4) from circumstances in our present context that dictate changes, and

5) from changes in our health that signal a need to reconsider the min-

istry in which we are engaged. The Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in their publication, "Discernment for Mission," state the truth for so many of our members who are entering the pre-retirement or retirement phase of their lives:

> Health limitations need not be a time of grief or resentment but rather an opportunity to fulfill a life-long dream that up until this point in time had to be postponed.[6]

Whatever the reasons for bringing us to the beginning of a discernment process, we first accept the reality that such movements of the Spirit are a call to walk more humbly with God.[7] The Holy Spirit is forever penetrating the consciousness of those who desire to have the Spirit of the Lord working in them. A change in ministry is first of all a personal call from God to a deeper experience of Trinitarian life for us individually and then to the broader spectrum. The process of discernment presumes faith, openness to the Spirit, and humility. The Spirit at work within us may awaken the awareness of needs for new evangelization—areas of the globe where the darkness awaits new light.

A. Faith

Our faith is a personal relationship with God, and, as with any relationship, it has phases of growth. A relationship is never static—it is dynamic and has its own energy that impacts our day to day consciousness. Day after day our faith makes us realize that we are working for God, we are doing God's work. Our self-image changes from the time we enter religious life to our retirement years. Often persons are attracted to a specific religious congregation because of the work of that group—teaching or nursing. Then there evolves over the years a deepening self-image of shared life with the Trinity. This identifying gift of humanly embodying the Spirit of God overflows in a compassionate response to the world. It is doing God's work.

Francis of Assisi exemplifies a living faith that matured over the years. As a young penitent bricklayer, he heard the Gospel of St. Luke proclaimed one day in such a way that it captured his religious imagination, and he personalized the message of Jesus to the disciples: go, and take nothing with you—no purse, money bag or sandals. Announce peace. Francis's reply, "This is what I want, this is what I seek with all my heart," compelled him to action, and he went out and began to preach. This was not the end of Francis's discernment, nor did his faith get lived out for the rest of his life without further deepening and changing his relationship with God. Discernment presumes that the relationship with God is *the* primary identifying principle of discerning persons.[8] Faith motivates us again and again to enter into discernment processes that insert us more and more into God's plan for humankind. Such faith is radically and inescapably contemplative because it requires a consciousness of the presence of God alive within and

around us in all the circumstances of our life.

B. Openness to the spirit

Discernment as a Spirit-initiated activity presumes that we daily expect the Spirit's inspirations for new directions in doing God's work. Daily readiness for receiving the Spirit's direction is increased with the habit of praying in the words of St. Francis before the Crucifix: "Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart." Praying this prayer for openness to the Spirit is in itself an act of humility. Humility is the third necessary disposition for effective discernment.

C. Humility

Humility, one of the four fundamental values named in the 1982 Third Order Regular Rule, is synonymous with minority. Jesus, the humble servant, invites us to become like him—letting go of all status and living among the lowly and poor as an expression of God's love. Humility disposes us in discernment to let go of our own wills and to serve the greater good.[9]

INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR DECISION-MAKING

Faith, openness to the Spirit, and humility are the pre-requisites for entering into discernment. The influencing factors for the decision-making process are: self-knowledge, guiding symbols, Franciscan values, signs of the times, friends, and confirmation. Discernment concludes with a commitment according to the clarified choice for ministry—a commitment that stems from one's belief and understanding of being in Christ.

A. "Stude tibi"

The beginning of discernment is "stude tibi," self-knowledge and self-disclosure. Francis entered this self-discovery by asking "Who am I and who are you, O God?" We are children of God, heirs of heaven. We proclaim our basic identity as living in Christ and with Christ through Baptism. There are many self-help tools for getting to know ourselves and the uniqueness of the face of God which we reveal to the world, such as the Myers-Briggs profile or the Enneagram. Underneath all of these profiles is the reality that the Spirit of God is at work within us.

Reflection, journal writing, dreams, and spiritual direction are all means for us to become more conscious of the Spirit within us. Also, desires are important to our growth in understanding our union with the Spirit of God. The more authentic our desires, the more they move us to give God glory.[10] Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't understand where this is coming from, but I have a desire to go to the inner city," or whatever desire is expressed? We need to listen to the desires of the heart and disclose them to others. These desires may stem from the indwelling

of the Spirit.

Knowing ourselves includes listening to our bodies. Signs of sickness or a different energy level related to aging or growth in personal development all are factors in a discernment process. Our evolvement in becoming spiritually mature persons revealing the presence of God prescribes shifts in our focus at different times in our lives. Robert Kegan, in his book *Evolving Self*, names stages of development as progressing from impulsive to imperial to interpersonal to institutional to interindividual.[11] Such an articulation assists us in understanding why certain desires for a change in ministry and community living reflect stages of maturation. There need not be an apology for a change in ministry and/or community life when we are responding to the Spirit of God at work in us. Caution is required so as not to place judgments on one another's change in ministries.

B. Guiding symbols

Guiding symbols come from within, from our unconscious, from our soul. Right brain activity provides energizing images that motivate decision-making processes. When we become conscious of a symbol empowering us, there is an accompanying release of divine energy from our inner self toward the outward reality in which we are engaged. These symbols which our imagination gives us emanate from the deeper recesses of our spirit for which words are inadequate. Our spiritual parents, Francis and Clare, offer us a wealth of examples of how their religious imagination directed their decision-making. Recall the younger Francis literally interpreting the words of Jesus, "Take nothing for your journey." This identification with Jesus is the core meaning of Francis's life. A recent book, *The Teacher of His Heart*, provides us with a study of the important Christological symbols that influenced Francis's life and writings.[12]

St. Clare's images of the poor Christ impacted her desire for living a life of absolute poverty. In her "Testament" at the end of her life, she reiterated her guiding symbol: observe the holy poverty that we have promised God and our most blessed St. Francis out of love of the God Who was placed poor in the crib, lived poor in the world, and remained naked on the cross.[13] Margaret Halaska describes how a group reflection process gave her a symbol whose full meaning was not known until the time of her death.[14] Her guiding symbol was to live in a wigwam.

