



# T • H • E C • O • R • D

## *Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

### *Editorial*

Margaret Carney, OSF. . . . . 1

### *"This is What We Proclaim to You"*

Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM . . . . . 2

### *Franciscan Eremitism*

Thomas Merton, OCSO. . . . . 23

### *A Franciscan Inspires the Jubilee*

Joseph Wood, OFMConv. . . . . 30

### *A Biographical Profile of*

Waldemar A. Roebuck, SFO. . . . . 35

*About Our Contributors.* . . . . 37

### *Book Reviews*

Anthony Carrozzo, OFM. . . . . 38

Anthony LoGalbo, OFM . . . . . 42

*Announcements.* . . . . 43

*On the Franciscan Circuit* . . . . . 56



**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF  
Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF  
Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM  
Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs  
Production Assistant: Geoffrey Lee

Editorial Board: Marie Beha, OSC, Murray Bodo, OFM, Mary C. Gurley, OSF  
Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR, Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.,  
and Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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). (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2). (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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.1 (2000)

**Fiftieth Anniversary Year!**  
**Jubilee!**

**Guest Editorial**

Funds from an anonymous benefactor, authorization from Rev. Pius Barth, OFM, President of the Franciscan Educational Conference (d. 1990), and the editorial zeal of the Franciscan Institute's first director, Rev. Philotheus Boehner, OFM (d. 1955) and his able assistant, Sr. M. Frances, SMIC,\* combined to launch *The Cord* in 1950. Boehner's inaugural editorial states that "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." The economic precision of this first "mission statement" is joined to a passionate appeal for the cultivation of authentic Franciscan spirituality in contrast to "superficial and sentimentally romantic concepts of Franciscanism." The founding editor is insistent that Franciscans must have more access to resources that will allow them to reproduce the "radiant countenance of our Father [Francis]" in a world that looks to the Franciscan Orders "with admiration and confidence."

As I review this first editorial and survey the fifty volumes of *The Cord* that follow, the countenance of Philotheus Boehner smiles down from a photograph above my desk. Does that smile of gentle wisdom take into account the amazing procession of persons and events, articles, editorials, book reviews, poems, notices, and advertisements that have bound generations of Franciscans together with a common tool for personal growth and corporate reflection? An honor roll of editors and writers, an unsung assemblage of skilled production personnel, and several generations of publishers must be summoned to mind as we begin the Golden Anniversary of this journal.

Unable to do justice to all of them in this short editorial statement, I invite the readers who receive this first jubilee issue to offer a psalm of praise for the veritable "cloud of witnesses" who have fulfilled this original vision. We reach a bend in the road of our *itinerarium*. What must *The Cord* be and become in order to remain the respected and important "tie that binds" together a Franciscan global community called to be salt and light in a new century?

*Margaret Carney, O.S.F.*  
Publisher

\*Sister M. Frances, SMIC, of Paterson, NJ, is still living and working in New Mexico.

## **"This is What We Proclaim to You" Facing the Christ Incarnate**

Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM

[This is the text of a presentation made at an international assembly  
of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, July 1996.]

### **Meditatio Pauperis in Tempore**

Fifty years ago, not long after World War II, a young monk living at the "center of the world" in Gethsemani, Kentucky, published his autobiographical memoir, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. The book was an immediate success both nationally and internationally as it met the spiritual hungers of a whole generation of Catholic, Christian, and secular people. The story of one life, so different, so removed, became, in a short period, a vocational statement unlocking a way and a meaning for thousands. It was a question not of literary merit or greatness, for the book seems dated now, but rather a question of convergence—the coming together of languaged personal experience with the greater incoherent speech of social and spiritual aspiration. Largely unnoticed at the time, *Seven Storey Mountain* concluded with a short reflection piece entitled "Meditatio pauperis in solitudine" [the meditation of a poor man in solitude], a title surely reflective of the first chapter of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, entitled "Speculatio pauperis in deserto"<sup>1</sup> [speculation of the poor man in the desert]. In his reflection, Merton, who had been a teacher at St. Bonaventure University, referred explicitly to the two great scholastic theologians, Thomas and Bonaventure, and pointed to St. Francis as a model for the life of the Christian in the Church and the world. "Christ implanted His own image upon St. Francis," Merton wrote,

in order to draw out some men [and women], not a few privileged monks, but all truly spiritual men [and women] to the perfection of contemplation which is nothing else but the perfection of love.<sup>2</sup>

These were the words of a monk writing from within his solitude fifty years ago; they were not the words of a Franciscan man or woman. However, Merton got it right for us as we try to face the Incarnate Christ. It is about being imprinted with, contemplating, and exemplifying, sometimes all in one moment and sometimes over a long period of time, the "perfection of love." We do not do it *in solitudine*, alone. That is not our vocation. But we do it together and *in tempore*, in time, in history, in community. So I entitle my reflection with you "the meditation of a poor person engaged in history" in hopes that together we might discover our witness to the "perfection of love." This is a *meditatio*—a reflection from faith on history; it is not an exposition of doctrinal truth nor a detailed, abstract analysis of our Franciscan christological tradition. Neither is it a great projection of our future life nor an essay full of answers. It is about the meditative intersection between ourselves, our history, and a recovery of the Incarnate Christ, as seen from the perspective of a poor human being, a creature. I would like to divide my meditation into a three step process:

- An *exemplum* or story to prime the imagination;
- A *meditation* on the journey of a post-conciliar Franciscan; a *memoria passionis*<sup>3</sup> as the social base for facing our Christ Incarnate;
- The spirituality of facing the Christ Incarnate: a beginning picture.

### **An Exemplum**

We stand at the beginning of the twenty-first century and in the midst of one of the most exciting theological retrievals of our time—the retrieval of our Franciscan christological tradition. Someone has been here before us, at the start of our own twentieth century, and I would like to begin with a reflection on her life. Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941), the great Anglican spiritual writer, was born in the last third of the nineteenth century. She described her own life as "one on the borderlands," that zone of a personal geography of faith which places an individual between places and marks her forever as emotionally and intellectually homeless. Married to Hubert Stuart Moore in July 1907, she found herself attracted to Roman Catholicism but unable to convert; her husband simply could not accept her desire for allegiance to the Roman Church and still remain married to her. At the same time, as a studious person, she found also that she could not convert to a type of Roman Catholicism which seemed intellectually stifling. Yet, she wanted to convert with her whole heart;

she wanted things to be different. Underhill's life became marked by an "*Impossibility*," a dilemma, an experience of tension, polarity, struggle between what she wanted to believe and what she could in fact achieve, what was indeed historically available for her. She wanted to touch and realize what she perceived to be the ideal, the spiritual, the transcendent, the divine, the truthful, the beautiful (oh, how she loved the Church and wanted to belong to it!), and yet this way seemed blocked for her. She could not stop loving her husband nor could she simply accept the limited, earthly, political, and, at times grotesque, institution of Catholicism.

As an initial solution to her personal and institutional dilemma, Evelyn Underhill turned to the mystics of the Christian tradition. She tried to recover personal religious experience when that was not given to her by a stifling tradition and environment. She sought spiritual mystery while living in the midst of dogmatic and formalized definitions of science and of faith. She discovered in historical models examples of inner freedom, self-enhancement, action, and power not otherwise available to her. Through the mystics she restored the "authority of personal religious experience."<sup>4</sup> In her view, God was accessible and provided a point of stability in the midst of a world full of difficulty and "impossibility." As she herself put it, she adored Christ's head and neglected his feet. "I am finding," she wrote in 1913, "that most devout persons are docetists without knowing it, and that nothing short of complete unreality will satisfy them."<sup>5</sup> "Mystical consciousness," she wrote

has the power of lifting those who possess it to a plane of reality which no struggle, no cruelty, can disturb: of conferring a certitude which no catastrophe can wreck. Yet it does not wrap its initiates in a selfish and otherworldly calm, isolate them from the pain and effort of common life. Rather it gives them renewed vitality; administering to the human spirit not—as some suppose—a soothing draught, but the most powerful of stimulants. Stayed upon eternal realities, that spirit will be far better able to endure and profit from the stern discipline which the race is now called to undergo, than those who are wholly at the mercy of events; better able to discern the real from the illusory issues, and to pronounce judgments on the new problems, new difficulties, new fields of activity now disclosed. Perhaps it is worth while to remind ourselves that the two women who have left the deepest mark upon the military history of France and England—Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale—both acted under mystical compulsion.<sup>6</sup>

Evelyn Underhill's faith in this platonic God of the mystics collapsed under the pressure of World War I, an event so terrible, so heart wrenching, so unreasonable, so useless, so full of sin, so dead-ending that it seemed totally

incompatible with the existence of a transcendent God of pure spirit. Her source of power collapsed; she "went to pieces," and her life, disembodied, became marked both by great activity and inner emotional starvation.<sup>7</sup> Before her very eyes appeared the sufferings of others.

In this crisis of her life, Evelyn Underhill had nowhere to rest her weary head, so she continued to do what she had always done—write. In 1919 she published one of the first modern English works on the Franciscan poet Jacopone da Todi.<sup>8</sup> A year later, she discovered fellowship in the "Confraternity of the Spiritual Entente," a small group of interdependent Christians founded by an Italian Franciscan sister. In 1921-1922 Baron Freidrich von Hugel, her famous spiritual director, gave her a way out of her historical and institutional dilemma—daily devotion to the humanity of Christ, participation in a circle of spiritually interdependent friends expressed in the fellowship of the sacraments and the Church, and contact with the poor.<sup>9</sup> She began to learn an "inclusive mysticism which saw all of life, thought, action, and feeling as material to be transformed by God."<sup>10</sup> In 1925, after some time of this practice, she wrote of St. Francis:

He emerged from the "rut of use and wont," to make a fresh contact with reality; and this contact took the form of a mysticism which was penitential, uncloistered, poetic and Christlike. . . . He was above all else a spiritual realist, who wished his inward and his outward life to be at one: we shall never learn to know him by studying or admiring his outward actions, unless we perceive these as the expressions of an unwavering interior attitude. We may prefer to call him a "little brother of the birds," forgetting that he was also a "little brother of the lice"; we shall only understand and correlate these facts when we remember that he first called himself and his companions the "penitents from Assisi." He accepted in the most practical sense the old ascetic prescription of an unmitigated meekness and an unlimited love, as the double foundations of all true relationship between created and uncreated Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Evelyn Underhill learned over time to face the Christ Incarnate, a God not of pure spirit but a God who is powerful enough to dwell as a human being in misshapen institutions, in sinful and limited corners of life, in the experiences of impossibility, in the small piece of bread, in human beings, in the poor, in imperfection, in her very self. Perhaps Evelyn began to plumb the depths of what the poet of her generation wrote in the trenches of the war:

The straggled soldier halted—stared at Him—  
Then clumsily dumped down upon his knees,  
Gasping, "O blessed crucifix, I'm beat!"

And Christ, still sentried by the seraphim,  
Near the front-line, between two splintered trees,  
Spoke him: "My son, behold these hands and feet."

The soldier eyed Him upward, limb by limb,  
paused at the Face: then muttered, "Wounds like these  
Would shift a bloke to Blighty just a treat!"  
Christ, gazing downward, grieving and ungrim,  
Whispered, "I made for you the mysteries,  
Beyond all battles moves the Paraclete."<sup>12</sup>

"More and more my whole religious life and experience," Underhill wrote,

seem to centre with increasing vividness on our Lord—that sort of quasi-involuntary prayer which springs up of itself at odd moments is always now directed to Him. I seem to have to try as it were to live more and more towards Him only—and it's all this which makes it so utterly heartbreaking when one is horrid. The New Testament, which once I couldn't make much of or meditate on, now seems full of things never noticed—all gets more and *more* alive and compelling and beautiful. . . . Holy Communion, which at first I did simply under obedience, gets more and more wonderful too. It's in that world that one lives.<sup>13</sup>

As I see it, this journey of Evelyn Underhill, her journey to face the Christ Incarnate, is an *exemplum* for our time; and it is given to us not simply as individuals but in our corporate experience. I will try to explain what I mean in our next section.

### Meditation on the Journey of a Post-Conciliar Franciscan

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, we religious were challenged to appropriate the conciliar decrees *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Perfectae Caritatis*. Beginning in 1967, we held chapters; changed our dress, our customs, our daily horarium; updated our theology; diversified our ministries; restructured our government; and eventually even came up with new terms to describe our style of life. All of this occurred in a society in tremendous mutation. We can recall where we were when John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy, and the students at Kent State University were shot. We remember the occupation of Columbia University offices and the disturbances in far away California; the folk music of Peter, Paul, and Mary; Bob Dillon's ballads. We experienced the great changes occurring in the lit-

urgy, the parish council, the diocesan synod; we knew first hand the battles over constitutional changes and the place of religious life in societal transformation. Those from Central or South America remember the period of revolution and civil war, the advent of liberation theology in the ferment of peoples associated with the *comunidades insertas* and *comunidades de base*, the official statements from Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979), and the emerging religious vision which united both Americas in an uneasy solidarity of wealth and poverty, power and colonialism, affluence and exploitation.

In 1972 the Leadership Conference of Women Religious issued an overall assessment of the immediate impact of these developments under the title of "principal changes introduced and experiments being carried out."<sup>14</sup> Let us listen a bit to our own history. The language, I think, is important:

- *Poverty*: a) the quest for experience of evangelical poverty is evoking a need among some to identify with the poor and to work for the eradication of poverty's causes; b) priorities among needs are being determined in such a way that personal and financial resources may be more effectively used for supporting programs that enable the poor and oppressed to experience justice and a truly human life. . . .
- *Obedience*: a) obedience is coming to be understood as a faith response to needs which have been discerned after prayer and consultation. Responsibility for and dedication to a corporate vision demand both personal involvement and community ratification of service choices; b) authority is being exercised in a context of service and in a manner that is fraternal; c) dialogue and consultation with those whose lives are influenced by decisions are becoming integral to the decision-making process. . . .
- "*Small communities*": Currently the phrase describes new modes of living where persons can experience more authentic 1) personal relationships, 2) sharing of the faith, and 3) spontaneous responses to people's needs in the context of Jesus' mission. . . .
- *Forms of Prayer*: Prayer forms are coming to be appreciated as authentic to the degree that they assist in making ordinary life experiences lead to deepening of relationship with the Living Presence who is at the center of life. . . .
- *Forms of Government Based on Collegiality*: a) a more collegial spirit is begetting new and untried ways of administration and decision-making (e.g. teams, executive committees, full-time councils); b) decisions at every level are tending to be based on experiences of communal discernment.

The report of this 1972 conference went on to list several effects of these profound changes on our sense of ourselves, our sense of affiliation, our sense

of the future. In retrospect it seems to me that three sections of the report are extremely significant in setting the stage for what would develop in the next thirty years; the report summarizes experiences in this way:

- Internal divisions and polarizations arising from disagreements about what constitutes the essentials and accidentals of religious life; increasing pluriformity perceived as destructive of unity; increased personal responsibility alien to a life of obedience; anomie and apathy in the application of the principle of co-responsibility; psychological inability of some to cope with change and to accept responsibility.
- Withdrawals from religious life because of the rapidity of change, disenchantment with the institutional church, the personal experience of women [and men!] religious who appear judgmental, intolerant, and unconcerned; loss of reverence for the sacred.
- Vocational crisis. Here the report refers to such items as the huge gap between the inherited structures of religious life and the aspirations of a younger generation marked by alienation from all institutions, especially those closely connected with the Church; the growing valuation of the lay vocation in the world as equally blessed to that of the religious vocation; the "lack of proper respect for religious women as women in the Church, especially lack of their inclusion in many ministries and in decision-making, especially decision-making concerning their own life and ministries, whether at local, diocesan, or Roman levels.

The affective and intellectual responses attached to these experiences named themselves: overreaction, carelessness, aggression, hostility, confusion, insecurity, anxiety, powerlessness, avoidance, unevenness, obduracy, depression, regression, apathy, carelessness, hurt, fear. What was called for was acceptance, respect, appreciation, mutual trust, risk, social sensitivity, openness of heart, flexibility, personal responsibility, a sense of dignity.

I recall all of this history between 1965-1972 not because I want to belabor the obvious. I do it by way of description. As an historian I believe that we can begin to "face the Christ Incarnate" only to the extent that we can enter into the memory of our own life's passion, and I have been astounded by the extent to which I myself and others, growing up in a society of denial, forgetfulness, and evasion, are skilled at avoiding the passion of our own lives and the lives of our neighbors. I have noticed that people talk with reluctance about those years of transition and massive change. Most recently, polarized descriptions of the events have begun to surface in historical and theological literature, and the complexity of the situation, its hopes and sufferings, the injuries caused and experienced, are placed once again at the service of competing

ideologies.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, the historical testimony within our own Franciscan family indicates that we followed a pattern similar to that outlined by the Leadership Conference.<sup>16</sup> The simple truth is, we need to look closely at the emergence during these years of the alloy of our personal, social, and ecclesiastical experience. The fire of the charged tensions of that period and their contemporary recall will forge the coin which bears the face of the Franciscan Christ Incarnate.

What the historian notes about this particular period, perduring from 1965 to approximately 1979, is the startling conjunction in people's experience of both life and death, hope and pain, infinite possibilities and finite practicalities, gain and loss, glory and despair, joy and suffering, aspiration and impasse, sin and grace, complicity in mutual hopes and complicity in mutual destruction. This was not the religious experience of the generation before us, nor that of the turn of the century, nor that of the immigrant church. This type of conjunction has not occurred since the sixteenth or thirteenth centuries. It provides the social key to the development of a new Christological image, if that image can be named and discovered in people's experience. On the one hand we have great idealism—the search for justice, relationships, mission for others, union with God, a sense of personal dignity. On the other hand we have personal, communal, ecclesiastical, and political impasse. What happens with such a mixture of elements is a fracturing of inherited identities, categories, structures, and relationships. The holy migrates from institutions with their forms, roles, functions, solidarities, universal symbols, intellectual meanings, and securities. Who cannot remember the universality of scholastic philosophy and theology or their immediate post-conciliar substitutes in humanistic psychology and the synthesis of Teilhard de Chardin, or the unitary symbols of the motherhouse, novitiate, corporate apostolates?—the holy migrates from these places to individuals with their talents, gifts, desires, feelings, local rituals, private interpretations, and relationships.<sup>17</sup> And, in the gap between inherited structures and new valuations of the holy, there begins a search for new forms of affiliation—houses of prayer, intentional communities, *comunidades insertas*, groups, circles of friendship, associations. When these do not readily emerge in any lasting way—and how can they in an age of heightened aspirations and limited historical possibilities?—personal and communal desires become frustrated, blocked, caught in a coincidence of personal and social opposites. History and expectation conflict.

I do not think it is accidental that the experiential polarities which emerged fully in the 1960s and developed in the 1970s reached their social and historical impasse by the early 1980s. This happened with the waning of liberation theology in the Americas, the public emergence of ideological blocks in both Church and State, and the growing sense that the horizon of our possibilities

was suddenly narrowing. The limitations inherent in the immediate post-conciliar period suddenly became transparently obvious—aging membership coincided with declining vocations; the expectations of social change floundered hard against the greater economic and political realities; institutional extension no longer matched personal and communal resources; changes in the Church left us orphaned and publicly invisible; the fracturing of community, which had occurred as a reaction to the submergence of the person in a corporate image, now turned back upon itself and kept people from engaging in the very task which their hearts desired: the formation of a community of equals.

Frustrated and blocked desire became partnered with emotional disengagement or displacement or victimization or retreat into the interior. More and more religious lived by themselves or concentrated on “tilling their own garden,” or committed their energies to the development of what was manageable, or affiliated, by choice, only with those of like mind and heart, or lived as victims within institutions whose goals and methods spelled discouragement. The many who did not react in these ways were still yoked to the experiences of their sisters and brothers. It was precisely in the mid-1980s that a Carmelite nun penned a famous article, “Impasse and Dark Night,” in which she tried to relate this contemporary religious experience with the tradition of John of the Cross. Impasse, she noted, was the ground from which a new imaginative vision could be birthed. Constance Fitzgerald called at that time for a revival of contemplation and, following Dorothee Soelle, called it “revolutionary patience . . . the epitome of passionate desire, activity, self-direction, autonomy, and bondedness.”<sup>18</sup> The impasse, however, continued to develop, so much so that we find almost the same experience described by Joan Chittister in 1995. “As we see the old resources crumble around us,” she notes,

the old institutions lose their luster and their glory, the old social situations dry up and blow away, our own perspective begins to shift. The life struggle of religious commitment that used to be taken for granted, done with love, in fact, looms larger than possible, larger than acceptable. The idea of starting over to do new work with a new energy wearies us to the bone. Without the numberless numbers of candidates, the great, stable systems, public approval and parochial support, the question of who we are and what we do gnaws at the heart and leaves us arid of soul.<sup>19</sup>

Most recently, a past president of the Conference of Latin American Religious described the situation in this way:

Aunque a muchos nos parezca por todas partes nos invaden sentimientos y experiencias de desilusión, de ineficacia y de impotencia frente a la cruda realidad de una injusticia y corrupción crecientes. Los religiosos

que se entregaron con total generosidad y coarje en favor de los pobres comprueban con tristeza la esterilidad de sus esfuerzos concientizadores y evangelizadores. El dolor se hace mas hondo cuando no solo se experimenta la falta de interes por parte de la propia familia religiosa o de Iglesia, sino que muchas veces hay que padecer como uno especie de castigo por haberse jugado por la causa de Jesus, optando por los pobres.<sup>20</sup>

We Franciscans are hardly immune to the personal and social trajectories embedded in this post-conciliar journey. From my own experience, I would say that we too ask the question: Where can we go: to a diocesan church which has defined us either as functionaries or as invisible? to our corporate commitments, whose large structures have escaped our control? to our brothers and sisters, themselves caught as we are in the vortex of social change and blocked desire? To whom do we belong? It is at this point that, in our tradition, the most basic religious question of all arises not only on a personal level but also on a collective one: Who am I Lord, and Who are You? We become together a “poor person” in time, a *pauper in deserto*, just as was Bonaventure at the beginning of the *Itinerarium*.<sup>21</sup> He climbed the mountain of La Verna not simply as himself but as one bearing in his own body a collective identity, “successor as Minister to all the brethren in the place of the blessed father after his death.” For everyone’s sake, he searched for the place where the Lord had been taken; he longed to give a face to the Christ Incarnate so that all his brothers and sisters could recognize themselves. We are fortunate historically to be at a similar point. It is now that the Body of Our Lord can be given historical flesh and blood and be named as Jesus, “the God who was placed poor in the crib, lived poor in the world, and remained naked on the cross” (Clare, *Testament*, 45). Finally, I would like to share with you some experiences of how this collective face of the Christ Incarnate might be delineated.

### The Spirituality of Facing the Christ Incarnate: A Beginning Picture

It seems to me that the distinctly Franciscan face of the Christ Incarnate emerges when the forces of our religious imagination and affection, constricted by the personal, communal, and ecclesiastical impasse which we experience, burst forth to paint a picture of our God which focuses on the following elements in its spirituality (presented here only as starting points):

- the Incarnation as a protest in favor of the human creature;
- the mirror effect, or the realization that we belong to a communion of enfleshed grace;

- mourning, the active and tearful longing for lost salvation;
- the prayer of delight in all God's works.

## The Incarnation as a Protest in Favor of the Human Creature

During the course of the post-conciliar changes, many of us experienced the holy, that which is blessed by God and truly valuable, as migrating from institutions to people, from programs to human activities, from laws and customs to personal choices, from work to value driven days. This development, so clear in the house of prayer movement, the concentration on personal gifts and talents, the trend away from corporate to diversified ministries, was accompanied by a loss of a previously defined role in Church and society. Against the backdrop of the sacralized structures of religious life, the 1972 LCWR report carried a significant section on the "incident of secularism within religious life." "Secularism," in this context, was positively defined as the relinquishing of symbols "which are no longer meaningful," the affirmation of the autonomy of the secular, and "being present to the world in its life and activities."<sup>22</sup> At the same time there was an accompanying turn towards the poor, precisely those who had been excluded from being equal participants in the contemporary social and political settlement, an option for those who had become disenfranchised.

What was happening? Let me interpret these events in the light of our Franciscan tradition and show their implications for our Christology. I believe that we as religious were engaged in recovering an identity which we shared with all people, an identity even more fundamental than our vowed life—our identity as human beings. Although we did not know it, we were engaging in a process very similar to that of Francis of Assisi and his followers, when, in the course of his conversion, he took off the habit of the religious person of his time, the hermit, and put on the habit of an ordinary human.<sup>23</sup> In that very action he was moved by God to discover the holy in a condition which all people without distinction shared.

We need always to remember that Francis of Assisi lived at a time of humanistic revival, a period which historically valued rights, participation, conscience, beauty, techniques, tools for work and trades, new modes of communion, the emergence of the public offices of notaries, lawyers, secretaries, merchants—all areas which the inherited structures of his time often viewed as either evil or ambivalent. Francis, Clare, and the penitents embodied an image of holy presence—one with eyes, arms, hands, feet, mind, and heart—which found value in people, discovered "sweetness" in activities institutionally defined or judged as "bitter." But the members of the Franciscan movement did more than that. They also made a fundamental human option

for those who were excluded from being participants in this history (i.e. citizens without rights, diseased persons who had no place in society, sinners marked with the sign of moral judgement, poor people without resources and social power). The Lord led them to reclaim for the others with whom they shared exclusion a place in the world of human making. In a similar way, they also wanted to recover for others their right to participate as human beings in shaping their own fate and creating their own history.<sup>24</sup>

In the midst of being moved in this way, we Franciscans found ourselves without a category of identification in Church or society—one simply could not be just a human being. It is too universal a category and allows for no boundaries; it carries with it the naming of all other humans as "sisters" or "brothers"; it implies freedom from social control and the challenge of becoming the agent of one's own fate; it demands too great a self-acceptance and is beholden to no one but God alone. In such an atmosphere and with such a challenge, we became dislocated. We were neither religious nor lay, neither in the world nor of it, neither rich nor poor, neither sacred nor secular. We were in fact sociologically and institutionally homeless, left with nothing but our personal and relational resources to fall back upon, and, as I have indicated, these could not carry the freight of identity. Because we had little knowledge of our Franciscan christological tradition, we also had no image of the Incarnate Christ to bless our condition and to strengthen us on our journey. But that is precisely the point. Francis too had no inherited image of Christ to fit his experience<sup>25</sup>; it is from within that experience of dislocation and identification with the human that he, with his brothers and sisters, fashioned something new. They discovered that God, in choosing to become human, made a loud word of protest in a world which had forgotten what it means to be human. Theirs was a Gospel Word which, for example, valued:

- *each person*: "Be conscious, O man, of the wondrous state in which the Lord God has placed you, for He created you and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body, and to His likeness according to the Spirit" (Adm. 5).
- *the birthing process*: "Through his angel, Saint Gabriel, the most high Father in heaven announced this Word of the Father—so worthy, so holy and glorious—in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from which He received the flesh of humanity and our frailty" (2EpFid 4).
- *those defined as non-existent*: "And they must rejoice when they live among people [who are considered to be] of little worth and who are looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and beggars by the wayside" (RegNB 9:2).
- *the world of work*: "Those brothers to whom the Lord has given



the grace of working should do their work faithfully and devotedly" (RegB 5:1).

- *women*: "Since 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. . . ." (FormViv 1).
- *enemies*: "Let us pay attention all [my brothers], to what the Lord says: *Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you*, for our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose footprints we must follow, called His betrayer "friend" (RegNB 22;1).
- *death*: "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living man can escape" (CantSol 10).
- *every human emotion*: "Let us all love the Lord God *with all [our] heart, all [our] soul, with all [our] mind and all [our] strength and with fortitude and with total understanding, with all of our powers*, with every wish, every effort, every affection, every emotion, every desire, and ever wish. He has given and gives to each one of us [our] whole body and soul, and [our] whole life" (RegNB 23:8).
- *their own souls*: "Indeed is it not clear that the soul of the faithful person, the most worthy of all creatures because of the grace of God, is greater than heaven itself? For the heavens with the rest of creation cannot contain their Creator. Only the faithful soul is his dwelling place" (3LAg 21-22).
- *time, place, circumstances, history, story*: "The Lord granted me . . . afterward . . . wherever . . . after . . . I used to . . ." (Test passim).

And the fundamental image of the Gospel Word which Francis, Clare, and the others finally placed at the center of their creative imaginations and their own self definition, the image which spoke volumes about their protest, was described in this way: "And for the love of the most holy and beloved Child who was wrapped in such poor little swaddling clothes and laid in a manger and of His most holy Mother, I admonish, beg, and exhort my sisters to always wear poor garments" (RCl 2:18). By this action the Word of God takes up the entire human journey with others, embedded in time and history. This is the Franciscan appropriation of one of the greatest teachings of the Second Vatican Council:

In reality, it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man [the human being] truly becomes clear. . . . Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us to a dignity beyond compare. For by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man [person]. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human

mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.<sup>26</sup>

## The Mirror Effect, or the Realization that We Belong to a Communion of Enfleshed Grace

One of the key post-conciliar experiences is that of personal, social, and ecclesiastical impasse. Our experience has revealed to us not only that we are human beings full of dignity, aspiration, talents, and promise, but that we are limited in our capabilities, hemmed in by our social opportunities, often as not caught in a conjunction of forces which make for historical "impossibilities." The problems of the poor increase; our own capabilities decrease. Frustrated and blocked desire become part and parcel of our lives. We experience in ourselves and our neighbors a host of affective responses and behaviors which end in aggression, hostility, confusion, insecurity, anxiety, victimization, hurt, withdrawal, apathy, worthlessness, and sin. When expectation and historical forces conflict, we find ourselves very much aware of our true size—small. Our own North American experiences have been well described by a commentator on Latin American religious life:

Consciente o inconscientemente, teníamos la ilusión de ser protagonistas de la nueva evangelización, de los cambios de estructuras, de los procesos de liberación y de las obras de promoción. Per hemos comprobado la inutilidad de nuestros esfuerzos.<sup>27</sup>

The difficulty for us as religious was that when we experienced impasse in all of its personal and collective forms, the face of our God, the God who had filled us with the energies and expectations of the post-conciliar period, the face of our God who had once appeared so transparent in our pursuit of perfection, our good works, and the Church's sure guidance, the face of the God who had dominated the great expansion of the post World War II period, disappeared, hidden behind the veils of personal and collective disappointment. The places where we had found God were no longer credible: the institutional Church, our religious family, our mission. As with the experience of a young child whose parent has left the room, the eyes, smile, touch, word, and pleasure of incarnate love which had given us identity—who **mirrored** us back to ourselves—became a "missing object," and with it disappeared our deepest sense of self.<sup>28</sup> The heritage we received gave us some puzzle pieces but no directions on how to picture a God who could take us in human arms and turn to us a human face capable of loving this experience of life. Fortunately, a return to our Franciscan sources accompanied our post-conciliar experience.

Francis, Clare, and their companions had a similar experience of personal, social, and ecclesiastical impasse. For many people of their time, the face of God's presence had disappeared behind the violence, inhumanity, arrogance, and moral depravity of people in society and the Church. The result was anger, apathy, withdrawal from the Church, reactionary exclusion of people from belonging to the human community. Where had they taken the body of the Lord? "On my bed at night I sought him whom my heart loves," the bride cries in the Canticle.

I sought him, but I did not find him.  
I will rise then and go about the city:  
In the streets and crossings I will seek Him  
whom my heart loves.  
I sought him but I did not find him.  
The watchmen came upon me  
As they made their rounds of the city.  
Have you seen Him whom my heart loves? (3:2-3)

Within such an experience, Francis, Clare and companions reimagined their inherited images of God and Christ. They had to do this to survive with hope, to free their blocked desires for action.

When we read the writings of Francis and Clare we find a startling range of words describing not only the greatness of the human condition but also the shape it takes within ordinary experience. Favorites among these words are *fragilitas* (3x), *fragiles* (2x), *humanitas* (2x), *humanus* (8x), *debiles* (4x), *debilitas* (3x), and above all *infirmis* (17x) and *necessitas* (30x).<sup>29</sup> These words communicate the physicality of existence, its sufferings and limitations; its experiences of persecution, tribulation, struggle; its insertion in time and space; its lack of freedom and feeling of being caught. In the language of the period, *necessitas* implies a return to experience, itself a resounding rejection of the myth of absolute freedom. A respect for "necessities," things we cannot live without (air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, self-love, love of neighbor), an acceptance of our human weakness and infirmity, forces us not to violate our human nature—nor the nature of our neighbors. We know in our hearts and in our experience that we must love ourselves and that to do this we must accept our need to be loved by another. Necessity forces compassion. In fact, it is through this law of necessity and weakness that God leads us to beatitude by modifying our tendency towards selfishness, uniting us to others, and filling our soul with the experience of gratitude.<sup>30</sup> The challenge was, of course, to accept their own necessities and the necessities of their neighbors, to rediscover in their world the presence of God.

In the Letter to All the Faithful, Francis presents a new image of the Lord for their consolation. He announced *this* "Word of the Father—so worthy, so

holy and glorious—in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, *from which he received the flesh of humanity and our frailty*" (2EpFid 4). The generic term which Clare, Francis, and others use for this human experience of Christ is "poverty." What have they done? They have placed their Savior in the middle of their own experience; they have accepted their human condition by seeing themselves through the eyes of God's love incarnate. We can see the process taking place in Clare's reflections in her fourth letter to Agnes of Prague. Let us listen to the text:

Look at the border of this mirror, that is, the poverty of Him  
Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes.  
O marvelous humility!  
O astonishing poverty!  
The King of angels,  
The Lord of heaven and earth,  
Is laid in a manger!

Then, at the surface of the mirror, consider the holy humility, the blessed poverty, the untold labors and burden that He endured for the redemption of the whole human race. Then, in the depth of this same mirror, contemplate the ineffable charity that led Him to suffer on the wood of the Cross and to die there the most shameful kind of death.

Therefore, that Mirror, suspended on the wood of the Cross, urged those who passed by to consider, saying: *All you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like my suffering.*

Let us respond, with one voice, with one spirit, to Him crying and grieving Who said, *Remembering this over and over leaves my soul down-cast within me* (4LAg 19-25).

The image of the Lord is that of someone who out of "ineffable love" willingly embraces the poverty of the human journey and from within that shared journey speaks the Word to the poor one longing for the face of God. This "enfleshed grace," the true form which the Body of Christ chooses to take in this world, mirrors back to Clare, and to us, the image of ourselves as belonging, even in our limitations, our impasse, and our sin, to the Creator of all things.

In the clarity of that loving glance coming from the body "suspended on the wood of the cross," Francis, Clare, and others also see clearly and with hope how God must come to be imaged in a time of historical impossibility, a time when limitation and sin hide the face of God in a broken world and Church. In this image, desire becomes unblocked; the missing object reveals itself; our collective identity in Christ is rediscovered and our dignity restored; our human condition is changed, not destroyed. We need not seek perfection nor to be other than we are; we need simply to begin to live from the love of the

Incarnate Christ. And Clare's response to Agnes continues: "From this moment, then, O Queen of our heavenly King, let yourself be inflamed more strongly with the fervor of charity" (4LAg 27).

Here then is the full face of the Franciscan Christ Incarnate. When a sense of human dignity meets with historical impasse, only a focus on the image of the Christ who chooses willingly to be a poor human being can restore us to creatureliness, that blessed state of belonging, in all our limited works and hopes, to a God of love. Francis, Clare, and companions embraced this Lord and followed him, thus once again making the face of Christ Incarnate visible and credible in and to the people of their Church and world. Our Lord became for them, not simply the one who joined with each human being, but also the one who accompanied them on their journeys full of impotence, limitation, poverty, and historical impossibility. He was the one who took shape in the disfigured form of their sisters and brothers, the one whose Body, the Church, appeared hardly human. Francis and Clare gave their spiritual and physical experience a name: *Poverty*. They married her by the wedding ring of faith, and they said that, in the mirrored light of their Incarnate Lord, their own human experience with others was indeed a beautiful way to be. "Happy, indeed, is she, to whom it is given to share in this sacred banquet" (4LAg 9).

### Mourning, the Active and Tearful Longing for Lost Salvation

I have tried to describe the full face of the Franciscan Christ Incarnate by focussing on the twin realities of human dignity and human limitation. Knit together by God's love for us, this historically real *Imago Dei*, in whose image we are made, enables us to accept ourselves as creatures and to enter into the blessed state of belonging to a God of love. However, our post-conciliar experience has taught us more than this. Embedded in it has been the continuing battle to negotiate the impasse created by the confrontation between our infinite desires (that there be justice, that people be one family, that the poor be recognized, that peace prevail, that happiness reign, that the community grow, that the Church be alive) and historical impossibilities, human weakness, and sin in ourselves and others. If we do not back away from this coincidence which in God's love creates the Incarnation, we have the experience of mourning. We become, if you like, creatures whose lives are full of tears, tears of love and tears of repentance, tears of hope and tears of disappointment, tears of fulfillment and tears of expectation, tears of joy and tears of repentance.<sup>31</sup> In response to how much is happening and to the size of our own efforts and hopes, we either fracture our relationships, withdraw from the task, work while dogged by hopelessness, retreat into apathy, or we weep.

These experiences are the affective counterparts to facing the Christ Incarnate in our tradition. Francis and Clare, in their writings, caution their followers against taking the false roads of temporary gain, discouragement, anger, hopelessness, withdrawal, and dissension. (See Admonitions, RegNB 22, 3LAg 20). Instead, as Clare admonishes Agnes: "[If you] weep [with Him] you shall rejoice with Him" (2LAg 21). It is the only way to keep desire from being crushed and engagement from being dissociated. Francis wept because "love is not loved" (2Cel 196). The Legend of Clare describes the experience more fully:

Crying over the Lord's passion was well known to her. At times, she poured out feelings of bitter myrrh at the sacred wounds. At times she imbibed sweeter joys. The tears of the suffering Christ made her quite inebriated and her memory continually pictured Him Whom love had profoundly impressed upon her heart.

She taught the novices to weep over the Crucified Christ and, at the same time what she taught with her words she expressed with her deeds. For frequently when she would encourage them in private in such matters, a flow of tears would come before the passage of her words (30).

Existentially, Clare and Francis weep because they long for lost salvation (i.e. peace, justice, unity, friends, God) much as the woman in the Canticle of Canticles mourns for the complete physical presence of her hidden lover. Mourning fills the spaces between their actions, their experiences, their results, and their yearnings, allowing them to keep themselves humanly alive, full of desire, and yet still engaged in tasks with limited outcomes and in a Church and society which seem always to fall short. Mourning is the counterpart to the repentance which flows from love (2Cor. 7:10); it is the companion of pilgrims full of joy because they, along with their friends, are on the way, full of sadness because of the struggle and full of energy because of yearning.

When Clare cries over the Lord's passion, she has something very concrete in mind—the image of the Incarnate Christ. The sight of him, so poor yet so full of dignity and life, living in her sisters, her brothers, her city, her church, her world, breaks her heart and moves her to pour out the alabaster jar of mercy on some very dirty feet (Lk. 7:36-40). At the same time, mourning for her is the result of love. Having seen herself the way God sees her from the "wood of the cross," she rejoices in her tears. They make her like Christ, who lamented,

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you slay the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I wanted to gather your children to-

gether as a mother bird collects her young under her wings, and you refused me! (Lk. 14:34-35).

Finally, mourning for Clare is an act of justice, for embedded in it is both the recognition that all is not well and the expectation that God is true to the promise and hears the cry of the poor, that the Lord is coming soon! Mourning is a demand, a cry from the importunate widow (Lk. 18:1-8).<sup>32</sup> To face the Christ Incarnate in our tradition is to become a "poor person in history," full of joy and mourning for lost salvation.

## The Prayer of Delight in All God's Works

There is one other element in the spirituality of facing the Christ Incarnate in the Franciscan tradition which I would like to indicate. This note runs throughout all of Francis's writings and is the culmination of his Office of the Passion. I can do little more than recite it to you, but I hope that what I have said has clarified how this prayer might be the psalm of all who are blessed to be post-conciliar Franciscans:

All you nations clap your hands  
Shout to God with a voice of gladness.  
For the Lord the Most High  
the awesome, is the great King over all the earth.  
For the most holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages,  
has sent His beloved Son from on high and has brought  
salvation in the midst of the earth. . . .  
Offer up your bodies and take up His holy cross,  
and follow His most holy commands even to the end.  
Let the whole earth tremble before His face, say among  
the nations that the Lord has ruled from a tree (OffPass 7).<sup>33</sup>

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Works of Saint Bonaventure, II, ed. Philotheus Boehner, OFM, and M. Frances Laughlin, SMIC (The Franciscan Institute, 1956), 38.