C. Franciscan Values

The richness of our Franciscan heritage offers us meaning, direction, a sense of identity, and purpose. Our whole lifetime is a journey of appropriating the Franciscan heritage of following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. This on-going conversion becomes manifest in the values of care of the poor, care of the earth and peacemaking.[15] We might think of a tuning fork. We are finely created musical instruments who improve our ministry as

we attune ourselves to Franciscan values. To do so we study our heritage—that is our Rule of Life, our Constitutions, the biographies of Francis, Clare, and our congregational founders. We keep abreast of the development of thought on living the Franciscan evangelical life which our Federation provides us. This year our Third Order response to the Lineamenta gave us new considerations on living the evangelical life. The response offers criteria for personal decision-making. For example, note the following sentence

> The call to be one with all of creation and all people, especially with the marginal and the oppressed, is fundamental to our presence in the world.[16]

Accepting the Incarnation informs our values and shapes our responses to ourselves and to the world in which we live. Values are emotionally felt guides or passions that generate energy and direct our ministry. Knowing the Franciscan tradition enables individuals and congregations to make clearer choices for the future. Suppose that a specific congregation was founded to care for victims of tuberculosis. That need for ministry no longer exists. What are the members to do? Living out the Franciscan charism has no limit in creativity for ministry in the future.

The conclusion of the study on the future of religious orders in the United States done by Nygren and Ukeritis states:

> Fidelity to the spirit of the founder *and* responsiveness to critical and unmet human needs are basic to the ongoing mission of religious communities.[17]

Considering that Francis and Clare so impacted the society and Church of their time, renewed Franciscans will be agents of systemic change. It is not enough for us to be individually enlightened for our own discernment. What is needed now is that Franciscans collaborate for systemic change to bring about the reign of God. To inform our choices we need to read the signs of the times.

D. Signs of the Times

The example of Francis's and Clare's responses to the socio-economic situation at the beginning of the thirteenth century teaches us to read the signs of our times. Their experience of God directed them to make choices of evangelical life that offered God's descending love to the people of their time through their service to lepers and their teaching by example that happiness cannot be found in greed and fighting for control. Following their spirit, we ask who in our society are the lepers? What do they need of us, personally and collectively? What commentary on greed in our society does the Spirit invite us to make by our lives?

The heretical movements in the Middle Ages indicated the laity's response to Church issues: disillusionment with uneducated clergy, igno-

rance of spiritual heritage in the Christian tradition, and unmet desires for piety. There are similar needs today. Bookstores acknowledge that sales are up for books on soul-searching: *Care of the Soul, Soul Mates,* and *The Celestine Prophecy* are just a few. Franciscans have the keys to unlock the doorways to postmodern spirituality. Human solidarity to overcome rampant individualism, essential connectedness to overcome isolation, a wholistic, embodied concept of person to undo the body-mind dualism are just a few Franciscan values that care for the soul of the human family.[18] The spiritual needs of our times suggest that Franciscans search out new ministries to bridge their spiritual tradition and the desires of the human family.

E. Friends

Newness in our self-development tastes bittersweet. Newness requires learning new skills, developing new relationships, and letting go of what hinders our call to holiness. Persons who know us well and who have our very best interests at heart are our true friends. They are the truth-tellers who mirror back to us what is happening to us as we express the ambivalent feelings connected with a call to a change in ministry. The paradigm for Franciscan discernment requiring feedback from friends is in an account from Bonaventure's *Life of St. Francis.* Francis chose two of the friars and sent them to Brother Sylvester praying at the Carceri and to Clare at San Damiano, asking them to pray and seek God's will for him because he had doubts about his ministry. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, both Sylvester and Clare came to the same conclusion and responded that "it was God's will that Francis should go out to preach as a herald of Christ" (LM 12: 2).[19]

Francis was called upon by his good friend, Leo, to offer advice in love.[20] The letter that Francis wrote to his companion still exists today in the archives of the Cathedral at Spoleto. In it we read:

> In whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprints and His poverty, do this with the blessing of God and my obedience.[21]

Time and time again we know in religious life the bittersweetness of sending our friends into new territories in order that God's goodness might be continually made manifest.

F. Confirmation

The Lord Jesus sent out the disciples two by two. We who aspire to follow in the footprints of Jesus seek Jesus' own commissioning to us through the confirmation of our discernment process by the community ministers. Their commissioning blesses us and assures us that we are about the true and holy will of God.

These influencing factors in discernment processes have been described as if they were for individual discernment alone. Evangelical life promotes communal decision-making. I believe that these six factors apply as well to Franciscan corporate decision-making. Let me describe my own experience with this. A working group of fifteen sisters in my congregation, including the congregational leadership, spent nearly two years in a discernment process arriving at the commitment to begin the Franciscan Studies ministry at Tau Center where I am presently living and working.

The beginning of the process was an assessment of the congregation at the time we closed our only institution for higher learning, the College of St. Teresa. The profile of self-knowledge gleaned from a congregational assembly feedback included a desire for a place of prayer and study focused on our Franciscan charism. Data was collected for a decision-making process including financial considerations and personnel needs.

The corporate guiding symbols that influenced the working group came from congregational membership in expressions of possibilities for use of the college campus once the college closed. A Franciscan study center was one of the images proposed.

The Franciscan eremetical life was a value that influenced the creation of the center. Anticipating a place and a small group of committed persons engaged in study, reflection, wholistic living, and personal integration continued to generate enthusiasm within the working group. This motivational strength was backed up with the understanding that both Francis and Clare were mystics.

Ever since the 1965 church document on religious life, *Perfectae Caritas,* congregations have been going back to the spirit of their founders. The ecclesial signs of our time point to continued research and teaching on the charism of founders and in our case, the Franciscan family. While the Nygren and Ukeritis study was made public after the working group had concluded its discernment process, it reinforced the need to be mindful of the original charism of one's religious family.

The working group submitted its proposal for this new ministry to friends, the membership of the congregation. The membership gave truthful feedback, both supporting and challenging the decision. Dealing with this input brought about a purification within the working group. After reviewing all the above steps, it was necessary to make a decision and submit it to the Executive Council. There was not a consensus in the group at first. Our facilitator directed us to some right brain activity, to go to bed and sleep in anticipation of a vision of what we were to do. The next morning we came to morning prayer in silence, and during the prayer we were instructed to place on a large piece of newsprint our proposal to submit to the Executive Council. Fifteen sheets were hung around the room, and we rose and walked in silence to read what the Spirit was saying in the group. Everyone had posted essentially the same proposal. We had arrived at consensus

The confirmation of the congregation's Executive Council commissioned the beginning of a small intentional community of four persons, Ingrid Peterson, Margaret Pirkl, Clairvaux McFarland, and myself, to live together and develop a community and ministry that would explore a renewed Franciscan response to the signs of the times.

Summary

This presentation has reviewed the nature of Franciscan discernment for ministry. Decisions for ministry make Christ's love shine brightly in the darkest places of our society. It is important that we not prioritize where that Light is needed. Light is needed in the exchanges made with the nurses in our infirmaries just as much as at United Nations commission meetings. Franciscan ministry knows no boundaries, the cosmos awaits the radiance of our lives lived in Christ.

Endnotes:

[1] For an extensive review of the meaning of ministry as mutual exchange, see Rosemary Chinnici's "Ministry Today and Tomorrow," *The Cord* 41/3 (1991): 89-95.

[2]In *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. and ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 103.

[3]See *Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Franciscan Federation, 1982) 11.

[4]See James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1993).

[5] Joseph Chinnici, OFM, "The Prophetic Heart: Evangelical Life as TOR Franciscans," keynote address at annual conference of the Franciscan Federation TOR, Chicago, August, 1994.

[6]See *Discernment for Mission* (King of Prussia, PA: Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, 1986) 10.

[7]See Micah 6: 8

[8]For further reflection, consider Jesus' definition of work from John's discourse, John 6: 25-40.

[9]For an overview of the four values emphasized in the TOR Rule, see Michael Higgin's "The Charisms of The Third Order Regular of Penance of St. Francis," *Analecta TOR* . 21 (1989): 201-212.

[10]For a fuller discussion of authentic desires, see Wilkie Au, *By Way of the Heart* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) 74.

[11]Robert Kegan,. *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[12]See Nguyen-Van-Khanh, *The Teacher of His Heart* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute Publications, 1994.)

[13]See Clare,"Testament," *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, trans. Regis Armstrong., OFM, Cap. (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1993) 58-59.

[14]See Margaret Halaska, "A Model of Discernment: The Experience of a Franciscan," *Review for Religious* 43/2 (1984): 259-263.

[15]See the Franciscan Leadership endorsement of the Franciscan NGO Vision Statement, *Franciscans* (April, 1991), obtained by contacting Franciscans International, 135 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201-4212.

[16]See *Newsletter*, Franciscan Federation Third Order Regular (1994) 4.

[17]See David Nygren and Miriam Ukeritis, "Future of Religious Orders in the United States: Research Executive Summary," *Origins* 22/15 (1992): 270.

[18]For further discussion, see Elizabeth Johnson, "Between the Times," *Review for Religious* 53/1 (1994): 6-28.

[19]See Bonaventure, "Major Life of St. Francis," *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973) 722.

[20]For the biblical motivation, consider "By speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way to Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

[21]See "Letter to Leo," in *Francis and Clare, TheComplete Works* 48.

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The Active-Contemplative Synthesis

Michael J. Higgins, TOR

> Contemplation is more than a consideration of abstract truths about God, more even than affective meditation on the things we believe. It is awakening, enlightenment and the amazing intuitive grasp by which love gains certitude of God's creative and dynamic interaction in our daily life.[1]

INTRODUCTION

Last month I had the opportunity to live with the women and men who were attending the various programs offered by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. During our meal times together talk inevitably turned to areas of personal interest. We exchanged information on things like: where we were from, our community affiliation, the kind of ministry we were currently doing (and of course other important issues that touch each of our lives, such as the role and importance of country line dancing in the full embrace of the Franciscan charism!)

One issue that surfaced often in our discussion was the importance of contemplation and prayer in our lives of ministry and for our well being as Christians and religious. Go to any gathering of Franciscans anywhere in the world, spend some time talking to the women and men who have embraced this way of life and sooner or later talk will turn to the yearning many have for a heightened prayer life. It's not unusual to hear comments like the following:

"I am caught in the responsibilities of administration. I didn't become a friar (or sister) for this."

"My day is filled with activity—a series of 15 minute meetings in which I have to do a half-hour's work."

"I just do not have the time to pray the way I would like."

During one of these conversations Bill Short, OFM, told us a story about a student who came to him during a course he gave on the importance of prayer in the Franciscan life and the fact that the Observant branch of the First Order grew out of a return to an intense embrace of daily prayer and contemplation. The student asked him if it would be possible to visit one of houses of the friars where she could see and experience this kind of life. After some thought Bill had to tell her that he could think of no Franciscan house where this kind of life is lived. The student was embarrassed. She was not trying to put him on the spot. But the encounter caused Bill to stop and think about the way his own life was being lived and about the importance he was putting on prayer. How would we respond to a similar kind of question?