<sup>2</sup>See Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1948), 418-419 for reflections on Bonaventure and Francis.

<sup>3</sup>For this term and some theological reflection supportive of the position, see Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God, The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (Paulist Press, 1998), 5, where *memoria passionis* is described as "the remembrance of the sufferings of others as a basic category of Christian discourse about God."

<sup>4</sup>See Evelyn Underhill, "The Authority of Personal Religious Experience," and "The Sources of Power in Human Life," in Dana Greene, *Evelyn Underhill, Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy* (State University of New York, 1988), 119-131, 69-85.

<sup>5</sup>As cited in Charles Williams, ed., *The Letters of Evelyn Underhill* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), 29. See "Introduction" for explanation of Underhill's "Impossibility," and p. 24 for "feet" and "head" analogy.

<sup>6</sup>Underhill, *Practical Mysticism* (Columbus, OH: Ariel Press, 1942), 13-14, (first published 1914).

<sup>7</sup>For this interpretation see Dana Greene, ed., *Evelyn Underhill, Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988) and "Introduction," *Fragments from An Inner Life, The Notebooks of Evelyn Underhill* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1993).

<sup>8</sup>Evelyn Underhill, *Jacopone da Todi, Poet and Mystic—1228-1306, A Spiritual Biography* (London: J.M. Dent, 1919).

<sup>9</sup>See the insights in *The Letters of Evelyn Underhill*, p. 155, where she writes to a friend: "And (as regards specifically Christian beliefs) it means getting beyond the idea of Christ as a 'perfect example,' 'spiritual genius' and so forth, to a realization of the principle of incarnation (and as a derivative therefrom, of sacramentalism also) as involving the special self-expression and self-imparting of the Infinite God, in humanity and for humanity." See also her essay, "Christian Fellowship: Past and Present," in Greene, *Evelyn Underhill, Modern Guide*, 103-116.

<sup>10</sup>Greene, *Evelyn Underhill*, "Introduction."

<sup>11</sup>Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystics of the Church* (London: James Clarke, 1925), 90-91 in a chapter entitled "Franciscan Mysticism."

<sup>12</sup>D. Felicitas Corrigan, *Siegfried Sassoon: Poet's Pilgrimage* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1973), 81, an unpublished poem.

<sup>13</sup>*Letters*, 27.

<sup>14</sup>What follows is taken from "The Report of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious of the U.S.A., in regard to *Topics Proposed to the Plenary Assembly of October 23-25, 1972 for Information, Reflection and Advice and Questionnaire on the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and Women*, July 6, 1972," copy in CFP, Baltimore Carmelite Monastery.

<sup>15</sup>See for some examples Ann Carey, *Sisters in Crisis: The Tragic Unraveling of Women's Religious Communities* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1997); and for the opposite, Lora Ann Quinonez, CDP, Mary Daniel Turner, SNDdeN, *The Transformation of American Catholic Sisters* (Temple University Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup>See for examples Ann Cannon, OSF, Maria Vianney Donovan, OSF, *Allegany Franciscan Study 1972*; Anne Maria Knawa, OSF, *As God Shall Ordain, A History of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, 1894-1987*, (Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, 1987); La Verne Frietich, OSF, *A Time for Beginning . . . A Time for Letting Go: History of the Sisters of Saint Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana, 1945-1975* (Dayton Ohio: Marianist Press, 1990); Mary Assumpta Ahles, OSF, *In the Shadow of His Wings: A History of the Franciscan Sisters* (St. Paul: North Central Publishing Company, 1977).

<sup>17</sup>For background on the developments in religious life during this period, see Mary Jo Leddy, *Reweaving Religious Life: Beyond the Liberal Model* (Mystic CT, 1990); Helen Rose Ebaugh, *Women in the Vanishing Cloister: Organizational Decline in Catholic Religious Orders in the United States* (Rutgers, 1993); Patricia Wittberg, SC, *The Rise and Decline of Catholic Religious Orders, A Social Movement Perspective* (State University of New York, 1994).

<sup>18</sup>Constance FitzGerald, OCD, "Impasse and Dark Night," reprinted in Joann Wolski Conn, *Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development* (Paulist, 1986), 287-311, with quotation from p. 308. She refers to Soelle's *Revolutionary Patience*.

<sup>19</sup>Joan Chittister, OSB, *The Fire in These Ashes: A Spirituality of Contemporary Religious Life* (Sheed & Ward, 1995), 76.

<sup>20</sup>Luis Coscia, OFM Cap., "Nuevos Acentos de la Vida Religiosa en America Latina," *Cuadernos Franciscanos*, 29 (Enero/Marzo, 1995): 3-7, with quotation from p. 7; see also, for over-

view of Latin American developments since the council, Nilo Agostini, OFM, "Perspectivas de la Nueva Evangelización en la América Latina," *Cuadernos Franciscanos*, 26 (Octubre/Diciembre, 1992): 237-256.

<sup>21</sup>Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Prologue, Chapter 1. The quotation is taken from the Prologue, 2.

<sup>22</sup>"The Report of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious of the U.S.A." (1972), 10-11.

<sup>23</sup>For background see Theophile Desbonnets, *From Intuition to Institution, the Franciscans* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1988); for application to the penitential movement see Giovanna Casagrande, *Religiosità Penitenziale e Città al Temo dei Comuni* (Roma, 1995), 113-127; for a general approach compatible with this understanding see Jacques LeGoff, "Franciscanisme et Modèles Culturels du XIIIe Siècle," in *Francescanesimo e Vita Religiosa dei Laici nel '200* (Assisi, 1981), 83-128.

<sup>24</sup>See the current interpretations of the Franciscan movement by Ovido Capitani, "Verso una nuova antropologia e una nuova religiosità," in *La Conversione all Povertà nell' Italia dei Secoli XII-XIV, Atti del XXVIII Covegno storico internazionale, Todi, 14-17 Ottobre 1990* (Spoleto, 1991), 447-471 and the articles by Manselli and Mollat in *La Povertà del Secolo XII e Francesco D'Assisi* (Assisi, 1974).

<sup>25</sup>See Norbert Nguyen-Van-Khanh, OFM, *The Teacher of His Heart: Jesus Christ in the Thought and Writings of St. Francis*, trans. Ed Hagman, OFM Cap., (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994), 19-57.

<sup>26</sup>*Gaudium et Spes*, 22. For the significance of this passage in a new Christological humanism, see Josef Ratzinger in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, V, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (Herder and Herder, 1969), 159-163. Part of this passage becomes the centerpiece for John Paul II's ethic of community, defense of every human life in *Evangelium Vitae*, and condemnation of fratricide.

<sup>27</sup>Coscia, "Nuevos Acentos de la Vida Religiosa en América Latina," *Cuadernos Franciscanos*, 29 (1995): 7.

<sup>28</sup>For further elaboration on this phenomenon, see the works of Dom Sebastian Moore, who builds on the psychoanalytic insights of Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child*. For a fascinating application to an individual, see Cynthia Griffin, *Emily Dickinson* (Wolff & Knopf, 1986) and Constance Fitzgerald, "The Mission of Therese of Lisieux," in *Contemporary Carmelite Women, The Way Supplement*, 89 (1997): 74-96.

<sup>29</sup>For a listing of these words see G. Boccali, *Concordantiae Verbales* (Assisi, 1976).

<sup>30</sup>For an exposition of this view of "necessity" see Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God, with an Analytical Commentary*, ed. Emero Stieglman (Kalamazoo, MI, 1995), 99-108.

<sup>31</sup>For background on this interpretation see the classic work, Irene Hausherr, SJ, *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East*, trans. Anselm Hufstader, OSB (Kalamazoo, 1982). Most recently Elizabeth Dreyer has called for a revival of this spiritual tradition in her "Blessed Are They Who Mourn: Tears, Compunction, and Forgiveness," in *Franciscan Leadership in Ministry: Foundations in History, Theology, Spirituality, in Spirit and Life, A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism*, 7 (1997): 179-204.

<sup>32</sup>See Johann Metz, "Theology as Theodicy," in *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (Paulist, 1998), 54-71.

<sup>33</sup>In *Francis and Clare, The Complete Works*, trans. and ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM (Paulist, 1982), 88-89. All quotations from Francis and Clare in this essay are taken from this book or from *Clare of Assisi, Early Documents*, trans. and ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1993).

## Franciscan Eremitism

Thomas Merton

[Reprinted from *The Cord*, December, 1966, pp. 356-364.]

Saint Francis's love of solitude, intimately related to his conception of a poor and wandering life, can easily be treated as so much romantic trimming, something to be admired but not imitated, like preaching to the birds. But eremitical solitude is more than mere ornament in Franciscan spirituality. The spirit of solitary adoration, in the midst of nature and close to God, is closely related to the Franciscan concept of poverty, prayer, and the apostolate. At the present moment, when there is a revival of eremitism in the monastic orders, it might be interesting to consider Franciscan hermits in their historical perspective. To do this, we have to understand the very important pre-Franciscan movement of itinerant and preaching hermits in the tenth and twelfth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally, eremitism in the west was closely related to the monastic orders. The Rule of Saint Benedict<sup>2</sup> provided that after a long period of probation in the monastic community certain monks could retire into solitude for the sake of greater mortification, perfection, and prayer. This solitude could be absolute or relative, and the pattern of life was usually worked out by the monk himself under the guidance of his abbot. But in any case monastic eremitism at this time implied a further withdrawal from the society of men into a life entirely alone with God in contemplation. In a conception of the monastic life in which the community provided a mitigated solitude for the average man who could not go all the way into the desert, the step to eremitical solitude was considered higher because more perfectly and unequivocally "monastic" and world-denying. Many monks obtained permission to live as re-

cluses, permanently enclosed in a cell in the monastery itself usually adjoining the Church, and at a certain period these monastic recluses formed a kind of spiritual and contemplative elite. We seldom find a really developed conception of any obligation to share with others the fruits of contemplation. True, the recluse was often consulted in spiritual matters by his brethren. But he was normally not in a position to preach and no one would have expected him to do so.

In the tenth century a new movement began which was for the most part independent of monasticism. Lay people and secular clerics began to withdraw directly into solitude without passing through a period of monastic formation. Living in the woods and developing as best they could their own mode of life, they remained in rather close contact with the poor (that is, generally speaking, with their own class), with outlaws and outcasts, and with the itinerants who were always numerous in the Middle Ages. Closely identified as the hermits were with the under-privileged, the oppressed, and those for whom the official institutions of society showed little real concern, the non-monastic hermitage quickly became a place of refuge for the desperately perplexed who sought guidance and hope—if not also a hiding place and physical safety. Thus the non-monastic hermit, by the very fact of his isolation from the world, became open to the world in a new and special way.

Since in fact preaching had been practically abandoned in the parish churches and the monks did not preach to the people but only to themselves, there was an urgent need for the gospel message to be announced to the poor in simple language they could understand—the language of penance, conversion, salvation, and love of the Savior. Consequently these lay hermits often became itinerant preachers and the movement of preaching hermits acquired a kind of charismatic aura in the eleventh century. The name of Peter the Hermit, preacher of the first crusade, is there to remind us of this fact. Many of these hermits had their preaching mission confirmed by the popes themselves. Others were approved by bishops. Still others just “got up and went,” and their words were well received. Some of these itinerant hermits thought of going to preach to the Saracens and even attempted to do so in the hope of being martyred. When they failed, they returned to their solitude and to the “martyrdom of contemplation.” The picture is a familiar one: we can see that the movement of itinerant hermits of the tenth and twelfth centuries provided a background and a precedent for the eremitism of the first Franciscans.

It is true that by the thirteenth century the eremitical movement had died out or been absorbed back into monasticism. The Cistercian lay brothers of the twelfth century were largely recruited from among the kind of people who might otherwise have become itinerant hermits. The Cistercian lay brotherhood in the twelfth century had something of an eremitical as well as a dis-

tinctly “lay” character: the brothers were destined by vocation to live outside the monastic enclosure if necessary, on distant farms and granges or in crofts where they might be entirely alone for long periods. The simple life of the brother was very close to that of the lay hermit, and the brothers of Citeaux and other monastic reforms tended to replace the hermit movement.

St. Francis, however, was in the direct line of the earlier hermit tradition. The First Rule of the Friars Minor, approved orally in 1209, does not specifically legislate for hermitages, but it mentions them in passing as taken for granted:

Let the brothers wherever they may be in hermitages or other places take heed not to make any place their own and maintain it against anybody else. And let whoever may approach them, whether friend or foe or thief or robber, be received kindly (RegNB 7).

Here we find not only the spirit we would expect from having read the lives and legends of St. Francis but also the authentic tradition of the earlier itinerant hermit movement which was non-monastic and completely open to the world of the poor and the outcast. It is taken for granted that the hermit will meet with thieves and robbers, and he must not place himself above them or separate himself from them but must show himself to be their brother. The hermit is not just the man who, like St. Arsenius, has fled entirely from other human beings. He is not just the man of deep contemplative recollection. He is the vulnerable, open, and loving brother of everyone—like Charles de Foucauld in our own time. He is a “Little Brother of the Poor.”

The special statute or instruction composed by St. Francis for those returning to hermitages is well known (RegEr).<sup>3</sup> A hermitage is in fact a small community of three or four brothers, some living entirely in silence and contemplative solitude with others who take care of their needs as their “Mothers.” These “Mothers” must also see that their “children” are not disturbed by outsiders. But the contemplatives should also from time to time take over the active duties and give their “Mothers” a rest. It is a charming document which, however, does not give a very detailed picture of the life these hermits led.

The importance of the document lies in the spirit which it exhales—a spirit of simplicity and charity which pervades even the life of solitary contemplation. It has been observed that the genius of sanctity is notable for the way in which it easily reconciles things that seem at first sight irreconcilable. Here St. Francis has completely reconciled the life of solitary prayer with warm and open fraternal love. Instead of detailing the austerities and penances which the hermits must perform, the hours they must devote to prayer, and so on, the Saint simply communicates the atmosphere of love which is to form the ideal

climate of prayer in the hermitage. The spirit of the eremitical life as seen by St. Francis is therefore cleansed of any taint of selfishness and individualism. Solitude is surrounded by fraternal care and is therefore solidly established in the life of the Order and of the Church. It is not an individualistic exploit in which the hermit, by the power of his own asceticism gains a right to isolation in an elevation above others. On the contrary, the hermit is reminded above all that he is dependent on the charity and the good will of others. This is certainly another and very effective way of guaranteeing the sincerity of the hermit's life of prayer since it shows him how much he owes it to others to become a true man of God.

Meanwhile, we shall presently see that Franciscan eremitism had another aspect—it was open to the world and oriented to the apostolic life.

St. Francis founded at least twenty mountain hermitages, and there is no need to remind the reader what outstanding importance his own solitary retreat at Mount Alverna played in his life. He received the stigmata there in 1224. Franciscan mysticism is centered upon this solitary vision of the Crucified, and the love generated in this solitude is poured out on the world in preaching.

Blessed Giles of Assisi was essentially an itinerant hermit. On his return from the Holy Land in 1215, he was assigned in obedience to a hermitage by St. Francis. In 1219 he went to Tunis vainly seeking martyrdom. From 1219 to about 1225, he lived at the Carceri in a small chapel surrounded by other caves. It is interesting that the Carceri, which had once been used by Benedictine hermits, became after Mount Alverna the symbol of Franciscan solitude. It is thought that St. Francis wrote part of the Rule there. The mysticism of Blessed Giles developed in the hermitage of Cetona, and he also founded other hermitages himself.<sup>4</sup>

With Blessed Giles we also find another emphasis. The hermitage is the stronghold of the pure Franciscan spirit, the primitive ideal of the Holy Founder, threatened by others too preoccupied, as some thought, with power and prestige. In the struggle to preserve the primitive spirit of poverty and utter Franciscan simplicity, the hermitages played the part that may be imagined. It is interesting, incidentally, that when St. Bonaventure was made cardinal he received the news while he was washing dishes in a hermitage.

It is not hard to understand that in periods of reform the ideal of solitude has had an important part to play in renewal of the Franciscan life and apostolate. This is especially clear when we study St. Leonard of Port Maurice and the Franciscan revival in Italy in the eighteenth century. St. Leonard himself got his vocation while listening to the Friars chant compline in the Ritiro on the Palatine, and his promotion of the Ritiro movement is both characteristic and important in his life as a reformer.

The Ritiro movement<sup>5</sup> went back perhaps to the sixteenth century. In addition to hermitages, which always existed and provided solitude for Friars desiring a life of more intense prayer, specially fervent communities were formed to serve as models of observance. A Ritiro must not in fact be confused with a hermitage. It was simply a community of picked volunteers who elected to live the Rule in its perfection with special emphasis on poverty, cloister, prayer, and all that could enhance the contemplative and ascetic side of the Franciscan life. However the Ritiri were not unconnected with the eremitical strain in the Order, and the first Ritiro founded by Blessed Bonaventure of Barcelona had developed out of a hermitage.

St. Leonard of Port Maurice began by reforming a Ritiro (even a Ritiro could eventually need to be reformed!) when he became Guardian of San Francesco al Monte in Florence. His emphasis here was not specifically on solitude and contemplation, but simply on the exact observance of the rules. The Ritiri were not originally centers of eremitical life; they were meant to be houses of model regularity and fervor. To promote greater solitude, St. Leonard of Port Maurice created the *Solitudine*.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this more frankly eremitical type of community was the life of pure contemplation. St. Leonard described his purpose in these words:

By complete separation from the world to become able to give oneself to pure contemplation and then after the acquisition of greater fervor to return into the communities to apply oneself more avidly to the salvation of one's neighbor.<sup>7</sup>

As always, in the Franciscan tradition, the idea of solitude is not self-sufficient. Solitude opens out to the world and bears fruit in preaching.

The character of the *Solitudine* instituted by St. Leonard is that of the reforms of that time. The strictness and austerity remind one of De Rance and La Trappe. The cells were so small that when standing in the middle one could touch the ceiling and the two sides. The discipline was taken daily in common for half an hour. Fasting continued all the year round. Perpetual silence was observed. The Friars went barefoot. There were small hermitages attached to the convent, and to these one might retire for greater solitude and more prayer.

This rigorous and solitary life was not intended to be permanent. Most of the five retreatants in the community were men who were there for two months only. However, Friars could remain in the *Solitudine* for longer periods and even for years. Besides the retreatants, there was a Superior (*Presidente*) with a gatekeeper and a cook (the latter a Tertiary). There were also cells for religious of other orders who might want to come there to renew their fervor.

There is an obvious resemblance between the *Solitudine* and the Carmelite "Desert." It is a place of temporary eremitical retreat to which one withdraws



in order to renew the spirit of prayer and fervor and from which one returns to the work of preaching with a more perfect charity and a message of more convincing hope. The emphasis is on the fact that in solitary prayer and meditation one gets deeper into the root of things, comes to see oneself more clearly as one is in the eyes of God, realizes more perfectly the real nature of one's need of grace and for the Holy Spirit, and comes to a more ardent love of Jesus crucified. With all this one is normally opened to the world of others and made ready for the more complete gift of self to the work of saving souls.

However, both the *Ritiri* and the *Solitudini* came under very heavy criticism. First they seemed to create a division within the Order. Second it could be asked whether their spirit was too formal and rigorous to be called authentically Franciscan. It is certainly true that the rather forbidding austerity of the *Solitudine* might be considered a little alien to the primitive Franciscan spirit of simplicity and evangelical freedom. The severe regulations contrast with the warm and tender spirit of St. Francis's statute for hermits. But the solitary convents evidently had the effect that St. Leonard desired, and the preaching of the Saint when he emerged from his solitude was said to be characterized by a great tenderness which, instead of frightening sinners; encouraged and strengthened them.

This very brief outline suggests a few conclusions. The eremitical spirit has always had a place in the Franciscan life, but it is not the spirit of monasticism or of total, definitive separation from the world. The eremitism of St. Francis and his followers is deeply evangelical and remains always open to the world, while recognizing the need to maintain a certain distance and perspective, a freedom that keeps one from being submerged in active cares and devoured by the claims of exhausting work.