There are some men and women who, drawn by the Franciscan way of life, come to our communities with the desire to live vibrant and prayer-filled lives. Is there a place for them in our communities or do we have to tell them to look elsewhere?

During the past year I have heard from sisters in England, Italy, the Philippines, and even exotic places like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Tiffin and Rochester, Oldenburg and Allegany, who have shared with me that they are wrestling with the place of prayer and contemplation in their communities and in their daily lives. These are the same kinds of issues with which Third Order friars are struggling.

Contemplation, vibrant prayer, or whatever you would like to call it, is a constitutive element in our vocations as sisters and brothers of the Third Order and is very much part of the evangelical nature of our Franciscan call. It is such an integral part of our lives that when it is not given its proper place in our lives, when prayer is pushed to the back burner of our schedules, we are left feeling disconnected, and our religious commitment is stripped of the nourishment it needs. Thus, we talk about it, desire it, yearn for it in our lives.

DEFINING THE TERMS

Joe Chinnici, in his address on "The Prophetic Heart,"[2] asked us to give some thought to how we can recover and reshape the "spiritual wisdom in our communities." In this light it is important for us to take a serious look at the place of prayer in our lives as individuals and the time and space our communities give to it.

This is a topic that seems to be coming up more and more in recent years. We are told that we have be "contemplatives in action," men and women of prayer guided by a strong and invincible inner core of quiet and recollection as we respond to the call of Christ and strive to bring the gos-

pel to our world and society. This is an awesome job description and, due to the pressures of our daily lives, all but impossible to fulfill. It is important, therefore, that each of us try to clarify in our own minds what we are realistically called to do or to be.

We will not explore the myriad definitions of the two main terms: "active" and "contemplative." However, we do need working definitions of the terms we are discussing. "Active" means our way of "being in" or participating in the world. In this sense it is not restricted to the classical categories of the pursuit of virtue, the life of corporal and spiritual works of mercy, or the apostolic life of service to the people of God. Rather it includes the fullness of our interaction with every aspect of life. Thus the "active" life includes such things as interpersonal relationships, our unique managerial or working styles, as well as what and how we eat and how we choose to spend our free time.

We must look at "contemplative" in fairly broad ways as well. Traditional ascetical texts define the contemplative as one who has withdrawn from the "world" and has embraced a life of solitude and prayer. Similarly "contemplation" is often described as the point when discursive prayer gives way to an experience in which the intellect, memory, and will are united and focused on a transcendent reality of God's being. (Could you imagine Francis encouraging his followers to do such a thing?) For our purposes here, contemplation is that capacity within every person to respond to God's presence and to enter into a vibrant relationship with the Mystery of all creation. Thus a person becomes more and more a contemplative as she or he becomes more and more sensitized to the presence of God and more responsive to the invitation of love that God holds out to us.

The mystics through the years have defined this reality much better than the theologians. Over and over again they remind us that the God of the universe loves us, reaches out to us, and wants to drown us in love. This relationship in turn transforms, enlivens, enlightens and changes one's way of being and responding. It is a growth in a contemplative stance towards the world. If you would like to get a feel for what this contemplative style of life is like, read the writings of Angela of Foligno, Jacopone da Todi, or Francesco de Usuna instead of pouring over dusty tomes of spiritual theology. Better yet, look at your own life, pay attention to the moments in your life when you felt the touch of God or had a time of clarity—a point in your life when you received an insight into who you are or what God means to you. We have all had experiences like this. Trust them, hold on to them, cherish them—they are all signs of the contemplative dimension within you. Read and contemplate the book of your life.

Thus the active part of who we are is constantly influenced and guided by our world-view, by our contemplative stance toward creation. The important thing to keep in mind is that these definitions of "active" and "contemplative" are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are complimentary, even necessary for one another. Too often these terms are presented to us as opposites, or at least antithetical forces that need to be dealt with a great deal of struggle and effort. In essence the active- contemplative synthesis does not state a problem to be solved as much as a reality that requires our participation.

WHAT FRANCIS TEACHES US

When we look to Francis for some clarity on all of this we find relatively little in the sources. I believe the same could be said, with some reservations, about Clare. Unfortunately we just do not have many writings from her.

Francis says little about the contemplative life. He left very few guidelines behind for his followers in their attempt to balance the life of prayer with the demands of active ministry. Certainly, nowhere in his writings does St. Francis explain how the obligation to pray is to be reconciled with the demands of the active life, nor does he show how we can fulfill the duties of an earthly city while, at the same time, we are seeking a heavenly one.[3] But even though Francis did not leave behind a detailed teaching on the contemplative life, it is very clear that he lived it.

If we apply the definitions of "active" and "contemplative" given above it is very easy to see that Francis was very much a contemplative in action. He recognized that an authentic and ongoing conversion to God was a requirement for himself and for his followers. He further recognized that this kind of awareness, this kind of willingness to cooperate with the action of conversion in his life, was very much dependent on a vibrant relationship with God. Francis's life was consumed by a tremendously powerful experience of the God of love who touched his heart with love. This experience totally amazed him, at times left him speechless, at times prompted him to sing and shout God's praises, and at times reduced him to tears. In the midst of God's embrace, even as Francis struggled to understand what it meant, his way of being in the world - his way of seeing the world changed dramatically. Then the Francis who had previously judged everything by his own self centered standards began to deal with the world with a gospel centered perspective. Francis' eyeglasses of self-exaltation and appropriation were replaced by the contact lenses of the gospel. Francis began to *see* differently.

There are echoes of this dynamic in Francis's own writing:

> Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. The truly pure of heart are those who despise the things of earth and seek the things of heaven, and who never cease to adore and behold the Lord God living and true with a pure heart and soul (Adm. 16).[4]

The "things of earth" in this admonition refers to any person, event, or thing that keeps God at a distance. The "things of heaven," on the other hand, are those people, events, and things that bring us into contact with the love and presence of God. Thus for Francis, all of creation, including lepers and the marginalized, were "of heaven," epiphanies of the divine. Those who have a single minded devotion to God are able to truly "see God" in this way.

Prayer was especially important for Francis. He insisted that it be more than an ascetical exercise that one takes time aside to do. Rather, it must permeate one's whole day and entire outlook on life. For instance, in the *Earlier Rule* Francis impressed on his followers that they must live in a constant and mindful relationship with God. Chapter 22 states that the friars (and sisters) are to "make a home and dwelling for Him Who is Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[5] This home is the soul in which Christ lives as a religious in his or her cell. In turn, this intimate presence of God influences how one enters into the day and how one deals with all the people and events of the day. In a very real sense, then, Francis understands the sisters and brothers to be "Christ bearers," who bring Christ's love and presence into every area daily activity. This is even clearer in the prologue to our Third Order Rule, taken from the *First Letter to the Faithful*, in which Francis challenges us to the "mothers of Christ." We are to give birth to love and forgiveness.

Francis states that even when the friars are involved in work (or study) they are be so in a way in which "they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all other things of our earthly existence must contribute."[6] Also in the *Rule for Hermitages* Francis gives us a wonderful picture of the balanced life. For part of the time in the hermitage the friars are to have a "Martha" role. They are to look after the practical needs of the others. For part of the time they are to have a "Mary" role and focus only on God. For Francis the Christian response to the gospel was not an either-or but a both-and. Here and in many other places in the writings of Francis, but even more clearly in his life, we can see elements of this "active contemplative synthesis."

Having said this, and realizing that a lot more can be said about Francis and prayer, it is fair to say that Francis teaches us more about a prayerful way of being in the world—or what contemplation is all about— by his way of responding to the in-breaking of God in his life than he does by his writings.

Another important caveat here is the fact that Francis and Clare are not here today—WE ARE. Yes, it is important to look at their lives and example in order to clarify how they responded to the Spirit of God and the needs of their time. However, we can not stop there. We are situated in a particular time and place and are faced with a world that Francis and Clare could not even begin to imagine. As heirs of the Franciscan tradition

it is up to us to respond creatively to our world in a way in which gospel values are the guiding factor, every woman and man is recognized as an icon of divinity, and our world is treated with the respect that is due it. In other words WE are now called to the primary actors of God's presence in the world.

THE "CONTEMPLATIVE OUTLOOK" AND ACTION

1. What It Is

A "contemplative outlook" is much more than a momentary glimpse of the God of love. It is rather an orientation in life that allows us to see the whole of our lives against the greater horizon of God's love and concern for us. Essentially it how Francis saw the world through the contact lenses of the gospel. Too often the way we deal with the world is through glasses clouded by sin; that is, with a vision that is blurred by the temptation to think and believe that we are somehow self-sufficient and self directed, that the world, every person, and every event have to conform to the way *we* want things to be. Isn't this what we are saying when we lose patience? For some reason *something* is not going the way *I* want it to go, *someone* is not doing what *I* want that person to do. You get the picture. This brings to mind what I would like to call the "Drivers' Test for Spiritual Maturity." You can tell a lot about how interiorly collected or spiritually mature you are by the way you drive a car.[7] Pay attention to how you feel the next time someone cuts you off on the highway or you hit the sixth yellow or red light in a row.

It is very important to clarify for ourselves what prayer is - what it means for us. The meaning we give to prayer—or the importance we give to our prayer life—will determine to a great extent how central we allow it to become in our lives. Prayer can either be relegated to the exterior of our lives—a duty that has to performed, a job or a duty that has to be accomplished. Or it can be an essential part of who we are and how we respond to the presence of God in every area of our lives. Scripture and the witness of the saints present prayer as a natural response to the surprising and gratuitous in-breaking of the love and presence of the divine. In this sense prayer is a natural response to the presence of God. The prophet Amos said of his prophesying: "The lion roars, who would not be afraid—the Lord speaks—who would not prophesy?" We can rephrase that somewhat: "The Lord reaches out to us—comes to us with love—who would not pray?"

Prayer in this sense means an ongoing and vibrant response to the relationship God invites to share. It is a participation in the community of the Trinity - an ever present and dynamic relationship. Thus, we do not have to come up with some "red hot" prayer of our own. We just have to tap into THE prayer, the very presence of God that constantly surrounds us.

2. Care and Feeding of the Contemplative Spirit

Be still and know that I am God.

Recently I had the opportunity to spend some time in prayer with the friars at Mt. Irenaeus, a mountain retreat staffed by Friar Minors associated with Bonaventure University.

During this time I prayed about what I had written so far and decided that something important was missing. I really do believe that many times the "active-contemplative problem," as it is sometimes stated, is a pseudo-problem at best. Contemplative prayer, if authentic, leads outward to others. By its very nature it prompts us to be involved in the lives of others, to love as Christ loves, to see the world as God sees it. Our active life in turn cries out for the energy found only in an ongoing relationship with God through prayer. Thus, instead of being opposite ends of a spectrum, the contemplative and active dimensions of our lives are part of the complex spiral that empowers our lives. Contemplation prompts prayerful awareness and action which in turn call us beyond ourselves and our limited energies and pull us into relationship with God. One feeds on and empowers the other.