In all forms of the religious life we are asking ourselves today whether the accepted methods of renewing our fervor are quite adequate to present day needs. Certainly the prescribed eight-day retreat has its value. But the new generation is asking itself seriously whether this rather formalistic exercise really produces any lasting fruit. Is it simply a tightening of nuts and bolts on machinery which is obsolete? Modern religious who feel the need of silence generally seek it not merely for the purpose of self-scrutiny and ascetic castigation, but in order to recuperate spiritual powers which may have been gravely damaged by the noise and rush of a pressurized existence. This silence is not necessarily tight-lipped and absolute—the silence of people pacing the garden with puckered brows ignoring each other—but the tranquillity of necessary leisure in which religious can relax in the peace of a friendly and restful solitude and once again become themselves.

Today more than ever we need to recognize that the gift of solitude is not ordered to the acquisition of strange contemplative powers, but first of all to

the recovery of one's deep self and to the renewal of an authenticity which is twisted out of shape by the pretentious routines of a disordered togetherness. What the world asks of the priest today is that he should be first of all a person who can give himself because he has a self to give. And indeed, we cannot give Christ if we have not found him, and we cannot find him if we cannot find ourselves.

These considerations may be useful to those whose imaginations and hopes are still able to be stirred by the thought of solitude and of its important place in every form of the religious and apostolic life, in every age, especially our own.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>G. G. Meersman, "Eremitismo e predicazione itinerante dei secoli XI e XII," in *L'Eremitismo in Occidente nei Secoli XI e XII*, (Milan, 1965).

<sup>2</sup>Rule of St. Benedict, Ch. 1.

<sup>3</sup>In *The Words of St. Francis*, an anthology compiled and arranged by James Meyer, OFM (Chicago, 1952), 111-113.

<sup>4</sup>For Bl. Giles see Raphael Brown, *Franciscan Mystic, Giles of Assisi* (New York, 1961).

<sup>5</sup>Angelo Cresi, OFM, "S. Leonardo di Porto Maurizio ed i conventi di Ritiro," *Studi Francescani*, 49 (1952): 154ff.

<sup>6</sup>Angelo Cresi, OFM, "S. Leonardo di Porto Maurizio e l'Incontro," *Studi Francescani*, 49 (1952): 176ff.

<sup>7</sup>As quoted by Cresi, "S. Leonardo di Porto Maurizio ed i conventi di Ritiro," 168.



Appeared in *Cord* (Sept. 1987)  
Artist unknown



## A Franciscan Inspires the Jubilee

Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.

### Day of Anger, Day of Wrath

A tremendous sense of doom and desperation accompanied the ending of the first millennium of Christianity. On Christmas Eve in the year 999, the faithful poured into the squares and streets of Rome, sure that the end of the world and Divine Judgment were close at hand. All were singing and praying and imposing severe penances on themselves. High above, the church bells tolled, not for a new year, but for the final one. When the fateful hour of midnight struck, the crowd barely dared to breathe. But the moment passed and the earth did not open to swallow the wretched masses; fire did not rain down from heaven. Then all stirred as if waking from a bad dream. Amid weeping and laughing, friend and stranger embraced. Even enemies exchanged the kiss of peace. The bells of every church began to ring as with a single voice. The fearful moment had passed, and the world could be reborn.<sup>1</sup>

### New Attitudes

One thousand years later some attitudes have changed. On New Years Eve 1999 most of the world was witnessing the *commencement* of the third millennium, rather than the demise of the second. Fear of the Last Judgment had paled before the dread of computer glitches. Most people prayed only for deliverance from traffic jams while on their way to this or that end-of-the-year party.

Not everyone living beyond the threshold of the new millennium understood this significant event as being sacred. Most readers of this journal, however, could at least appreciate the calculated passing of time as something more

than the welcoming of a new year. And yet, after two thousand years of patient or anxious waiting for the Second Coming, Franciscans can also admit that somewhere along the way we too exchanged our cups of wrath for glasses of champagne.

As the Year of Jubilee began, the simultaneous opening of the Holy Doors of the patriarchal basilicas of Rome and the designated Holy Doors in our own local dioceses all over the world renewed our belief in an Advent God, a "prodigal" Father, one who is truly imminent and "waiting in hope" for *our* return. We have come to appreciate that, while God is a judge, He is also merciful.

St. Francis realized the gift of unmerited mercy and pardon at Poggio Bustone when he received a vision of Christ assuring him of heaven. At that moment Francis's scrupulous medieval sense of unworthiness was transformed into such an uncontrollable joyfulness that G. K. Chesterton could later write: "The stars which passed above that gaunt and wasted corpse . . . had for once . . . looked down upon a happy man."<sup>2</sup>

That same joyfulness in the face of God's mercy has transcended the ages, has transcended even the creeds and personalities of modern day journalists. *Time* magazine listed St. Francis as one of the ten most influential people of the second millennium.<sup>3</sup> And not only that, but this same list includes Columbus, Gutenberg, Michelangelo, Galileo, and Mozart—all personally influenced by later sons of St. Francis (the first four were Secular Franciscans).<sup>4</sup>

Most non-Franciscans would scoff at the thought that somehow Francis and his followers had something to do with "The Great Pardon" or "The Great Jubilee." But in fact there is evidence that Franciscans played a role in the development of this observance.

Francis was assured of pardon at Poggio Bustone in 1209. How could someone like Francis be satisfied with his own assurance of heaven without seeking the same assurance of mercy and peace for others? Thus he was emboldened to request an indulgence to be attached to the Portiuncula, a request which was granted in 1216. And how could the followers of Francis not seek a variety of means by which each generation could be assured of the same incredible gift of pardon?

### A Franciscan Jubilee

In a brief article in *Assisi Mia* regarding tourism in the new millennium, PierMaurizio della Porta reminded his readers that it was a friar, Blessed Andrew of the Counts of Segni, who actually inspired the Christian Jubilee. Friar Andrew was the uncle of Pope Boniface VIII, the first pope to proclaim a Year of Favor in order to calm the terrified masses who had marched on Rome in December 1299.<sup>5</sup>

Supporting this surprising revelation and in preparation for the Jubilee of 1950, the *Osservatore Romano* cited a conference offered at the Franciscan College of Rome, the Antonianum, by Professor Piero Chiminelli.<sup>6</sup> The title of the address was "The Holy Year and Franciscanism." Chiminelli believed that St. Francis and his movement had prepared the climate of penance and pardon that allowed for the calling of the first Christian Jubilee in 1300. The *Osservatore Romano* confirmed that many articles from its own publication recounted recent studies that clearly pointed to Friar Andrew as the inspirer of the Great Jubilee. Chiminelli was also proud to point out that the three popes in the first half of the twentieth century who celebrated jubilees also happened to be Secular Franciscans: Leo XIII in 1900, Pius XI in 1925, and Pius XII in 1950.

### Blessed Andrew of the Counts of Segni

Born at Anagni, a short distance from Rome, Friar Andrew was blood related to several medieval popes who were closely associated with the Franciscan movement. Innocent III and Gregory IX were his ancestors from a century earlier. He himself was the nephew of Alexander IV and the uncle of Boniface VIII. And further down the family tree, in the early eighteenth century, another son of this noble family, Pope Innocent XIII, solemnly confirmed the uninterrupted devotion of the faithful toward this grand uncle of his.

Though raised in a family which was busy about the business of the world, Andrew instead sought the life of a poor and obscure friar. But solitude was not his for long. When his uncle assumed the papal throne as Alexander IV, Andrew was offered the cardinal's hat, which he refused. Later, however, Andrew's nephew, Pope Boniface VIII, would not take "no" for an answer. Andrew probably never wore the princely robes. Boniface, deeply edified by his uncle's humility, stated that if Andrew should die during his pontificate, he would personally canonize him as an example to other prelates.<sup>7</sup>

Preferring a hermit's cave to the trappings of court life, Andrew tried to remain far from Rome. But his desire for obscurity soon gave way to the demands of the human family. Andrew was summoned to Rome to help advise the pope about what to do with the pilgrims who were suddenly pouring into the city. The threat of the Final Judgment loomed once again as the century drew to a close. In 1299 there was particular unrest. People came from all over begging the pope to give them a blessing before the end of the century. Boniface did not know what to do with the crowds.

While he too stood on the threshold of the End Time, Friar Andrew was mindful of his own failings as part of sinful humanity. He searched the Scriptures for a precedent. He came upon the practice of the sabbatical and jubilee years of ancient Israel. According to the law as prescribed in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, these years were associated with liberation and pardon. Arthur

Waskow writes:

Among all biblical traditions, Leviticus 25:8-23 is perhaps the most remarkable programmatic assertion of empathy for both the earth and all human beings. The passage describes three crucial intertwined expressions of love: the redistribution of wealth, the protection of the earth, and the celebration of community.<sup>8</sup>

### Love and Forgiveness

While Andrew groped for a means of universal release from the bondage of guilt and sin, he also turned to the New Testament. In the Middle Ages the highest aspiration of civilized people was the pursuit of love, or at least the ideal of love as mirrored in the mystery of Christ's spousal relationship with the Church. Christ, however, is often depicted as a rejected lover, bent low by suffering and by humanity's infidelity. Feeling himself undeserving of kindness, love, or pity, Andrew could not comprehend Christ's extravagant response of unmerited forgiveness. Eventually he could only stand quietly in awe of Christ, the faithful bridegroom. He realized that Christ's pardon from the cross was the authentic and extreme way of expressing the lengths to which Divine Love will go in seeking even the most unworthy paramour. No doubt Andrew would have agreed with his contemporary, the friar and poet, Jacopone da Todi, that truly "God is crazy with love for the human person."<sup>9</sup>

No historian would deny that Pope Boniface VIII had his ups and downs with the intrigue of the noble families of Rome, not to mention the Franciscan Spirituals who accused him of usurping the throne of Pope Celestine V. But this fearful time, the turn of the century when Divine Judgment felt imminent, was a moment of grace for Boniface. The eyes and hearts of the entire Christian world turned toward Rome and to the occupant of Peter's chair. And so, on February 22, 1300, after two months of deliberations and organizing, Boniface, having been influenced in this decision by Friar Andrew, proclaimed the first Christian Jubilee.

Friar Andrew was a practitioner of what he initiated, and thus he gifts us across the centuries with his model life. He was a man of penance who finally found peace in the Great Pardon. Once he had experienced the joy and gratitude that come from being eternally released from the debt of sin, Friar Andrew could once more respond to God with the sentiments of his confrere, Jacopone da Todi: "[Christ is] love beyond all telling, Goodness beyond imagining, Light of infinite intensity, [Christ] glows in my heart."<sup>10</sup>

Friar Andrew di Segni died on February 1, 1302. The faithful venerated his memory immediately as "Blessed" without any need for formal pronouncement.

- <sup>1</sup>Richard Erdoes, "The Year 1000," *Psychology Today* (May 1999): 45.
- <sup>2</sup>G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Francis of Assisi* (New York: Image Books, 1957), 82.
- <sup>3</sup>"Beyond the Year 2000," *Time*, special edition (Fall 1992): 25. The remaining four influential people were: Martin Luther, William Shakespeare, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.
- <sup>4</sup>Angelus La Fleur, OFMConv., "Franciscans on Stamps," *Topical Time* (Jan-Feb, 1963): 35.
- <sup>5</sup>PierMaurizio della Porta, "Il Giubileo, il Perdono e i Souvenir," *Assisi Mia*, n.18 (1999): 41.
- <sup>6</sup>"Alla Cattedra Franciscana," (no author), *Osservatore Romano* (Dec. 31, 1949): 3.
- <sup>7</sup>Marion Habig, OFM, *Franciscan Book of Saints* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979), 124.
- <sup>8</sup>Arthur Waskow, "Proclaim Jubilee!" *The Other Side* (Sept., 1998): n. p. (pamphlet).
- <sup>9</sup>Alvaro Caciotti, OFM, "The Cross: Where According to Jacopone da Todi, God and Humanity are Defined," trans., Miceal O'Neill, *Greyfriars Review*, 9.2 (1995): 220.
- <sup>10</sup>Caciotti, 193. (Jacopone da Todi, 91:1-4).

## New Bona Magazine Published

Periodical, Scheduled To Appear Monthly, Reviews Franciscan Spirituality.

The first number of a new Franciscan magazine, *The Cord*, has made its initial bow on the campus of St. Bonaventure University, according to an announcement today by the Rev. Irenaeus Herscher, O. F. M., U. S. C. A., who is in charge of the magazine.

Scheduled to appear monthly, the periodical is published at St. Bonaventure by the Franciscan Institute, under auspices of the Franciscan Educational Conference.

Under editorship of the Rev. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M., and with the assistance of Sister M. Frances, S. M. I. C., of Paterson, N. J., the new magazine is expected to fill a long-felt need for a review that would be devoted exclusively to Franciscan spirituality.

According to Fr. Irenaeus, "Each number of *The Cord* will contain: a monthly conference on a spiritual subject; a biography of some Franciscan saint; and explanation of the rule of St. Francis."

A brief translation from the works of select Franciscan spiritual writers; an occasional book review, and a department devoted to 'Franciscan Briefs' or items of interest to followers and friends of St. Francis.

Although designed exclusively for members of the Franciscan family, which numbers into the thousands in the United States alone, the new magazine is being published "to aid in effecting among the children and friends of the Proverbia of Assisi a deeper knowledge of, and more ardent love for the Franciscan Way of Life." In a word, *The Cord* hopes to present Franciscan spirituality, as explained by experts, in simple easy-day language.

## New Magazine Issued At St. Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure, Nov. 23.—The first number of a new Franciscan magazine entitled *The Cord*, has made its bow on the campus of St. Bonaventure University, according to an announcement made by Father Irenaeus Herscher, OFM, librarian.

Scheduled to appear monthly, this periodical is published at St. Bonaventure by the Franciscan Institute, under the auspices of the Franciscan Educational Conference. Under the editorship of Father Philotheus Boehner, OFM, and with the assistance of Sister M. Frances, SMIC, of Paterson, N. J., the new magazine is expected to fill a long-felt need for a review that would be devoted exclusively to Franciscan spirituality.

*Buffalo Courier Express*  
Nov. 24, 1950

## The Cord is born!

November, 1950

## A Biographical Profile

### Waldemar Augustin Roebuck, SFO

Few Catholic laypersons have worked as diligently in the cause of justice and peace as Waldemar Augustin Roebuck has done during the past five decades. Born on January 30, 1913, in Christiansted, St. Croix, the Virgin Islands, Wally, as he was affectionately known, attended the local St. Mary's Parochial School where he was an altar server until his graduation. When he was fifteen, his mother sent him to New York City to continue his education. He attended the Harlem Evening High School for Men but, because of the hard times of the depression, was unable to attend either Fordham University or Columbia University. Fortunately, he obtained a position with the United States Post Office. With this security, he was able to marry and start a family. In spite of his personal responsibilities, Wally immediately began his career of service to humanity and the Church. Beginning in All Saints Parish during the 1940s, he became involved with Friendship House, the Christian Family Movement, and the Catholic Interracial Council. He served as President of the parish Holy Name Society and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

During the 1950s he organized the first Boy Scout Troop in the parish. He also organized a day of Prayer, Church Unity, and Social Justice which attracted more than a thousand participants of all faiths, and a one-day seminar, Fifty Years of Catholic Education in Harlem, for all the parishes and their teaching staffs. On the latter occasion, his research revealed that the seven Harlem parochial schools had educated more than fifty thousand children during the fifty years being celebrated.

Wally began his association with the Franciscans by serving the daily 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Capuchin Franciscan Church near the Main Post Office. He deepened this association in 1951 by joining the Third Order of St. Francis (now the Secular Franciscan Order) at St. Francis of Assisi Church on West 31st Street. He was Prefect of his fraternity and a representative to the North American Federation of the Order. In 1967 he was elected President of the Federation. His duties involved travel to Rome, where he had an audience with Pope Paul VI, and to First and Third Order Franciscan communities throughout the world as the Third Order revised its Rule and constitutions. In

recent years he was an active member and formation director of the St. Stephen of Hungary Fraternity of the Secular Franciscans. In 1988, Wally was received as an affiliate member of Holy Name Province of the Friars Minor, an honor which he cherished above all his other achievements.

Imbued with Franciscan ideals of humble justice, communal peace, and divine joy, Wally energetically set out on the path of interracial understanding and peace. He served as a delegate to the National Conference of Race and Religion. In this capacity, he traveled throughout the United States speaking to Catholic groups about racism and the effect it had on the Church. During the riots in Harlem, Wally organized a group to distribute the Peace Prayer of St. Francis on the streets and in the churches. As a representative to the Third Order North American Federation in 1963, he arranged for the Annual Peace Award of the Third Order to be conferred on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his acceptance speech, Dr. King observed that the Award was the first time he had been honored by the Catholic Church. However, because of racism, the Archdiocese of New York did not recognize this event.

As a member of the Catholic Interracial Council, Wally had the pleasure of working closely with Rev. John LaFarge, S.J. The Council later generated the Office of Black Ministry for the Archdiocese of New York. At the time of his death, Wally had served several years as the Director of the Pierre Toussaint Guild which John Cardinal O'Connor had established to support the canonization cause of the now Venerable Pierre Toussaint and to promote the unity of the Harlem and Bronx Catholic Communities. A highly successful Gospel music concert was a recent major accomplishment of Wally as Director of the Guild. He also served on the Board of Directors of the oldest retreat house in the United States, Mount Manresa, where he personally participated in thirty retreats over the past forty years. The Mount awarded him two honorary citations for his committed service.

In the public sector, Wally worked with Rev. Henry Brown, former pastor of St. Gregory the Great Parish, where Wally had been a lector. Together they joined the struggle to have the Stryckers Bay Apartments built. Upon their completion, Wally became a resident and served as the apartments' first President. Wally worked with the New York State Commission on Human Rights to set up the first and only conference on race relations and Catholic education on Staten Island. Among the many honors given in recognition of Wally's untiring service were: the St. Bonaventure University Tertiary Achievement Award, the Pierre Toussaint Medallion, the Archdiocese of New York Busiest Layman Citation, and a Doctor of Humane Letters from St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of St. Bonaventure University from 1991 to 1992. In 1994, the Vatican conferred on him the Pontifical Order of a Knight of St. Gregory the Great, and in 1998,

awarded him the Ecclesiastical Order of a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

After a lingering illness, Wally passed away on All Saints' Day, November 1, 1999. Wally is survived by his wife, Dolores; his sons, Waldemar and Gerard; his daughter, Patricia; six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Well done, Wally, you have been a good and faithful servant of the Lord!

---

## Contributors

**Anthony Carrozzo, OFM**, is a friar of Holy Name Province, New York. He served as provincial for nine years and is now Vice-President for the Franciscan Charism at St. Bonaventure University, New York. He teaches courses in the School of Franciscan Studies and has published *Refounding in the Franciscan Tradition*, essays on the province's refounding experience (The Franciscan Institute, 1994). He has recently edited *In Solitude and Dialogue: Contemporary Franciscans Theologize* (The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

**Joseph Chinnici, OFM**, is a friar of the St. Barbara Province, Oakland, California. He earned his D.Phil. in ecclesiastical history from Oxford University and presently teaches history at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley. He is author of *Living Stones: the History and Structure of Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States* (Macmillan, 1988). He also teaches occasionally at the Franciscan Institute and is a popular lecturer on the Franciscan tradition.

**Anthony LoGalbo, OFM**, is a friar of Holy Name Province, New York. He served for a number of years as librarian and Assistant Director of Post-novitiate Formation at Holy Name College in Washington, DC, after which he worked as a pastoral minister in Brazil (1983-1986). He has been librarian for the Franciscan Institute collection at St. Bonaventure University since 1988 and teaches courses in spiritual direction and research methodology.

**Thomas Merton, OCSO**, taught English at St. Bonaventure University, New York, from 1939-1941, when he became a Trappist monk at Gethsemani, Kentucky. He had earned both a B.A. and M.A. in English at Columbia University. As a monk, he was a prolific writer, producing over fifty books and dozens of articles and poems. In 1965 he retired to a hermitage at Gethsemani and died in 1968 during a trip to Bangkok, Thailand, at the age of fifty-three.

**Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.**, is a friar of the St. Anthony Province. He ministered in Italy from 1990-1998, serving as a retreat and vocation director at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi and as archivist at the General Curia in Rome. He is presently a team member for the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program and an editorial board member for *The Cord*. He is stationed at Marytown in Libertyville, Illinois, a Marian shrine and retreat center.