However, I think each of us can agree that many times our lives are out of balance. We very easily can get caught up in the demands we place on ourselves or that are placed on us by others and become disconnected from the source of our identity as children of God. We fall into the trap of defining ourselves by what we do instead of who we are. We thus end up feeling stressed out, disconnected, empty or wondering whether what we are doing means anything to anybody.

When these feelings arise it is a sign that the contemplative dimension of our lives has not been given the attention it needs to empower and sustain us. The spiral of our lives is thrown off and we feel out of balance. Thus, it is necessary to build into our schedules the time and exercises necessary for a well-balanced life. We have heard this over and over again in conferences, spiritual direction, and through books and articles. Each one of us can probably give *someone else* very good advice on how to pray and the steps necessary to stay close to God. The challenge is to stop giving lip service to them and make them an integral part of our own lives.

Here are some elements I believe are important for the care and feeding of the contemplative life. I would like to invite you to think about these. Do you agree? Why or why not? What do *you* think is important for a contemplative or prayer stance in life? How well do you put them into practice in your own life?

Spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament and recognize that we are loved so much that God came to us in the Incarnation and comes to us everyday in the Eucharist.

Spend time in prayer and solitude. Schedule this time into your day. Put this time down in your daily schedule book and consider this to be sacred time for you—as important as eating or sleeping and certainly as important as a meeting with a major benefactor, a community superior, or someone who "just *has* to see you."

Find a place in your room or your house where you will not be disturbed and simply spend time with God. If necessary find a small church, a park, a lake, or some area in which you can be alone and anonymous and simply be with God. Get in touch with the reality of your identity as a child of God. Hold onto and accept the love and grace that God constantly holds out to you.

From time to time stop the frenetic activity of your day and pay attention to the presence of God. Stop and smell the roses. Stop and appreciate the presence of God in the person with whom you are talking or the event in which you are currently involved. Every occasion in life, every encounter in life, is pregnant with the presence of God. Try to see with the eyes of faith.

Fall madly in love with the God who is madly in love with you and then live accordingly.

Go to a hermitage, a retreat center, or a house far away from the day to day situations and responsibilities that clamor for your time and tap into the prayer that surrounds you.

Pay attention to how you spend your free time. It's a real shame that many of us are "energized" by things like computers, sports, going to the mall, and the like and give little time to solitude and prayer.

In your next community gathering or meeting with the brothers or sisters of your congregation take a good look at them and see the presence of God. Be thankful for your vocation, your community, and God's presence in your sisters and brothers.

When you get up in the morning and prepare for the day, do more than comb your hair and brush your teeth. Look yourself in the eyes and recognize that YOU are made in the image and likeness of God. Carry this awareness through the day with you. Do what YOU need to do to develop an openness to God, an awareness that the Divine is all around us at every moment.

When we develop this willingness to respond to the presence and love of God the way we see reality changes dramatically. We become much more alive and gentle with ourselves and others. This in turn gives way to

a more gentle and relaxed way of being in the world and of understanding our place in it. All of creation then comes alive with the presence of God (a good definition of the contemplative spirit). Tatiana Goricheva, a Russian woman who went through a powerful conversion experience under the old communist regime in the Soviet Union, presents a vivid picture of the reorientation that takes place as a result of this in-breaking:

> At the age of twenty-five I had the feelings of an old woman. I felt as if I had tried and experienced everything. Then came my conversion. It is clear to me that God affected not only my understanding but also my soul and my heart and all the perceptions of my senses. I feel as I used to in the best moments of my childhood. My soul has become pure, innocent and open; it is again capable of being amazed and has thrown off its defenses. The world appears to me in a new way, quite directly; it hurts me and delights me. . . . I became vulnerable. But how good that is![8]

Tatiana became aware of the presence of divine love and grace in her life. She was thus able to *see* herself and to *see* the world differently. It is clear in the Christian experience of God throughout the ages that contemplation is essentially this way of "being in" the world. It is a way of *seeing*.

A life imbued with the presence of God is the result of an ongoing and mindful openness to the transcendent. Contemplation thus becomes less something we have to do—or make time for—and more a way of looking at and responding to life.

SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Growth in the contemplative spirit and growth in our Franciscan vocation go hand in hand. As members of the Third Order the role of prayer and contemplation has always been an important part of our tradition. The active and contemplative dimensions of our lives are not diametrically opposed. Rather they are integral parts of ourselves. We have the capacity within us to be contemplative. We have had contemplative moments. We must hold onto and celebrate the God who creates us in love, calls to us with love, and wishes to complete us in love.

Endnotes:

[1] Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions Books, 1961) 5.

[2] Joseph Chinnici, OFM, "The Prophetic Heart: Evangelical Life as TOR Franciscans," keynote address to the annual conference of the Franciscan Federation, TOR, Chicago, August, 1994.

[3] Oktavian Schmucki, "The Spirit of Prayer and the Active Life According to the Mind of St. Francis" (*Greyfriars Review* 8, 1994): 31.

[4] Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady. *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980) 32.

[5] *Francis and Clare* 128.

[6] "The Later Rule," *Francis and Clare* 140. See also Francis's "Letter to Anthony" in which he gives Anthony permission to teach theology to the friars 79.

[7] Donald Nicholl states it this way: "How a person drives a car is often a good indication of whether or not he (or she) has begun to assume responsibility for his (or her) actions. And there is no surer sign of irresponsibility than to drive a car without knowing how to stop it. The same applies to the traffic of our daily lives. Unless we can stop the rush and noise of daily traffic in our lives we do not have the slightest chance of hearing the call to holiness." In *Holiness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987) 62.

[8] Tatiana Goricheva, *Talking About God is Dangerous* (New York: Crossroad, 1988) 40.

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The Cord, 45.6 (1995)

CLINTON FRANCISCAN JOURNEY INTO ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

Maria Zeimen, OSF

In the past two years, the Clinton Franciscans have been seriously engaged in fulfilling our 1992 General Chapter commitment to deepen our understanding of active nonviolence. Frequently we are asked how we came to this point in our journey. In this article, I will summarize the events that led us into active nonviolence.

In May, 1989, one of our sisters participated in a Faith and Resistance Retreat. The focus of the retreat was the gospel call to active nonviolent resistance, and it included an opportunity to participate in faith-centered, nonviolent, direct action. As I read her three-page reflection on the experience, I paused over the following lines:

> In preparing for the witness of civil resistance, we discussed how the principle of nonviolence called us not to think of the military as our enemy, nor of ourselves as somehow morally superior to them. Consequently, there was an atmosphere of respect. We began to talk with each other, and as the afternoon passed, the atmosphere began to change. The military personnel began to change . . . began to loosen up, and we saw them more and more as the persons they are.

As Franciscans, we say that our ministry needs to be relational and collaborative. For me, the words above are a description of relational ministry. I lingered over those words, because I was wondering how we, as a congregation, could bring this kind of relational attitude to our daily living and to all of our ministry: this attitude of respect; of having no enemies; of

not being morally superior to anyone; of readiness to dialogue: this opening of our hearts to conversion.

Jesus said: "Do you know that a little yeast has its effect all through the dough?" (Cor. 5: 6). Saul Alinsky concretized those Gospel words by telling us that two percent of any group totally committed to an idea or a way of life can change the whole group. At that time, two percent of our whole congregation was three sisters.

In the spring of 1990, I invited three sisters to participate in the Franciscan Lenten Weekend sponsored by the Nevada Desert Experience (NDE) in Las Vegas. NDE is described as a voice in the desert calling people of faith to nonviolence in the face of violence; to truth in the face of illusion; to hope in the face of despair; to love in the face of fear. One sister went to the Lenten Weekend. She said that it was a turning point in her life.

In the fall of 1990, we as a congregation helped finance the 1991 Corpus Christi Desert Experience, which also was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This was a five-day, faith and resistance retreat sponsored by over one hundred religious congregations and organizations. Six of our sisters participated. In preparation for the Desert Experience, all sisters and associates were invited to share in a series of group reflections, to pray and to fast to help transform the hearts of all of us including the six sisters who actually went to Las Vegas.

On their return, those sisters and two others who had previously participated in similar retreats were invited to give witness during the annual congregational retreat. Some of the concepts they shared were:

- One who practices nonviolence can have no enemies, only opponents, that is, persons who have opposing values, ideas, actions. Even opponents are our brothers and sisters.
- Our nonviolent efforts, energy and actions are always to be directed toward a system or an issue, and not at persons. There is to be no judging or blaming of others.
- If we are to act nonviolently, we need to be aware of our inner selves and our own inner violence.
- Everyone has part of the truth. Openness to the truth in others is essential to active nonviolence. It creates a climate of trust.
- Acting out of truth, love, and justice frees or engages a force that is greater than any other force.

A short time after this witnessing, the Nevada Desert Experience beckoned again, and four of our sisters and one of our associates went together to Las Vegas for an eight-day journey into a deeper experience and awareness of nonviolence intended to help them grow in nonviolent spirituality and develop the skills of active nonviolence.

Saul Alinsky's theory seemed to be proving true for us. In surfacing issues for our 1992 General Chapter, active nonviolence appeared as one of the main concerns of our congregation along with care of the earth, nurtur-

ing the feminine, and action on behalf of the poor and marginalized. We decided that active nonviolence encompassed the other three concerns and was a new way of understanding them. Our prayers during Chapter reflected this perception:

> God of truth and justice, we ask you for the honesty and openness to look at our own violence:
> toward the earth,
> toward the poor and marginalized,
> toward the feminine.

And this realization also directed our reflections. We searched for how

> we could respond nonviolently to the earth by. . . .
> we could respond nonviolently to the feminine by. . . .
> we could respond nonviolently to the poor and marginalized by. . .

We concluded our 1992 General Chapter by making the following commitment:

> **We choose to nurture our Franciscan spirituality of compassion, courage and connectedness with all creation by committing ourselves to a deeper understanding of active nonviolence.**

The General Council decided that the best way to fulfill the chapter commitment would be to take immediate action as a group. All five council members, along with one other sister and two associates, participated with the Western Shoshone Nation in the "Global Anti-Nuclear Alliance Call to Healing Global Wounds" at the Nevada Test Site in October, 1992, the fifth centenary of the Columbian expedition. During the three-day ritual, we prayed and celebrated, listened to Native American stories, participated in civil resistance, were arrested and released.

Being five among two thousand people from very diverse backgrounds gave us some feeling of what it is to be a minority. We experienced overwhelming fear in the presence of physical violence. We soon understood the great need for training in nonviolence. We discovered that we had enormous trust in each other. That trust helped us to remain physically nonviolent in a violent situation.

Before leaving the desert, we met with the staff of Pace e Bene, a Franciscan service in active nonviolence based in Las Vegas. Pace e Bene is an outgrowth of NDE organized and operated by NDE founders Rosemary Lynch, OSF, Louis Vitale, OFM, and Alain Richard, OFM.

Seated in a circle on the desert floor under a tent, buffeted by a strong wind, we prayed for the guidance of the Spirit and asked the Pace e Bene staff to help us formulate a four year congregational plan that would guide our journey into active nonviolence.