## Book Reviews

Charles Carpenter. *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999. 222pp.

Recently there has been a plethora of worthy books published on St. Bonaventure. For me none quite matches the well-documented and quite disturbing *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure* by Charles Carpenter. Every page is filled with footnotes that point to Bonaventure's writings in defense of Carpenter's thesis. It is disturbing, not because of the way in which Carpenter handles the material but because of the questions that are raised by his thesis in the areas of Franciscan formation, the study of theology by Franciscans, and the meaning of a Franciscan education.

Three intrinsically united and well-established premises support the work's thesis that the study of theology is a road to holiness for St. Bonaventure. First, there is a fundamental relationship between holiness and wisdom. This is true primarily because Christ, after whom all that exists is patterned, is the Wisdom of God. The more one conforms to Christ Jesus, the more one possesses wisdom, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. To be Christlike is to be wise. So St. Francis, while unlearned, was filled with that

Wisdom itself which surpasses both knowledge and understanding. Carpenter makes his point through a judicious use of texts from the *Hexameron* and *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*.

Having firmly established this point, Carpenter moves to his second premise which argues that "theology 'properly and principally is wisdom'" (p. 73). Brilliantly using the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, he provides ample evidence that Bonaventure is concerned with presenting "a perfect six-step approach that would be a privileged spiritual way to God" (pp. 71-72). Interestingly enough, Hayes chooses the *Itinerarium* for the structure of his book, indicating that "in the remarkable text of *The Journey of the Soul into God* we find the most synthetic statement of the Seraphic Doctor's program. It involves both the pursuit of the mind and the pursuit of the heart, both knowledge and wisdom, both the life of the intellect and the life of the mystic" (pp. 42-43). A reader interested in further pursuing the *Itinerarium*, might profit from Denis Turner's "Hierarchy Interiorized: Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*" in *The Darkness of God* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). This engaging study supports Carpenter's premise.

Carpenter's final premise to illustrate his thesis is that "Bonaventure has made of theology a paradigm of the illuminative way" (p. 126). He further comments that "even though theology is not the exclusive context in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate, Saint Bonaventure could esteem theology as the most excellent way in which to live under the illumination of these gifts" (p. 127). These gifts "predominate in the illuminative way" (p. 131). Carpenter rightly cautions that the three ways of Bonaventure should be seen as "parallel" ways. While teaching a course on *De Triplice Via*, one of my students used the image of a three-lane highway to describe Bonaventure's concept. It is a solid image, for one can cautiously yet quickly change lanes, continuing to journey along the same road in the same direction.

Having set forth his thesis and premises carefully and exhaustively, Carpenter concludes that "Bonaventure's particular contribution is to make of theological study a spiritual life, by considering theology as that particular operation of the gift of wisdom which raises man's study to the level of contemplation" (pp. 172 - 173).

Carpenter's work deals with the Bonaventurian vision, but not with the repercussions or contemporary implications of such a vision. However, the author does suggest three areas for considering such repercussions. First, he suggests that theological study must be seen as an experience of Scripture. Such an observation is certainly in line with the thinking of St. Francis of Assisi who opens the Rule of 1223 with the words: "The life and rule of the friars minor is this: to live the holy Gospel." The study of the Gospel, which is both intellectual and affective, assists a person in developing a personal relationship with the Word Himself. Secondly, Carpenter deals with the need for prayer while studying theology. His observations are sane and sensible. It seems to me that it is impossible to study Christology within this Bonaventurian perspective without prayerfully grappling with the christological question: "Who do people say that I am?" along with the more personal "And you, who do you say that I am?" Studying Christology with such a contemplative consciousness will indeed make one wise. Lastly, Carpenter, utilizing the masterpiece *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*, argues that "knowledge without leisure cannot escape the fate of all reasoning without contemplation—rationalism, utilitarianism, and even skepticism—traits that enervate intellectual development" (p. 188). While reading this section, I was reminded of the wonderful words of William Kennedy on the occasion of the dedication of the new library at Siena College: "Robert Louis Stevenson said that mankind was never so happily inspired as when it made a cathedral, but I would add the library to that thought; for the cathedral is encompassed in the library, if in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, then doesn't it follow that, long before the first cathedral, God owned the first library card?"

I closed the book exhilarated and saddened. Exhilarated because Carpenter presents an engaging and challenging perspective of the role of theology in the spiritual development of the person, particularly the Franciscan person; saddened because I wonder if this vision can be implemented or even discussed in our times. Theology today has become rationalistic and pragmatic. Pope John Paul II's recent encyclical *Faith and Reason* has even contributed to this, as did Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* at the end of the last century. We are no longer concerned about faith seeking understanding but rather about faith seeking reason. In the academic world it would be tantamount to heresy even to suggest Bonaventure's vision. And in the Franciscan world, theology is often seen as a distraction to Franciscan formation rather than an asset to it. We fail to perceive the formative value of theology. Worse still, we act upon this failure so that in some provinces today theological studies are put off until after initial Franciscan formation.

Carpenter issues a challenge: "After studying Bonaventure's approach I can only conjecture what this may imply in a contemporary setting, but would suggest that others, through their own experiences, make up for the deficiencies I meet with in speaking of something so enveloped in mystery" (p. 176). I would like to accept, partially and briefly, that challenge here by an appeal not only to my experience but also to an insight provided by Louis Mackey in "Redemptive Subversions: the Christian Discourse of St. Bonaventure," *Peregrinations of the Word* (University of Michigan Press, 1997). Mackey appeals to a triple way of mythologizing, demythologizing, and remythologizing in his investigation of the theological approach of St. Bonaventure, observing that "Bonaventure determined to reverse . . . the movement from myth (Scripture) to ironic rationality (Philosophy): remythologizing *reductio* that would counter the demythologizing reduction of the philosophers" (p. 135).

The Franciscan heritage is a story tradition. Franciscan narratives are written from a variety of perspectives with an even greater variety of emphases and polemics. In spite of their diversity, they unite the Franciscan family and bind it together. It is a common communal experience that usually begins with "Remember when . . ." and leads to "No, that's not how it happened. . . ." So we have different accounts of the same story. Eventually, through argument and interpretation, we arrive at the kernel of truth in the story, no matter the differences in the recounting of the narrative. This is the process of demythologization—the accounts are interpreted, the truth is evident and is expressed in rules and doctrine. However, rules and doctrine do not motivate so the stories now need to be retold in new and vibrant ways that appeal to contemporary people.

This is an appropriate approach to Franciscan formation and education. The stories must be passed on, the kernel of truth must be discovered, and

new renditions must be presented to motivate us. Yet a contemporary Franciscan problem is that, while we do well in recounting the stories and are superb at explaining them rationally, we rarely even try to remythologize. We need, then, to turn to artists, poets, novelists, and filmmakers to help us in this process of retrieving and expressing anew the beauty of the truth discovered. Permit me to use an example.

Recently I was fortunate to see the screening of a forthcoming film *The Big Kahuna* which is based on Roger Rueff's play *The Hospitality Suite*. The story is fairly simple and straightforward. Three salesmen Phil (Danny DeVito), Larry (Kevin Spacey) and Bob (Peter Facinelli) rent a hotel suite where they will host a reception for prospective customers. Bob, the youngest of the group and the newest salesman, deals with life by recounting Jesus stories and quoting St. Paul. Larry is the pragmatist who wants to catch "the big kahuna," cashing in on a major sales. And Phil is the aging salesman who is asking God questions in a much deeper and more introspective way than Bob. What slowly becomes apparent is that these are not three men at all but they represent three stages in life's journey: telling someone else's stories, analyzing the accounts to attain results, and finally struggling to regain life's myths. The result, as Phil very eloquently and passionately recounts near the end of the film, is *character*, that is, a wisdom that comes through making these stories, lessons, and experiences part of one's identity. This film suggests how the Franciscan formative, theological process might be remythologized, might speak to us, enlighten our experience, and motivate us to search our hearts for the answers that reside deeply within us. It is this process that Carpenter eruditely explains in his book.

At times Carpenter reveals a more conservative agenda than I am comfortable with. He often uses non-inclusive language. And he has a curious use of the word "pretends." But, these concerns aside, I believe that Franciscan formators, theologians, and educators would do well to read, study, and discuss this book and its implications for formation, theology, and education in a Franciscan setting. Carpenter has made an extraordinary contribution to Franciscan life. I hope we will not ignore it.

Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

"May our Holy Father Francis obtain for us the grace always to live in his spirit, so that the *Vita Evangelii*, the life of the Holy Gospel, may never cease to be our ideal, that we may be always youthful and radical like him in the pursuit of this idea, that daily we may start anew, as he himself did and exhorted his brethren to do: 'Brothers, let us start today, for up to now we have made but little progress.'"

From the first "Monthly Conference" by Philotheus Boehner, OFM, *The Cord* (November, 1950): 7.

Robson, Michael. *St. Francis of Assisi: The Legend and the Life*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1997. 294 pp.

The bibliography of books on Francis of Assisi is quite large and each year seems to produce numerous reflections and meditations from the scholarly to the popular about the saint. Robson's biography follows a more thematic rather than chronological approach. Here, the Poverello's life unfolds primarily through the major personages and ideals which figured prominently in his life. In the Introduction, Robson delineates his approach: "The chapters on the key people in Francis's life point to the different dimensions of his personality and teaching revealing the influences on his life and fraternity." The book is composed of nine chapters, with the first seven devoted to Peter Bernardone, Bishop Guido, Pope Innocent III, Cardinal Ugolino (later Pope Gregory IX), Lady Poverty, St. Anthony of Padua and St. Clare. The last two chapters deal topically with the public ministry of Francis and the early friars, and the death, canonization, and legacy of Francis.

Robson carefully and objectively constructs his narrative solidly based on the early classical Franciscan sources. His secondary sources reveal a concentration upon mostly Anglo-American scholars and a few standard Italian sources. He elaborates with great care the solicitude of the institutional Church in the persons of Guido, Innocent III, and Ugolino toward Francis and his friars, even though, at times, they misunderstood the desires of Francis. Without lengthy excursions into the various controversies surrounding Francis and the early Franciscan movement, the author alludes to differing and opposing interpretations of the observance of poverty, the role of studies in the Order, the internal struggles within the fraternity, and the external tensions with other mendicants and clergy.

Each chapter concludes with a concise summary of the major points treated in that chapter. The book includes a rather extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Bibliographical citations are sometimes incomplete, often lacking publishers' names.

Robson's tone is scholarly without being pedantic, reverent without being pietistic or romantic. He tries to give equal consideration to various viewpoints without any particular axe to grind or specific agenda to promote.

This work would appeal to those who have passed the introductory stage and are looking for something more substantial with a view to seeing how Francis gradually developed his vision within the milieu of his time. Professional Franciscan scholars and those who manage to keep abreast of things Franciscan may not find too much of concern or interest to them. I would recommend this book as suitable for any library collection, especially since books in this middle range are scarce.

Anthony J. LoGalbo, OFM

#### Notice to all *Cord* subscribers:

All *Cord* subscriptions end in December of each year, unless you have a standing order or have ordered *The Cord* for more than one year.

#### IT IS NOW TIME TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.

We continue to offer *The Cord* for the low price of \$20.00 a year for six issues.

**As *The Cord* enters its 50th year of publication  
we know you will not want to miss even one issue.**

**Please renew your subscription now.**

Send your order to:

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Ph.: 716-375-2105 FAX: 716-375-2156

(And please consider giving a gift subscription to our sisters and brothers who cannot afford their own.)

### THE FRANCISCAN THIRD ORDER REGULAR IN THE UNITED STATES: ORIGINS, EARLY YEARS, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

by Margaret Slowick, OSF

This book is the thesis work of Margaret Slowick, OSF, of Tiffin, Ohio. It offers for the first time a chronology of the founding of all existing congregations of the Third Order Regular in the United States, a brief narrative describing the beginnings of each foundation, and some recent developments.

*"Readers . . . will find themselves overwhelmed at the magnitude of the obstacles overcome, the persistent hope in the face of bigotry and rejection, the multitude of acts of heroic service that came to define many of the congregations that survived their first years. . . . Religious who were unsinkable and insatiable emerge from this overview to baunt us as we struggle with questions of vision and viability in the century to come" (Margaret Carney, OSF, Foreword).*

**This is a "must" resource for  
all Third Order Regular archives and libraries.**

129 pp. +xii, paper

\$15.00

plus shipping and handling

Order from:

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Ph.: 716-375-2105 FAX: 716-375-2156



**INSTITUTE FOR**  
**CONTEMPORARY**  
**FRANCISCAN LIFE**

A distance learning program  
responding to the desire of Secular Franciscans  
to learn more about their unique identity as Franciscans  
in the contemporary world.

*offered through:*



OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

*currently offering:*

FRAN 201 Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World  
FRAN 202 The Franciscans: A Family History  
FRAN 204 Franciscan Spirituality

*Currently in preparation:*

Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings  
Servant Leadership for Secular Franciscans  
The Franciscan Sources

*proposed courses include:*

Christian and Franciscan Tradition  
Writings of Francis of Assisi  
Franciscan Ministry: Challenge and Response  
Integrative Project

*For more information contact:*

Saint Francis College Office of Continuing Education  
Loretto, PA 15940-0600 ~ phone: (814) 472-3219 ~ e-mail: ICFL@SFCPA.EDU



Enter the Center

a Franciscan place of peace

***Franciscan Art  
and Spirituality Retreat***

Sunday, June 25 - Saturday, July 1, 2000

Retreatants will have the opportunity to come to a deeper awareness of God  
through art and music as windows into the spirituality of Francis and Clare.

*Reflections will be followed by sessions of prayer using art and music  
as the medium for grace-filled insights.*

No artistic or musical talent is needed—  
just a heart open to the experience of the incarnate God!

**Leaders:** **Kay Francis Berger, OSF**, internationally known Franciscan  
artist and sculptor.

**Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF**, Franciscan scholar, author,  
retreat leader.

**Tod Lavery, OFM**, team member of The Franciscan Pilgrimage  
Programs, retreat director.

**WoodSong Ministries, Kathleen Hook, OSF and Joy Sloan**,  
composers, facilitators of the spirituality of music.

***40-Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat***

November 11-December 21, 2000

Immerse yourself in an experience with the Incarnate Son of God in the length  
of time and the type of solitude Francis himself experienced.

Come to the woods and spend the sacred time of 40 days to prepare for the great  
celebration of the Incarnation in one of our hermitages: San Damiano, Greccio,  
La Foresta, or in the house of solitude, Poverello.

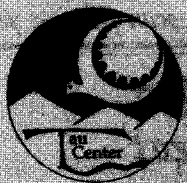
*The retreat is thoroughly and uniquely Franciscan. It is based on the Third Order Rule  
with elements faithful to Francis's Rule for Hermitages. It was designed by Mary Eliza-  
beth Imler, OSF, as part of her Master's thesis at St. Bonaventure University, titled:  
"The Franciscan Solitude Experience: The Pilgrim's Journal."*

Costs range from \$1375-\$1775 depending on the type of hermitage space. Included are all  
meals, materials, direction, and companion sessions. **Registration deadline: May, 2000.**

For brochure, contact:

Portiuncula Center for Prayer  
9263 W. St. Francis Road  
Frankfort, IL 60423-8330  
Ph: 815-464-3880 Fax: 815-469-4880





## TAU CENTER

A Place for Franciscans  
to nurture and  
strengthen their charism.

### FRANCIS OF ASSISI: THE EARLY DOCUMENTS

March 3 (7:00 pm) - March 5 (1:00 pm), 2000

Presenter: Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap.

This workshop will review the methodology used by the editors in presenting a new edition of the sources and will examine in depth selections from *The Saint*, Volume I of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*.

CCost: \$150.00

Registration deadline: February 18

### FRANCISCAN CHALLENGE

May 4 (5:00 pm) - May 8 (10:00 am), 2000

Presenters: Bill Hugo, OFM Cap., Cathy Nelson, Ramona Miller, OSF

The four-day workshop presents the call and the challenge of living the Franciscan way of life. The format integrates lectures, discussion, shared prayer, liturgy, leisure, recreation, creativity, and intercongregational networking.

CCost: \$250.00

Registration deadline: April 26

### A SABBATICAL FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCANS

January 24 - April 24, 2000 January 22-April 16, 2001

A three-month experience of renewal in a community setting for members and friends of the Franciscan family. The study of Franciscan sources, the Franciscan charism, and Third Order history offers intellectual challenge. Wholistic living—nutritious meals, physical fitness opportunities, communal prayer, faith sharing, and leisure—allows participants to integrate their personal development. Hermitage days provide for the contemplative dimension of Franciscan living.

CCost: \$4,600.00

For more information or to register, please contact:

TAU CENTER  
511 Hillcrest Street  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
Tel. (307) 454-2093 FAX (307) 453-0910  
E-mail: osfsyr@eznet.net

## Seventh Annual Central New York Franciscan Experience

sponsored by the  
Sisters of the Third Franciscan Order, Syracuse

### Meeting Francis & Clare in Their Time for All Time

Presenter: Murray Bodo, OFM

Friday, March 3, 2000 (7:30-9:00 p.m.)

*An Evening of Poetry*

Saturday, March 4, 2000 (9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)

*Francis Visits Our World*

*Francis & Clare in the Twenty-First Century*

*Clare & Healing*

Place: The Franciscan Center, 2500 Grant Boulevard, Syracuse NY 13208

Fee: \$20 per person/\$30 per couple (by February 10)

\$25 per person/\$35 per couple (after February 10)

For brochure contact: Sisters of St. Francis (address above)

Phone: (315) 425-0115 or email osfsyr@eznet.net

## Celebrating the Life and Holiness of Mother Marianne of Molokai

Two beautiful, factual books  
about the legacy of Mother Marianne Cope, OSF

### Mother Marianne of Molokai: Heroic Woman of Hawaii'i

A beautifully illustrated full-color children's book introduces Mother Marianne as a child, as a Sister of Saint Francis, and as the heroic "mother" who brought love into the lives of so many.

\$8.95 per copy.

### Valiant Woman of Hawaii'i: Mother Marianne of Molokai

A visually appealing, inspirational, factual account of the life of Mother Marianne. Her spirit, Franciscan vocation, and devotion to patients with Hansen's Disease are detailed in words and pictures.

\$14.95 per copy.

Send order and payment to:

Sisters of Saint Francis c/o Mother Marianne Books  
2500 Grant Boulevard  
Syracuse, NY 13208-1797  
or call 315-425-1507  
E-mail: osfsyr@eznet.net

Please include priority  
shipping of \$3.20 for  
up to four books.  
NY State Residents include  
7% sales tax.

From The Franciscan Institute, New York

The Franciscan Institute

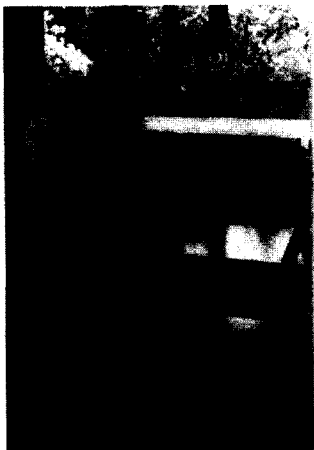
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

Presenters to date: Mary Matis, FMM; John Kiesler, OFM;  
Dan Riley, OFM; Margaret Carney, OSF; Thomas Blow, OFM;  
Edward Coughlin, OFM

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Tel. 716-375-2156 Fax 716-375-2156

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Tel. 716-375-2156 Fax 716-375-2156

The Brothers & Sisters of Charity, a Public Association of the Faithful, is a Catholic based community made up of an integrated monastic expression of celibate brothers, celibate sisters, families and singles, and a domestic expression of those who live throughout the world in their own homes. The monastic and domestic expressions exist under one scripture rule, and under the leadership of our founder. The motherhouse of the whole community is the Little Portion Hermitage outside Eureka Springs, Arkansas in the diocese of Little Rock. We are called by God to seek this life through the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. We also hold dear substantial silence, substantial solitude, prayer and penance. We



Prayer



Profession

live in an hour of history when God calls us to respond radically to His gospel call to evangelical life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Love is the primary charism of the community. Truth is our surest guide. Integration is the expression of this love guided by truth. We are, as an integrated monastic community, religious from a Christian base, Christian from a Catholic base and monastic from a Franciscan base. As such, we consider Franciscanism our mother but we are a child that is unique and new. We also integrate the charismatic and contemplative, solitude and community, contemplative prayer and apostolic activity. Are you one who will take up the call? Will you give your whole self to Jesus? For more information about the Brothers & Sisters of Charity, please write:

The Brothers & Sisters of Charity  
Vocations Director  
350 CR 248  
Berryville AR 72616

2000

## FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

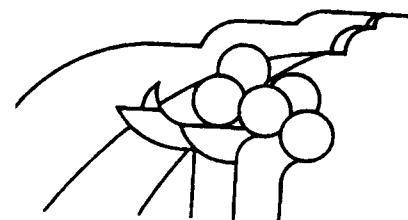
2000

in  
Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats

**All sessions in 2000 will be conducted  
for Franciscans in the Far East and Africa  
to celebrate the Millennium.**

A three-month ministerial and experiential program born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors, parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, missionaries, community leadership, personal renewal.



*For more information contact:*

Tom Speier, ofm; Marilyn Joyce, osf  
St. Francis Extension  
2014 Springdale Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45231  
Phone: (513) 825-0674 Fax: (513) 541-9347



### FRANCISCAN SOLITUDE

April 13-16, 2000  
*André Cirino, OFM*  
 Based on his book  
 Cost: \$225.00

### TRIDUUM RETREAT

April 20-23, 2000  
*J. Lora Dambroski, OSF*  
*Bernard Tickerboof, TOR*  
 Cost: \$150.00

### CONFERENCE RETREAT

June 2-9, 2000  
*Timothy Fitzgerald, CP*  
 Cost: \$275.00

### DIRECTED RETREAT

June 11-17, 2000  
*J. Lora Dambroski, OSF*  
*Malachy Broderick, FSC*  
*Joseph Markalonis, TOR*  
*Bernard Tickerboof, TOR*  
 Cost: \$300.00

For further information, contact:

Mimi DeGregory, Office Manager  
 Franciscan Spirit and Life Center  
 3605 McRoberts Road  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15234  
 412-881-9207; e-mail: FSLCCOM@aol.com

## Franciscan Scripture Calendar 2000 makes a thoughtful, spirit-filled gift

This unique Franciscan calendar, created by the Franciscan Sisters, contains the scripture references for each day of the liturgical year and timely, inspirational words for the new millennium. Franciscan feasts are cited as well as ethnic celebrations in the Catholic community. It folds to a convenient 8½" x 3¾" size.

### Scripture Calendar Prices:

- 1 to 9 - \$4 each
- 10 or more - \$3.50 each

Please include shipping and handling:

- 1 to 4 calendars - \$1
- 5 to 9 calendars - \$2
- 10 or more - \$3

All proceeds  
 support the  
 ministries of the  
 Franciscan Sisters  
 of Little Falls.



To order, call or write:

Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Office of Development  
 116 8th Avenue SE, Little Falls, MN 56345-3597  
 Phone: 320-631-0619 or 320-632-2981 • e-mail: info@fslf.org



## THE FRANCISCAN CENTER



### of the WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE  
 IN A WEEKEND CONFERENCE

## Francis and Clare: New Evidence and New Images

A teaching symposium that will explore Francis and Clare based on new research. Primary emphasis will be given to the first volume of the new *Omnibus: Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*

## May 27 - 28, 2000

Speakers include:

*Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv; Dominic Monti, OFM;*  
*Ingrid Peterson, OSF; Bill Short, OFM*

Registration fee: \$25.00

Conference fee: \$75.00

(Registration forms will be available in spring semester, 2000)

*The Franciscan Center at W TU was created over ten years ago to enrich our gospel ministries with contemporary studies in the Franciscan charism.*

For more information write:

The Franciscan Center of the  
 Washington Theological Union  
 6896 Laurel Street, NW  
 Washington, DC 20012

# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation  
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix  
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor  
Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

To satisfy people's legitimate desire to know the truth about what was described by Alessandro Ramati in his book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, Don Aldo Brunacci claims "it is truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth."

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: franstor@genevaonline.com



## **Franciscan Spiritual Center**

Summer Retreat Offerings 2000

### **Preached Retreat: The Mysteries of the Rosary - The Mysteries of Life**

May 26-June 2

Presenter: Rev. Paul G. Mast

Registration Deadline: May 1 \$310 (\$50 deposit)

### **Directed Retreat July 5-12**

Directors: Clare A. D'Auria, OSF, Frank Doyle, OSA,  
Kathleen Gannon, OSF, Julie McCole, OSF

Registration Deadline: June 15 \$350 (\$50 deposit)

### **Guided Retreat: Jesus' Beatitudes and Our Response July 16-23**

Presenter: Michael Crosby, OFM Cap.

Registration Deadline: June 22 \$325 (\$50 deposit)

### **T'ai Chi Chih Retreat: A Moving Meditation August 2-9**

Presenters: Antonia Cooper, OSF, and Celeste Crine, OSF

Registration Deadline: June 30 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

### **Praying with the Feminine Face of God September 6-13**

Director: Kathryn O'Connell Cleary

Registration Deadline: August 6 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

### **Directed Retreat September 6-13**

Directors: Clare A. D'Auria, OSF, Ellen Duffy, OSF, Beth Flannery, RSM

Registration Deadline: August 6 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

The Franciscan Spiritual Center is situated in the southeast wing of Our Lady of Angels Convent, the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Located about 20 miles south of Philadelphia and just north of the Delaware state line, the Center consists of 21 bedrooms with private bath, 10 bedrooms sharing a common bath, lounge, kitchenette, large meeting space, spiritual direction rooms, prayer room, and a ground-level multipurpose space which houses a second lounge as well as library, listening center, arts and crafts area, and exercise corner. There is an elevator to all levels but a few additional stairs to the multipurpose space and some spiritual direction rooms. The Center is fully climate controlled and handicapped accessible from the outside. Quiet, shaded grounds provide ample space for walking and solitude. Reservations are requested.

For more information on these or other programs or to register, contact:

### **Franciscan Spiritual Center**

609 S. Convent Road  
Aston, PA 19014

Phone: 610-558-6152; Fax: 612-558-6122; E-mail: fsc@osfphila.org

## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events, 2000

### Monday, January 24-Monday, April 24

Sabbatical for Contemporary Franciscans. At Tau Center. (See ad p. 46)

### Sunday, January 30-Friday, February 4

Franciscan Gathering XX: The Gospel Path: Overcoming Our Tolerance. With Rose Margaret Delaney, SFP and Wayne Hellman, OFMConv. Contact Franciscan Center, 3010 Perry Ave., Tampa FL 33603; ph. 813-229-2695; fax 813-228-0748; email: francnt@aol.com.

### Friday, February 18-Saturday, February 19

Introduction to the Enneagram. With JoAnne Haney, OSF and Ramona Miller, OSF. At Tau Center, 511 Hilbert St., Winona, MN 55987; ph. 507-454-2993; fax: 507-453-0910.

### Friday, February 18-Monday, February 21

Franciscan Hermitage Experience. With Helen Budzik, OSF and Ellen Duffy, OSF. Contact Franciscan Spiritual Center, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014; ph. 610-558-6152.

### Friday, February 11-Thursday, February 18

Directed Retreat. With Thomas Hartle, OFM and visiting directors. \$270. At Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Sunday, February 20-Friday, February 25

Conference Retreat for Sisters. With James Gavin, OFMCap. At Franciscan Center, Hastings-on-Hudson (see above).

### Friday, March 3-Saturday, March 4

Seventh Annual Central NY Franciscan Experience. With Murray Bodo, OFM. Syracuse, NY. (See ad p. 47)

### Friday, March 3-Sunday, March 5

Francis of Assisi: Early Documents. With Regis Armstrong, OFMCap. At Tau Center. (See ad p. 46)

### Thursday, April 13-Sunday, April 16

Franciscan Solitude. With André Cirino, OFM; based on his book. At Spirit and Life Center. (See ad p. 52)

### Saturday, April 15-Sunday, April 23

Holy Week Retreat and Easter Triduum. With Tod Lavery, OFM, and Tau staff. Tau Center, 511 Hilbert St., Winona, MN 55987; ph. 507-454-2993; fax 507-453-0910.

### Saturday, April 1

Rebirth of a Charism, at Friars' Spiritual Retreat Center, Graymoor, NY. Contact the Franciscan Federation, P.O. Box 29080, Washington, DC 20017; Ph. 202-529-2334 Fax: 202-529-7016

### Thursday, April 20-Sunday, April 23

Triduum Retreat. With J. Lora Dambroski, OSF, and Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. At Spirit and Life Center. (See ad p. 52)

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenBern	Blessing for Brother Bernard	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	Test	Testament
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	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
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	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 Jacques 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

**School of Franciscan Studies  
The Franciscan Institute  
June 26-July 28, 2000**

**JOIN US FOR  
SUMMER SESSION  
2000**

**Courses:**

- Robert Karris, OFM: *To Live the Gospel* (June 26-July 27)  
Joseph Chinnici, OFM: *Franciscan Movement II* (June 26-July 7)  
Dominic Monti, OFM: *Franciscan Movement I* (July 10-28)  
Robert Stewart, OFM: *Francis: His Life and Charism* (June 26-July 7)  
Ingrid Peterson, OSF: *Clare and Franciscan Women* (July 10-28)  
Regis Duffy, OFM: *Franciscan Theology of the Word* (June 26-July 7.)  
David Haack, OFM: *Franciscan Paintings I: 13th-15th Centuries* (July 10-28)  
Margaret Carney, OSF: *Franciscan Leadership* (June 27-July 7)  
Anthony Carrozzo, OFM: *Formation in the Franciscan Tradition* (July 10-28)  
Edward Coughlin, OFM: *Franciscan Spiritual Direction* (July 10-28)

For more information or for  
application material please contact:

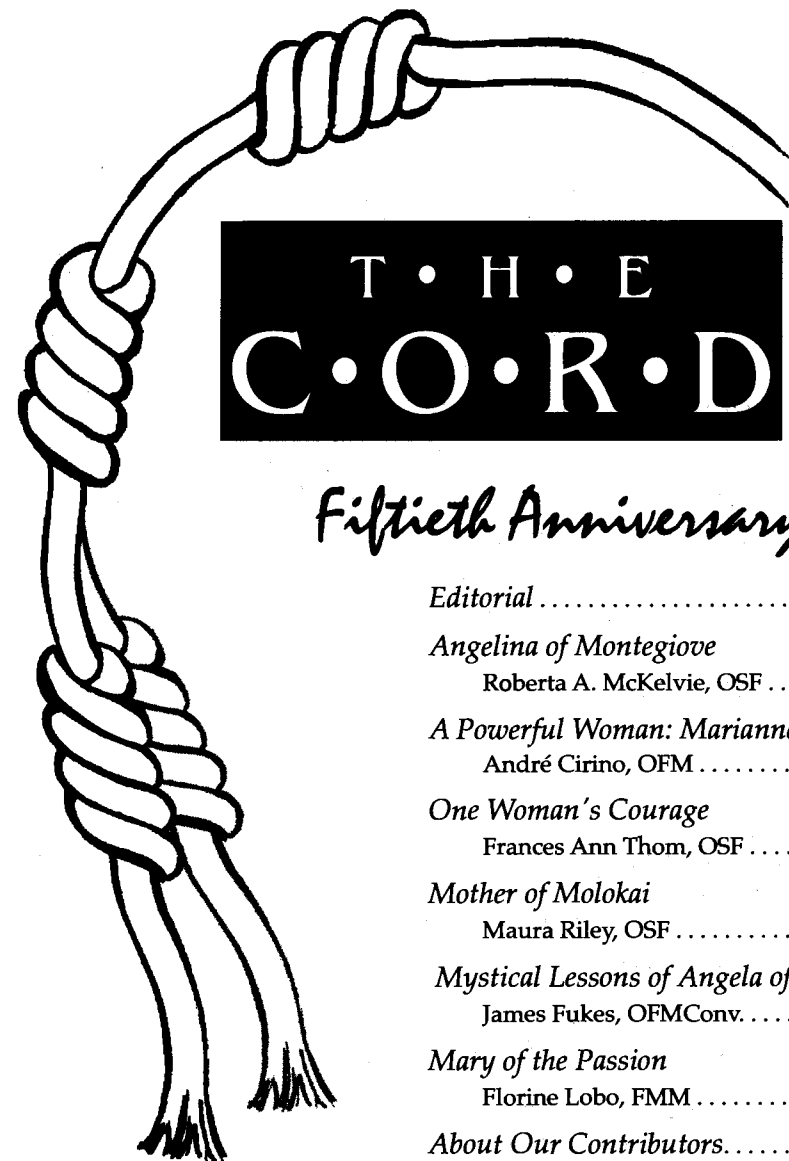


The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Phone: 716-375-2105  
Fax: 716-375-2156

The Cord  
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid  
at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:  
PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR DESTROY THIS PERIODICAL  
Return Postage Guaranteed.



**T • H • E  
C • O • R • D**

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year*

Editorial .....	
Angelina of Montegiove	
Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF .....	
A Powerful Woman: Marianne Cope	
André Cirino, OFM .....	
One Woman's Courage	
Frances Ann Thom, OSF .....	
Mother of Molokai	
Maura Riley, OSF .....	
Mystical Lessons of Angela of Foligno	
James Fukes, OFMConv. ....	
Mary of the Passion	
Florine Lobo, FMM .....	
About Our Contributors .....	
Book Reviews	
Anthony Carrozzo, OFM. ....	
Winifred Whelan, OSF. ....	
Announcements .....	
On the Franciscan Circuit .....	1

**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF  
Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF  
Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM  
Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs  
Production Assistant: Geoffrey Lee

Editorial Board: Marie Beha, OSC, Murray Bodo, OFM, Mary C. Gurley, OSF  
Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR, Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.,  
and Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

**No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.**

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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). (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2). (4LAg 2:13).

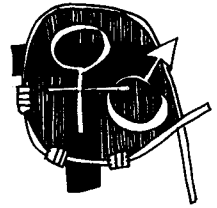
A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. The edition of the Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.1 (2000)

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*



Robert Pawel, OFM

## Editorial

"Who shall find a valiant woman?" (Prov. 31:10). Every religious tradition can boast of its valiant women, and the Franciscan family is no exception. From the beginning of the movement, women have played significant roles, roles which historical accounts have often neglected or undervalued. In our own times, when the retrieving of women's stories has become a value in "doing history," we are privileged to be gifted with new awarenesses about the contributions of women, past and present. In our Franciscan family we are gradually uncovering information that helps us understand better how our heritage has been enriched and preserved by the gifts of our sisters. Over the centuries multitudes of women have undertaken the particular way of living out the gospel vision which Francis, Clare, and the earlier followers set in motion and, by so doing, have assured that sisterhood stands today beside brotherhood as a fundamental character of our way of life.

In this second issue of our Fiftieth Anniversary year, *The Cord* honors in a special way Franciscan women. It presents a few of our outstanding "mothers," of the distant past and of the more recent past, who have made significant contributions to the Church, to the society, and to our own Franciscan inheritance. By honoring them with our attention, respect, and gratitude, let us symbolically honor all the sisters, past and present, who walked the Way with such integrity, grace, and spiritual power.

Our first article reprints some portions of Robert McKelvie's book on Angelina of Montegiove, in which she challenges us to see in this fourteenth-century religious a prototype for our own times. This challenge might compel us to read McKelvie's whole fascinating account. This Angelina is not to be confused with Angela of Foligno (thirteenth-century mystic) who is honored in James Fukes's article on prayer. Two articles acquaint us with Mother Marianne of Molokai, whose work among the lepers is legendary. André Cirino speaks of the spiritual power of the place where Marianne worked and where her body now rests, and Frances Ann Thom offers a biographical account. Florine Lobo tells us the story of Mary of the Passion, another nineteenth-century woman, whose vocation led her to found the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, who now number in the thousands and serve throughout the world.

*Elise Saggau, OSF*



## Angelina of Montegiove Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine

Roberta Agnes McKelvie, OSF

[The following article presents excerpts from chapter 7 of Roberta McKelvie's book, *Retrieving a Living Tradition: Angelina of Montegiove, Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine*, published by The Franciscan Institute in 1997.]

The life and experience of Angelina of Montegiove (ca. 1357-1435) reveal in microcosm the major issues of women's identity present in both the Late Middle Ages and early modern period. . . . Angelina joined the Franciscan Third Order as a widow and freely entered into its program of charitable works. She settled eventually in Foligno in a community which combined the independence of Italian Beguine life and the austerity of the Franciscan Observant tradition in an "open" (unenclosed) monastery. For at least forty years she lived at the Monastery of Sant'Anna. During that time, Angelina reshaped its form of life, founded other open monasteries, and was widely revered as a charismatic leader of tertiary women. From 1428-1435 Angelina was the first papally approved minister general of a group of Franciscan Third Order houses in Italy. (From the Introduction, page 1.)

### Angelina: the New Symbol

From time to time, symbols can and should be re-examined. This is especially true in light of the sweeping changes initiated with the decrees of the Second Vatican Council some thirty years ago. What would a reconstructed symbol of Angelina look like? Development of a new symbol which speaks to Christian women today unfolds many levels of reflection. The first level produces the awareness that Angelina grasped her baptismal consecration as the foundation of her relationship to God, church, and neighbor. One consequence for Angelina: a commitment to God, perhaps even in adolescence or early adulthood, became a *choice* of virginity as fulfillment of her baptismal commitment. In feminist analysis, of course, the issue of virginity is a thorny one. Often, virginity is interpreted as denigrating the full humanity of women or as evidence of patriarchy imposing its will on women in an attempt to achieve

greater control over them.<sup>1</sup> In many instances, that was the case. But Angelina's *choice* of virginity provides an opportunity for a radical departure from negative feminist interpretation. Although male dominance was certainly part of the culture in which Angelina lived, her promise of virginity and her gathering together other women of similar purpose can be reinterpreted as a stance *against* that patriarchy.

Angelina as a secular woman of the late fourteenth century raised significant questions about the society in which she had been raised, where war and disease were virtually inescapable, and where the pursuit of power overshadowed almost all other values, both in civil society and in a church riven by the Avignon schism and preoccupied with protecting the Papal States. In gathering around herself other women who likewise chose virginity as a positive value, Angelina refused to honor the feudal paradigm, provoking the wrath of communal leaders who required women as marriage partners and mothers of new warriors. Too little attention has been given to this Angelina. Tracing the emphases among the Jacobillian biographies shows that Angelina recognized the difference between valuing virginity and condemning marriage—even though her accusers did not. She seems not to have been trapped by dualistic thinking that marked the patriarchal culture in which she lived. In voicing her consciousness (at the trial in Naples) that choosing virginity and condemning marriage were different issues, Angelina became a transgressor: a public, speaking, informed, moral leader.<sup>2</sup> Put another way, Angelina knew how to choose what Philip Sheldrake calls "enduring truths."<sup>3</sup> She also knew how to differentiate those truths or values from limited particulars conditioned by social or cultural expectations. Such informed and courageous leadership was not the norm for late medieval Italy, nor is it always the norm today.

The reconstructed symbol of Angelina—a woman making a free choice for virginity, proclaiming its value and calling others to join her—offers immense food for thought to modern religious women who struggle with voicing self-understanding and vocational awareness. It seems clear that Angelina's intention in joining the Third Order to enter tertiary life because it offered a recognized category through which she could devote herself more fully to the gospel and move into deeper discipleship even while remaining "in the world"—with emphasis on being in the world and not inside the enclosure. These same questions of deeper discipleship and devoted gospel life beset women in the church today.

A second level of reflection with respect to the "new symbol" concentrates on Angelina in her communal life (1395-1435). A revised interpretation of the mature Angelina reads her as a symbol of a transformed church, albeit an idealized one. This Angelina does not operate from the dualism that divides sacred and profane, nor does she fit the imposed "canonical model" that pre-

scribed religious life for women between the sixteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, the model imposed upon her by the post-Tridentine mentality of her first biographer. In one respect, a reconstructed symbol represents all women who live in ways which call forth a church not limited by patriarchy, elitism, or insistence that women's lifestyles be identical.