We are now two years into living that plan which has meant:

- Establishing an ongoing lecture series at our College which has included an address and campus visit by Dr. Robert Muller, retired Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and current Chancellor of the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica.
- Making a video of six of our sisters sharing their experiences and struggles with active violence and active nonviolence.
- Two series of regional meetings during which discussion, role playing, reflection on that video, and prayer were used to help us develop physical, psychological and spiritual skills for living active nonviolence.
- A Peace Rites Workshop, "Disarming the Self"—a movement workshop about creating peace by reflecting on scripture and prayer and shaped through the medium of dance.
- Small groups using the booklet "Love Beyond Measure: A Spirituality of Nonviolence" (Pax Christi Publication).
- A congregational retreat directed by Rosemary Lynch, OSF, and Louis Vitale, OFM, staff members of Pace e Bene.
- Congregational participation in the INFACT campaign to eliminate the marketing and sale of cigarettes to children.
- Sponsorship of the Corpus Christi Desert Experience II. Three of our sisters who had not previously participated in a Desert Experience attended.
- Sharing our belief in and understanding of active nonviolence with other groups, particularly within our city, which has resulted in the establishment of a local Chapter of the NAACP and of an ecumenical study group on active nonviolence.

The yeast of nonviolence is raising consciousness worldwide as well as in the minds and hearts of Clinton Franciscans. We realize that our journey as a congregation has barely begun. We also realize that each one of us is at a different place on this journey.

As I write this article my heart is filled with gratitude for the disciples of active nonviolence, the yeast people, who have gone before us to bring us to this point: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, the Quakers, and so very many more; and most especially our dear friends at Pace e Bene, Rosemary, Louis and Alain.

My heart is also filled with hope for all those disciples yet to come. Do you recognize yeast in your midst? Do you feel the dough rising?

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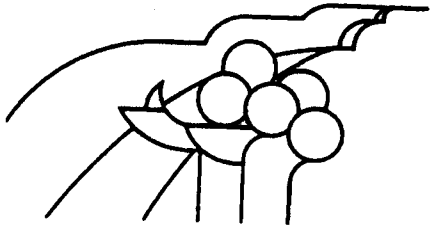

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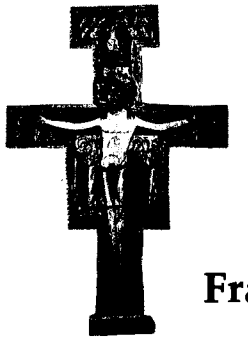

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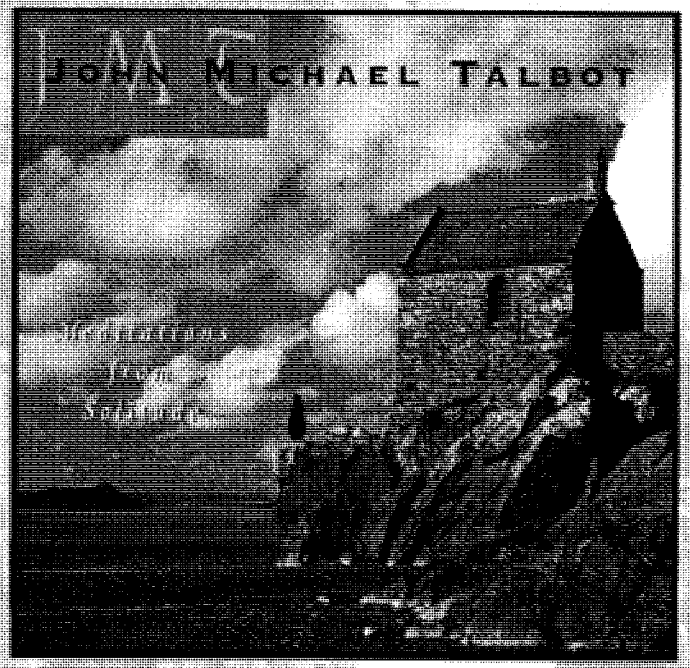

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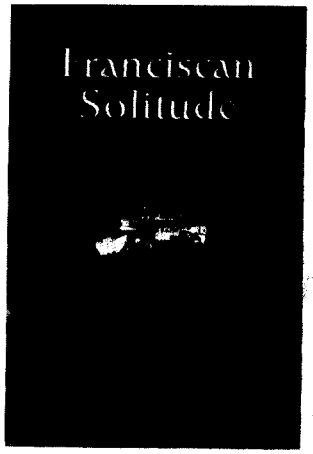

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Friday, February 23-Saturday, February 24

Seminar on Franciscan Spiritual Direction. F. Edward Coughlin, OFM. Contact: Tau Center, 511 Hilbert St., Winona, MN 55987; ph. 507-454-2993.

Friday, April 26-Sunday, April 28

Facing the Christ Incarnate. Tau Center, Winona, MN. Sponsored by the Franciscan Federation. Contact: Kathleen Moffatt, OSF, 650 Jackson St. NE, Washington, DC 20017; ph. 202-529-2334; fax 202-529-7016.

Tuesday, January 2-Monday,January 8

The Franciscan Challenge. Tau Center, Winona, MN. Intercongregational workshop on Franciscan sources/spirituality. Presenters: Ingrid Peterson, OSF, Nancy Schreck, OSF, Patricia Fritz, OSF, Doris Klein, CSA, Judy Sinnwell, OSF. Register by Dec. 15; cost: $325. Contact: Shirley Schmitz, OSF, PO Box 4900, Rochester, MN 55903; p. 507-282-7441.

Saturday, May 25-Tuesday, May 28

Second Bi-Annual Networking Seminar for Franciscan Renewal/Retreat Centers and Franciscan Spiritual Directors. (See detailed ad, p. 47)

Friday, May 17-Saturday, May 25

The Soul's Journey Into God. André Cirino, OFM and Josef Raischl. Contact: Director, Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207.

Writings of Saint Francis

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EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
EpCust	Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
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