Angelina, reconstructed as unenclosed and mobile yet committed to communal life, symbolizes a church appreciative of charismatic women who by preaching and by courageous example contribute to the living tradition of Christianity and to the continuing development of women's spirituality in spite of cultural, political, or ecclesial barriers.<sup>4</sup> Assuredly, the retrieved Angelina is a woman who worked collaboratively not only with her own sisters, she also used contacts with the friars of Paoluccio's movement, with the bishop of Foligno, and with at least three popes to ensure that the semi-religious eremitical-active life of Sant'Anna and the other houses affiliated with it preserved their vocational integrity. Asking for and receiving papal approbation, she used the power of the church to break through a number of cultural restrictions. For example, women choosing their own "superiors" and investing them with authority certainly did not fit the socio-cultural paradigm of the time. In addition, as itinerant minister general conducting visitation of various houses, Angelina embodied values of practicality and flexibility that contradicted prevailing cultural views of women as weak and dependent upon male authority.<sup>5</sup>

In one sense then, the "new symbol" of Angelina allows her to be considered a *prototype*, that is, an original model which is not forever static and which is open to the possibility of change and development.<sup>6</sup> The monastery at Sant'Anna was not founded by Angelina, and to say she reformed it (as some historians have said) seems inadequate. Rather, life at Sant'Anna was *transformed* so that it combined elements of *bizzocche* independence and Franciscan common life in imitation of the poor Christ. During her own life at Sant'Anna, Angelina assumed different roles at different times and successfully modeled for her sisters ways to blend independence and accountability. Tertiary women led by Angelina were free to promise obedience to another woman, to retain ownership and administration of their own goods, and to pursue their spiritual lives in an atmosphere which respected individuality and personal responsibility. Such a form of life required each member of the group to grow in respect for her own vocation without imposing her individual choices on another. The community at Sant'Anna as a corporate entity unequivocally demonstrated these values: we need only recall the results of Angelina's unauthorized promise of obedience to the Friar Minor Provincial and the community's immediate repudiation of her right to make such a promise. . . .

## Commitment in a Post Conciliar Church

In a broader context, the feminist critique challenges modern Third Order women to re-examine the parameters of their lives in light of a commitment to renewed gospel values. Such re-examination does not nullify fidelity to the Second Vatican Council; rather, it enhances it. Nearly thirty years ago women religious of all families—Franciscan, Benedictine, Dominican, and so on—were charged with the task of renewing religious life by means of a "return to the sources." The Conciliar declaration on the renewal of religious life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, contains the following instruction:

The up-to-date renewal of the religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the Christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our times. This renewal, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and with the guidance of the Church, must be promoted in accord with the following principles:

- a) Since the final norm of the religious life is the following of Christ as it is put before us in the Gospel, this must be taken by all institutes as the supreme rule;
- b) the spirit and aims of each founder should be faithfully accepted and retained, as indeed should each institute's sound traditions, for all these constitute the patrimony of the institute (*Perfectae Caritatis* 2).<sup>7</sup>

Many questions emerge with regard to the issues of "founder," "adaptation," following the "impulse of the Holy Spirit," and the recovery of the living tradition of Angelina of Montegiove. Although Angelina was not in a literal sense the "founder" of Third Order Regular life, she is, as has been proposed above, a *prototype*.<sup>8</sup> Angelina's leadership and the way of life established at Sant'Anna as an original model may be profitably examined—especially since it was not static at the time of establishment and is open even now to the possibility of change and development under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Feminist historical theology can now acknowledge that Angelina of Montegiove and the women who shared her way of life . . . were inspired by the Holy Spirit in the fulfillment of their vocations. They developed a common life according to the spirit of a Rule meant for people living in the world, praying together and praying in solitude, dedicating their financial resources to service of the group and of their marginalized neighbors. These are the "sound traditions" of tertiary observance that *Perfectae Caritatis* calls our patrimony.

The continuation of *ressourcement* in the last three decades has not only helped Third Order women recover the original vision, it also helped them learn how the process of de-monasticization occurred and changed their self-understanding.<sup>9</sup> The *bizzocche*-tertiary women of the Observant tradition made private "simple" vows until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when enclosure and solemn vows were imposed. It was only in 1900 that the institutional church finally recognized religious who made "simple vows"—those not papally enclosed because of apostolic ministry—as "true religious."<sup>10</sup> But a 1917 revision of canon law helped obscure individual community characteristics, because from that time forward all constitutions were written to meet the prescriptions of canon law. This legalistic way of defining a congregation had widespread impact, especially as diocesan congregations moved to regain pontifical status. . . . A kind of "generic religious life" overshadowed founders' legacies and spiritualities within specific traditions. For women of the Third Order traditions, one consequence of the generic understanding of religious life was the loss of any deep sense of Franciscan heritage.

Although enclosure had been ameliorated, other monastic practices had not. Structure and symbols remained essentially unchanged until Vatican II.<sup>11</sup> When *Perfectae Caritatis* called for a return to the sources, a major clash over ecclesial identity resulted, especially in American communities with European backgrounds. As the renewal process unfolded it became important to be "Franciscan"—but often values of Franciscanism conflicted with traditions and values of a specific community. . . . Mission—a Franciscan value—began to challenge ministry—a canonical apostolic model. When the question of studying the founder's heritage arose, the problem of *which* founder should be considered followed.

John Lozano writes that each founder . . . had a unique charism which the Holy Spirit transmitted to their disciples, and I would propose that this is likewise true of each prototype such as Angelina of Montegiove.<sup>12</sup> Lozano also asserts that it is the mission of the descendants of a given religious family to live, safeguard, deepen, and constantly develop the charism and provide for its growth.<sup>13</sup> In light of the recovery of the living tradition of tertiary observance and the complex history of Third Order women, what must now be discerned is the possible meanings Angelina and her contemporaries offer us for this era and for our future. The challenge is to re-examine what we *thought* the sources said and to apply to our lives the lessons embodied in the reconstructed symbol.

If Third Order Regular women peel away centuries of cultural accretions—customs, habits, security in apostolic work which we once thought defined us and religious life—what is left? What would it mean if every Third Order congregation were to look at Angelina and learn from her courage? What

would it mean if Third Order women would deeply internalize the value inherent in a combination of independence and common life so that the female face of patriarchy which exists in our lives could be addressed and erased in our obedience to one another? What if we could muster the courage to embrace Angelina as a prototype of vocational self-understanding and fidelity and apply what we learn from her to our personal vocational self-understanding? . . .

I would propose that it is possible to remove the false dichotomy between adaptation and fidelity. In order to do so, we must read "adaptation" as nothing less than learning to understand our vocation as *evangelical*, as a call to bring the gospel alive in the world today just as Angelina, Clare, or Francis did in theirs. Pope Paul VI implied as much in *Evangelica Testificatio*, his *Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life* (29 June 1971) when he stated that (1) renewal is the dynamic process due to the action of the Holy Spirit and (2) it is the *obligation* of religious groups to "be faithful to the spirit of . . . [their] founders, to their *evangelical intentions* and to the example of their sanctity."<sup>14</sup> Franciscan life was not originally monastic. It was itinerant and missionary in intent and intrinsically person-centered. The earliest "adaptation" of the Franciscan charism was conditioned by the hierarchy's desire to use the friars as missionaries who would bring the effects of Lateran IV to the universal church and to "protect" women, semi-religious or "fully" religious, (for whom the "root of evil" was assumed to be going outside the cloister) from heresy and sexual misconduct.<sup>15</sup> Founders' stories throughout the history of religious life unequivocally demonstrate that church culture governed by patriarchal standards and dualistic antagonism toward women radically altered the shape of religious life. Now, however, women religious have an *obligation* (Paul VI's word) to move toward a recovery of original ideals, to study a retrieved history and to embrace evangelical freedom—all of which challenge patriarchal church culture. The result of that fidelity goes beyond external adaptation; it is *internal transformation*.<sup>16</sup> In reality, adaptation and transformation for the sake of the gospel *define* fidelity.

## Unanswered Questions and Unfinished Business

. . . The process of post-conciliar transformation has led toward something that resembles (at least for Third Order Regular women) a return to the prototype, to the tertiary life of the women in the fifteenth century at Sant'Anna, where women came together to share the God-quest with each other, and with all who entered the monastery grounds. One of the fascinating items in the 1476 Constitution of the tertiaries of Angelina is a directive that in the evenings of certain feast days one of the sisters was to "read some devout book

to the seculars for a half-hour."<sup>17</sup> The implication seems to be that secular women lived in close proximity to or even inside the monastery; perhaps the reading was a kind of evangelization or spiritual direction or catechesis. It is clear from the context that the "seculars" were not novices or candidates; what, then, was the relationship between these groups of women? This is one of the areas that requires additional investigation. But the implications for the hierarchically structured model of the church are clear: women ministering to and empowering other women can and should be part of the God-quest of the entire church. . . .

Finally, it is devoutly to be hoped that Franciscan women and men will benefit from serious consideration of the sometimes troubled history of the Franciscan movement. At the very least, there is something to be said for asking ourselves about re-connecting on a collaborative basis as brothers and sisters and modeling for the church the freedom of egalitarian male-female relationships based upon the living of the gospel. There are fundamental texts in the Franciscan tradition, beyond those cited in the present work, which can and should lead to more egalitarian and collaborative praxis. There are as-yet-unrecovered stories of important Franciscan women which, if recovered and shared, would enrich the tradition immensely. When additional retrieval and study take place, the collaborative model might once again be the preferred option for the entire movement. And if the Franciscan movement were to teach the larger church, by word and example, the possibilities of full, egalitarian collaboration, it would make a major contribution to the transformation of the church and the demise of patriarchy.

[This book, *Retrieving a Living Tradition: Angelina of Montegiove, Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine* can be ordered from The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY, 14778. See page 94 for ad.]

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>For different feminist views on the development of the ideal of virginity, see, for example, Daly's *Beyond God the Father*, 85; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 150-83; Eleanor C. McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," 213-66 in the same volume; and Kari Vogt, "Becoming Male: One Aspect of Early Christian Anthropology," in *Women: Invisible in Church and Theology*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza and Mary Collins (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 72-83.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 161, 176.

<sup>3</sup>Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 84.

<sup>4</sup>See chapter five in Sheldrake for an excellent analysis of the "development of religious life" issues. For Angelina, the ecclesial resistance I refer to alludes to the leadership of the Friars Minor between 1428-1435.

<sup>5</sup>Sheldrake, 121. Sheldrake identifies Angela Merici (d. 1540), Mary Ward (1600s) and the Daughters of Charity of the nineteenth century as models of women's active and mobile religious life. He apparently did not know the story of Angelina.

<sup>6</sup>Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 33; Schüssler-Fiorenza states that a prototype requires the transformation of its models of faith and community. Given the history of Third Order Franciscan women and the many transformations of the numerous congregations under that title, prototype is a most appropriate label for Angelina.

<sup>7</sup>See Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 2nd edition (New York: Costello Pub. Co., 1977), 612.

<sup>8</sup>John Lozano, in *Foundresses, Founders and Their Religious Families*, trans. Joseph Daries (Chicago: Claret Center for Spirituality, 1983), 3, indicates that there are "different ways of being a founder." I substitute prototype for founder in light of that statement and of the following criteria clearly applicable to Angelina: "founders" feel called by God to create a new religious family or a "new family of evangelical life"; they assign goals, set up guidelines, or give a rule or constitutions to the family; and they often come to a "gradual discovery" of their own vocation (see Lozano, 3, 44).

<sup>9</sup>*Ressourcement* or "resourced theology" according to the late Yves Congar is "a theology recentered and reoriented upon the Christian mystery which is identical with the paschal and parousial mystery." Yves Congar, "Le Purgatoire," *Le Mystère de la mort et sa célébration*, Lex Orandi 12 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1951): 326, cited in Charles R. Meredith, "Themes of Thomistic Eschatology in the Ecumenical Theology of Yves Congar," dissertation for The Catholic University of America, 1993, 19. It is this principle that inspired the "return to the sources" directive found in *Perfectae Caritatis*.

<sup>10</sup>The recognition is contained in "Condite a Christo," by Pope Leo XIII. See Donovan, 49. Within three years the Tertiary Franciscans of Blessed Angelina had successfully overcome the nearly four-hundred-year-old obligation of papal enclosure and once again became an active community. The Bernardines in the U.S. were already not observing papal enclosure, although they remained under the jurisdiction of the Reformed Friars Minor in Poland, a long-distance connection that had sporadic repercussions until the first World War.

<sup>11</sup>For specifically American analysis of the changes in American religious life, see, among others, Joan Chittister, *Winds of Change Women Challenge Church* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1986); Patricia Wittberg, *Creating a Future for Religious Life* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991); and Mary Ewens, "Women in the Convent," in *American Catholic Women A Historical Perspective*, ed. Karen Kennelly (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 17-47.

<sup>12</sup>"Charism" was first used by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelica Testificatio*, 11, in 1971; with respect to founders' charism, it was first used by the Congregation of Bishops and the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in *Mutuae Relationes*, 11, in 1978. In the broad sense, it means the gift/legacy of the founder for the group of followers and for the church.

<sup>13</sup>Lozano, 29.

<sup>14</sup>*Evangelica Testificatio*, 11, 6. Emphasis added.

<sup>15</sup>Graciela Daichman, "Misconduct in the Nunnery," in *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity*, ed. Lynda L. Coon, Katherine J. Haldane, and Elisabeth W. Sommer (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 109.

<sup>16</sup>See Sandra Schneiders, "Contemporary Religious Life: Death or Transformation?" in *Religious Life: The Challenge for the Future*, ed. Cassian Yuhaus, 9-34 (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1994). Schneiders' discussion of the transformation of religious life provoked my interpretation of the sequential relationship of adaptation-transformation.

<sup>17</sup>Marco Bartoli, "Le antiche costituzioni delle monache di Foligno," in *La Beata Angelina da Montegiove e il movimento del Terz'Ordine Regolare Francescano femminile*, ed. R. Pazzelli and M. Sensi (Rome: Analecta TOR, 1984), 132, 136.

There is something to be said for asking ourselves about re-connecting on a collaborative basis as brothers and sisters and modeling for the church the freedom of egalitarian male-female relationships based upon the living of the gospel (McKelvie, p. 64).

## A Powerful Woman: Marianne Cope

André Cirino, OFM

[This article was originally published in the December 1999 issue of *Propositum*, a publication of the Conferenza Francescana Internazionale, TOR, in Rome. It is reprinted here with permission.]

Recently I was invited to Hawai'i to conduct a retreat for the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse, New York, approximately fifty of whom live and work in the American island-state. I was not eager to go there because of the length of the journey from New York, and, upon my arrival, I discovered that the sisters had made arrangements for yet another journey. Barely out of jet lag, I flew in a tiny plane to Moloka'i where we stopped for a few minutes on "topside" and then continued with another five-minute flight to Kalaupapa.

The island of Moloka'i is usually associated with a leper<sup>1</sup> colony and with Damien De Veuster, the Belgian priest-leper who was recently beatified.<sup>2</sup> I had certainly been aware of Damien as well as the name of "Moloka'i," but it was only on this trip that I learned that Moloka'i has a large area referred to as "topside," where all the "clean" people once lived, and a "flat plain" called Kalaupapa, an isolated peninsula at the base of a steep cliff (2215 feet or 675 meters high) on the northern side of the island. It was to Kalaupapa that the lepers were exiled when the disease was widespread.

Upon my arrival I was warmly greeted by Sister Frances Therese and we drove immediately to the tomb of Mother Marianne Cope,<sup>3</sup> about whom I knew next to nothing. We got out of the car and approached her grave. I walked around it, read the inscriptions and stood there in silence. After a few minutes, Sister Frances Therese suggested that we move on, but for some strange reason I could not. I asked to remain there longer because of the impact this sacred place was making on me. I was experiencing, as pilgrims often do, the "spirituality of place."<sup>4</sup> I felt spiritual energies begin to flow within, connecting me with a Franciscan forbear who preceded me in our family. I was picking up the energies of this great woman, Marianne, who herself drew on the energies of Francis for the work of love that she did for thirty years in this sacred

place. She, together with her sisters, literally replicated the primitive thrust of the Franciscan movement—ministry among the lepers.

Since that experience at her tomb, I have seen a video, read a biography, and listened to many sisters share their oral tradition about Mother Marianne. But none of this has affected me as forcefully as this valiant woman did when I stood at her graveside. There I felt the power of her spiritual energies, and it is precisely her power that I have reflected upon since my visit to Kalaupapa.

Our brother, Richard Rohr, OFM, has spoken of power as:

1. the ability to act from the fullness of who I am;
2. the capacity to establish and maintain a relationship with people and things;
3. the freedom to give myself away.<sup>5</sup>

It is within this paradigm that my considerations have evolved.

Reflecting on power as the ability to act from the fullness of who I am, I saw Mother Marianne's power stemming from the fullness of her being a woman. It is from this solid base that she acted and accepted the challenges that came her way. Even her title of "Mother" is instructive. Francis was very fond of using this term—even for himself,<sup>6</sup> because it expresses an attitude that is tender, sensitive, warm, delicate, and nurturing. That became Marianne's attitudinal stance with the lepers as she tended their body, soul, and spirit.

Moreover, Marianne was a woman of faith. She was open to the risk that faith offers when one is challenged. From the initial response she made last century when, as provincial minister she was asked to send sisters from Syracuse, New York, to Hawai'i, her risk of faith was evident. She wrote: "I am hungry for the work and I wish with all my heart to be one of the chosen ones. . . . I am not afraid of any disease."<sup>7</sup>

After successfully establishing a home for young girls with leprosy, she was asked to take over Father Damien's home for boys. Her faith-response was: ". . . my heart has bled for them and I was anxious and hungry to help put a little more sunshine into their dreary lives."<sup>8</sup>

Her power as a woman of faith risking all is most evident in her words to Sister Leopoldina in 1889: "You will never be a leper, nor will any Sister of our Order."<sup>9</sup> Sister Leopoldina later wrote: "It was wonderful what power there was in Mother's words to banish every fear. . . ."<sup>10</sup> Marianne's promise, full of the risk of a woman of faith, has been realized, for to this date no sister has ever contracted leprosy. However, let it also be said that, at the same time, this self-effacing woman of God did not take it upon herself to excuse the sisters from using ordinary precautionary measures in the care of the patients.

A second dimension of the word "power" is the capacity to establish and maintain a relationship with people and things. Before the arrival of the sisters, the patients were living in repulsive squalor. So Marianne, together with her sisters, rolled up her sleeves and swept, washed, and scrubbed the entire facility. She planted trees, flowers, shrubs, and vegetables wherever she could. As they took care of such things, the patients warmed up to Marianne and her sisters and quickly came to trust them and cherish the care they received from them. The power of relationship took root from the beginning, and Marianne began to speak of the patients as her "children."

Living and working in such a setting was a superhuman feat. The sight and smell of leprosy was a constant challenge to the senses. We glimpse Marianne's thoughts when she writes in a convent journal:

I suffer when I go to church, the smell and the sight of lepers everywhere is disagreeable. . . . How glad I was to get outside to breathe again the fresh clean air. We met many of our old patients outside. All were anxious to shake hands—something that makes one shudder—yet we did it. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Her words clearly echo those of Francis when he wrote:

It seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body. . . . (Test 1-3).

Marianne, very aware of her internal struggle, never outwardly displayed this conflict. "Robert Louis Stevenson would testify only five years later, after he had seen Mother Marianne and the sisters attending the lepers at Molokai, in their presence 'even a fool is silent and adores.'"<sup>12</sup>

A third aspect of power is the freedom to give oneself away. As provincial minister, Mother Marianne accompanied the first sisters by train to California and by steamer to Hawai'i, intent on establishing the new mission and returning to Syracuse. As she embarked upon her work, it became clear to her sisters, to the King and Queen, to government and church officials, to the lepers, and finally to herself, that God had brought her to Hawai'i to stay. And by giving herself away fully to this new place and work, she was empowered by God to root this mission in the Franciscan spirit. Thus it continues to this very day.

I am writing these thoughts on the feast of St. Francis (1998) as I sit in Assisi, the very place where Francis both struggled within himself to face lep-

ers and later came to serve them, living among them; I cannot help but imagine how proud he must be of men and women like Marianne Cope, her sisters, and other members of our Franciscan family who literally perform this same ministry today. Marianne is but one example I discovered as I opened our family album. From the very origins of our movement it is clear that being with the minors, the little ones, the marginalized, enfleshes a significant dimension of our charism. Our being with the marginalized, in whatever capacity, seems to enfold for us the words of Jesus: "I have come that they may have life" (Jn. 10:10).

I am convinced that when Francis found himself among lepers, he experienced the "life" Jesus promised because he proclaims "that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body." I am certain Marianne knew this sweetness, and it is there waiting for all of us as well.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Although current usage would rather speak of a person suffering from "Hansen's disease," I retain the word "leper" to connect with its usage in early Franciscan writings.

<sup>2</sup>He was beatified by Pope John Paul II during a pastoral visit to Belgium on June 4, 1995.

<sup>3</sup>The process of canonization has been opened. The diocesan phase was completed in Honolulu in 1993 and the cause forwarded to Rome, where it has been accepted. Thus Mother Marianne Cope is more correctly referred to as a "Servant of God." More information on Mother Marianne's life or cause can be obtained by contacting the Director of the Cause of Mother Marianne, 1024 Court Street, Syracuse NY 13208, USA; Telephone/fax: +1.315.422.7999.

Two new works for younger readers have recently been published by Editions du Signe: *Mother Marianne of Molokai'i: Heroic Woman of Hawai'i* (for younger children) and *Valiant Woman of Hawai'i: Mother Marianne of Molokai'i* (for older children and adults). Contact Mother Marianne Books, Sisters of St. Francis, 2500 Grand Boulevard, Syracuse NY 13208; Telephone: +1.315.425.1507; Fax: +1.315.425.0610; e-mail osfsyr@eznet.net.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *The Cord*, 47.1 (Jan./Feb., 1997).

<sup>5</sup>Richard Rohr, OFM, "Menders of the Breach," Franciscan Gathering, Tampa, FL, Feb. 7-12, 1993, audio cassette.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. RegEr 1; 2Cel 137; RegB 6:8.

<sup>7</sup>Mary Laurence Hanley, OSF, and O. A. Bushnell, *Pilgrimage and Exile* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup>Hanley and Bushnell, 326.

<sup>9</sup>Hanley and Bushnell, 138.

<sup>10</sup>Hanley and Bushnell, 304, emphasis added.

<sup>11</sup>Hanley and Bushnell, 348.

<sup>12</sup>Hanley and Bushnell, 328, emphasis added.

The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. (Test 1-3)

## One Woman's Courage Marianne Cope

Frances Ann Thom, OSF

There is much research going on today in religious communities in an attempt to capture the true spirit of their founders. Many have examined Francis and Clare as the founding spirit for their communities but continue to wrestle with their immediate founders and the question, why Franciscan? I, too, have been caught up in this mystery. However, in researching our immediate foundress, Mother Bernardina Dorn, I can only believe that she, who was a Third Order Franciscan when she arrived in this country from Bavaria as a young girl, fell much in love with Francis and his spirit. She had watched the Sisters of St. Francis in her own town and at an early age had committed herself to serving the sick and the poor in that distant land, America. Although we do not have extensive research on her before she came to this land, she remained rather a silent witness to the day-teacher, night-nurse lifestyle which she lived so heroically. However, we do know how effective her life was as a Syracuse Franciscan by the women who followed her example. And here I speak in particular of Mother Marianne of Molokai.

Barbara Cope grew up in Utica, New York, where she had contact with Mother Bernardina and the other sisters who taught in schools there. At age fifteen she desired to enter the convent, but her parents asked her to remain at home to help with caring for her siblings and with the housework. Later, when her father died, her mother gave her permission to enter the community. She was now twenty-four years old with a mature desire to give herself to God as a Sister of St. Francis.

Even at that age Barbara must have prayed a great deal and wondered if she could stand the separation from her family whom she so dearly loved. She forged ahead, however, and joined the then struggling Syracuse Franciscan Community on August 26, 1862.

It wasn't long before her talents were recognized, and she was given positions of great responsibility. One of her undertakings was the administration St. Joseph Hospital, which had been converted from a saloon. Authorities visiting the hospital remarked on the extreme order and cleanliness not often found in other hospitals of that time. Sister Marianne, as she was called, was convinced that cleanliness would prevent the further spread of infection. This would be one of her strong points in years to come.

On December 27, 1877, Sister Marianne was elected the second Superior General, replacing Mother Bernardina who had served two three-year terms and was worn out from her labors day and night. Mother Marianne was re-elected on July 14, 1881. She accepted this as she had other events in her life—as the will of God. And God's will was again made known to her in 1883 when she received from Hawaii a letter sent by a priest, Father Leonor, representing the king and the queen. He explained that he had searched extensively for a community of religious women who would care for patients with leprosy. He had written to over fifty communities. Indeed, it was most unusual that the King of Hawaii himself was asking for Catholic religious sisters, since he was not of the faith. To Mother Marianne this was a clear indication of a call from the Lord who had such compassion on those so afflicted. It accorded as well with the true spirit of St. Francis.

Father Leonor was invited to give a presentation to the full community, a presentation that pulled at the heartstrings of all the sisters. Following it, Mother asked for volunteers. All of the novices volunteered and thirty-five professed sisters. Mother Marianne herself gladly embraced the call.

And so it was decided! After some legalities were cleared up between the Bishop of Hawaii and the Provincial of the Franciscan Friars, Mother selected six sisters from the volunteers and decided to accompany them to see for herself what was needed for their work in schools and hospitals and for the future. She intended to return to Syracuse after the visit, but this was not to be.

Plans were made to leave. Father Lesen, the Friars Minor Provincial, was uneasy over the fact that nothing had been put into writing. He wanted "... provisions that would allow the Sisters to return to their Community in America, if they wished, or in case of necessity or at the end of a specified time, such as twelve years, at the expense of the government" (p. 81).<sup>1</sup> In response to her question about how long she could stay in the Sandwich Islands, "... he gave her completest freedom: 'Use your prudence and come back when You see matters settled'" (p. 81). This was followed by his blessing upon their journey. Thus they were to depart September 23 or 24 from San Francisco, which meant they must leave from Syracuse by September 12. A day or two before that time, they received a letter from Father Leonor telling them to postpone their departure until further notice.



On September 24, the day they had expected to sail from San Francisco, a letter from Father Leonor arrived. He sent four full pages of information about how to travel across the continent, get reduced fares, transfer luggage, and how much they should pay. He mentioned priests along the way who would be willing to assist them. Finally he stated: "You may leave on the first steamer after the 15th of October, and everything will be ready for your reception" (p. 84). He wished Mother Marianne to select the date and notify him so that they, on their part, could "... join in public prayer that God protect you during the trip" (p. 84). During this interim Mother Marianne prepared Mother Antonia Eulenstein to assume her responsibilities.

Early in the morning of October 22, they set off for the train station, accompanied by a few older sisters and some lay friends. At 7:00 o'clock the train moved out of the station. Sister Crescentia looked back to see "... Mother Bernardina reaching out her arms, 'her dear face so white and drawn like the agony of death.' And weeping sisters gathering around to comfort her" (p. 86).

The trip across the country was rugged and tiresome, but their enthusiasm countered any exhaustion as they delighted in the variety of the scenery and hurried to get from train to train. Six days and five nights later they arrived in Oakland, California, where Father George Montgomery met them and escorted them to a convent in San Francisco for some rest. The following day, those who wished and were well rested went for a tour of the city. They were also given a view of the Mariposa, the ship on which they would sail on November 1.

At 3:00 p.m. on November 1, 1883, the Mariposa backed from her berth and turned toward the west. Once she emerged from the Golden Gate onto the rolling sea, "All the Sisters from Syracuse took to their bunks, and all except Mother Marianne recovered by the third day" (p.89). Finally, in the bay of Waikiki, where the sea is quite calm, those still afflicted with seasickness could raise their heads. Mother Marianne's companions rushed to her state room to help her dress and bring her on top "... to see her first view of the land that had drawn her so far away from home." What were her thoughts as she gazed on the mountains and the forests of coconut palms, valleys and beaches, a few cottages on the beach, a few fisherman's huts? Everything was strange. In the distance she could see the red, white, and blue flag of Hawaii.

There was a warm reception for the sisters. When the ship docked, Father Leonor, Walter Gibson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the queen's maid of honor welcomed the sisters in the name of the bishop and of the king and queen. Gibson, who held many titles in addition to Minister of Foreign Affairs, was much taken by these "angels of mercy" and would prove to be a tremendous advocate in the years to come.

The sisters were escorted to the royal carriages. As the procession drove through the main streets, the bells of the cathedral rang with joy. The bishop

awaited them at the entrance and gave them his blessing. Hymns were sung, the *Te Deum* was recited, and a wonderful welcome was given the sisters by the bishop. There was benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and much weeping from a grateful congregation. The sisters knew "... the peace of safe arrival, the joy of coming home" (p.96).

Mother Marianne and her sisters soon became aware that many of the large promises had not been fulfilled. In fact, nothing was ready for them. Construction of the new convent had hardly begun, and it was the first week of 1884 before they could move into it. Meanwhile, Mr. Gibson found them a house. He became lord-protector to these "helpless homeless females" (p.99).

Later, Mother also learned that the sisters were to care for the patients in the Branch Hospital at Kakaako, which was a receiving station for people suspected of being lepers. It was not on the island of Molokai, which was the last home for most of these unfortunate people. One priest, Father Damien de Veuster, was on that island, and he too was now a leper. This reality must have hit her hard, but she had come to care for the lepers and care she would until God in his own time would show her what to do.

Mother did not give up but remained at the hospital and began to develop ways of caring for the patients. Her administrative ability, her creativity, her concern, and her good sense, together with her courage, bore out what she had written to Father Leonor before coming to the islands:

I am hungry for the work and I wish with all my heart to be one of the chosen ones, whose privilege it will be to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of souls of the poor islanders. . . . I am not afraid of any disease hence it will be my greatest delight even to minister to the abandoned "lepers." . . . Waking and sleeping, I am on the islands. Do not laugh at me for being so wholly absorbed in that one wish, one thought, to be a worker in that large field (p. 72).

Mother Marianne must have reflected on her childhood and perhaps concluded that her present call was the reason why death and illness had always been her companions and why she had been given charge of a hospital early on in her training as a young sister. She believed that this was all in the Divine plan, which gave her each and every day a new opportunity to comfort and heal others and to love her God.

There must have been some resistance within herself as she tried to adjust to the new culture. Perhaps interiorly she recoiled the first few times she saw the disfigured faces, the gaping wounds, and the fingerless hands. But, in reality, these poor afflicted ones were the least of her problems. She was more troubled by politics! Always politics! She and her sisters could accept and understand the anger, the discontent, and even the resentment of those afflicted



with leprosy. They were less able to understand and accept the interior evil eating away at the hearts of the politicians, which caused them to fill their pockets, keeping food and small comforts from the poor islanders. This was a complete tragedy and unforgivable in eyes of Mother Marianne and the sisters. It bespoke the selfishness and the materialism of the age. Most of these politicians were foreigners who were there to exploit the poor islanders. They had no real love for or connection with them. Only Walter Gibson, as President of the Board of Health, reached out a helping hand.

Mother Marianne proved herself a match for these high ranking bigots by her determination, sincerity, and extreme generosity which drew others to help her. The queen had great admiration for this woman and her sisters who had come so far, given up so much, to care for her poor unfortunate children.

The queen could not speak English, so Mr. Gibson translated for her, and while he was speaking great tears were streaming from her beautiful black eyes. I love you! she said. You have left your home and country to come to these far away Islands to care for my poor afflicted children; I shall never forget you, and you are my Sisters and I shall always love you. The King was a very grand noble looking man and while the Queen was speaking his eyes were cast down and his face showed that he felt as she did (p. 104).

Sister Leopoldina Burns wrote this account of the meeting that had taken place in 1883. Although she was not present at the meeting, the emotions and the sentiments are beyond questioning.

Once Father Damien's impending death was certain, it seemed imperative to have the sisters on the island of Molokai. Mother and her sisters welcomed this idea, especially since they had visited there and saw the poor conditions under which the patients were living. Mother spoke with Father Damien before his death and assured him that she would care for his boys as well as the women and girls. She then made preparations for his funeral, fixing his coffin appropriately, and bringing with her as mourners those girls and women who were physically able.

While politicians still raged over spending money uselessly on the poor victims on Molokai, Mother Marianne separated the children from their infected parents, believing that this would keep them free of the disease. Then she planned to enhance the land around their drab dwellings and ordered a variety of trees, plants, and flowers. The land proved to be fertile and became transformed into the paradise of foliage that existed on the other islands. All of these innovations endeared her to the patients, whose lives had been so neglected by their own people out of fear of the disease.

Meanwhile, many letters crossed the ocean back to the Motherhouse in Syracuse. Mother Marianne, far away from home, was continuing to get the sisters established on the islands. She had taken upon herself an arduous but rewarding task. Her courage increased as the tasks challenged her, while her love of God strengthened her resolve to follow Christ and St. Francis in caring for the lepers. Though she could not miraculously cure anyone, she did help them to regain their human dignity, made their lives more comfortable, and gave them a mother's love.

When Mother Marianne died in 1918 she had spent forty years in establishing her sisters in the islands. Great mourning took place among the patients, and over her grave at the Kalaupapa settlement was raised a monument which testifies to the seeds of trust, faith, and love which she had sown. This memorial was paid for by the patients to honor her. One woman's courage had set fire to those about her so that today the settlement at Kalaupapa is no longer a prison for the condemned but a paradise of peace.

I conclude with the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited Kalaupapa on May 22, 1889. He dedicates them to "Reverend Sister Maryanne, Matron of the Bishop Home":

To see the infinite pity of this place,  
The mangled limb, the devastated face,  
The innocent sufferers smiling at the rod,  
A fool were tempted to deny his God.

He sees and shrinks; but if he look again,  
Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain!  
He marks the sisters on the painful shores,  
And even a fool is silent and adores (p. 328).

#### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> All references and quotes are from Mary Laurence Hanley, OSF, and O. A. Bushnell, *Pilgrimage and Exile: Mother Marianne of Molokai* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1991 edition).

*"May our Holy Father Francis obtain for us the grace always to live in his spirit, so that the Vita Evangelii, the life of the Holy Gospel, may never cease to be our ideal, that we may be always youthful and radical like him in the pursuit of this idea, that daily we may start anew, as he himself did and exhorted his brethren to do: 'Brothers, let us start today, for up to now we have made but little progress.'"*

From the first "Monthly Conference" by Philotheus Boehner, OFM,  
*The Cord*, (November, 1950): 7.

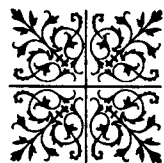
## A Voice from the Past Maura Riley, OSF

[Excerpts reprinted from an article first published in  
in *The Cord*, March/April, 1953.]

Just as a study of the part played by Saint Clare in the Franciscan story is an absolute necessity for an over-all picture of Francis of Assisi and his conquest of the world, in much the same manner the tale of Mother Marianne and her achievements among the lepers is fundamental to a more than superficial evaluation of Damien and his work on Molokai. The study of the woman and her part in the leper mission is doubly intriguing in the knowledge that not only was she an American Franciscan, but an American Franciscan quite close to our own day. . . (p. 62).

[On Damien's visit to Honolulu]

Father Damien had not been in Honolulu even two weeks when he was back on the steamer bound for Molokai, and Mother Marianne was waving her farewell from the wharf, reassuring him of her intention to send Sisters to Molokai very soon. "Hurry," he cried, as the ship pulled away, "there is not much time, you know." As she looked at Damien, for the moment seeing just the man, so wasted and disfigured by the dread disease, she realized that he did not exaggerate, and she was thankful for his timely visit. It had been a meeting of kindred spirits, of two strong minds with but a single thought of service, of two wills determined that even these least brethren in the household should be led by every means within their power to the mansions of their Father. And as the boat receded, her conviction became a determination that not only would there be a Damien of Molokai; there would be Sisters of Saint Francis on the Isle, and there would be a Mother Marianne of Molokai. . . (p. 70).



Like Damien's, [Mother Marianne's] sacrifice had been prompted by love—love of God and love of humanity—and it was the overflowing of this love into the lives of the lepers on Molokai that made her truly their mother, and gave her a second claim to the title (p. 98).

## Growth and Transformation through Prayer Using the Mystical Lessons of Angela of Foligno

James Fukes, OFM Conv.

As baptized Christians, we are all called to live in loving relationship to God and one another, to follow the teachings of Jesus given to us in the Gospels, and to spread that message, led and strengthened by an intimate life of prayer. For many people, their life of prayer can be called a shot in the dark, giving them a sense of fruitlessness. Not that we should judge our prayer by what we think it should produce, but we ought to find a measure of progress and, in time, see some spiritual growth and transformation. Angela of Foligno, a Franciscan mystic who lived during the years 1248 to 1309, was certainly a person whose life was transformed by prayer. Influenced by the penitential movements of her times and powerfully inspired by the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, she grew in an intimate relationship with God to become a witness and teacher of the Gospel message. Angela shares with us her mystical experiences by way of her *Memorial* and her *Instructions*<sup>1</sup>. The lessons she had from her experiences can serve to teach us today about the transforming power of prayer, about how prayer leads us to knowledge of the self and knowledge of God, and enables us to be, in turn, transformed into willing witnesses in service to the Gospel.

Angela's *Instructions* were mostly drawn from her letters to individuals and groups—probably Franciscan First and Third Order members—for whose spiritual formation and growth she was concerned. To be transformed into Christ was a major focus of Angela's spirituality as it was for Franciscan spirituality in general. In Instruction 28, Angela speaks about "transformation into Christ through the exercises of prayer and penance." The instruction was formed from Angela's own experience and knowledge gained from her transforming practices of penance and prayer. In it she articulates the elements and

process of what she calls the three schools of prayer by which the soul is transformed into the Beloved:

It is in prayer that one finds God. There are three schools, that is three types of prayer, without which one does not find God. These are bodily, mental, and supernatural (p. 286).

### Schools of Prayer

The three schools of prayer are progressive and lead one deeper into the experience of God in prayer. One way of entering into this school of prayer is to pray with a story from the Gospels. The personal encounter between Jesus and one of the Gospel characters—such as the Samaritan woman at the well, or Jairus whose daughter Jesus had healed, or Zacchaeus—can be reflectively read several times in the Gospel account by the individual who enters into the role of the character. The story of the encounter with Jesus is then retold in the individual's own words. Sharing the stories in a group would be a prayerful experience for secular Franciscans, professed religious, or any group that could benefit from personal faith sharing. This can be helpful in the Franciscan tradition of sharing our own story. One could also write the personal story in a journal as part of the same prayer experience. The elements of the Gospel story itself and the personal experience of retelling it can show us what Angela means by the “bodily, mental, and supernatural” schools of prayer.

### School of Bodily Prayer

Angela included in the first school of “bodily prayer” those expressions of the body used for prayer, such as “the sound of words and bodily movements such as genuflections.” She explained that this leads to mental prayer and that she herself was helped by bodily prayer when she was impeded by her own laziness or sleepiness. Using the Gospel story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), we see the elements of this kind of prayer: Zacchaeus was impeded from making visual contact with Jesus by his own short stature; his bodily prayer is evident in his running ahead and climbing the sycamore tree to see Jesus. Angela cautions us to perform this prayer with attention. Zacchaeus's attention is evident in his *running* ahead to see Jesus; he is able to fix his gaze and *watch* Jesus with heartfelt attention by *climbing* to a higher vantage point. Our distractions in prayer today are many, and our bodily efforts aid us in reaching out and holding our attention on God in prayer. Reading a Gospel story in a reflective way, such as for this prayer exercise, is also a common and effective form of bodily prayer.

### School of Mental Prayer

Angela's second school of prayer by which the soul is transformed into the Beloved is mental prayer. Angela explains: “Prayer is mental when meditating on God so occupies the soul that one thinks of nothing but God.” We can recall moments when our thoughts are captured by the beauty of a sunset, and we think of how gracious and wonderful God is. Angela says: “Such prayer curbs the tongue and renders one speechless.” We have also experienced liturgical prayer that drew us into heartfelt worship or meditation on the life of Jesus during a rosary that seized our attention away from the cares of our day. In his mental prayer, Zacchaeus was fixed on who Jesus was and what he was teaching. His mind was so transfixed that he blurted out that he would give half his possessions to the poor. He was not even distracted by the grumbling of the people, nor did he even think of defending himself against their accusations. “The mind,” Angela teaches, “is so totally filled with God's presence that it cannot think or speak about anything except about God and in God.” We need to reach this point in our prayer if we are to be attentive to the stirring of God's Spirit and hear God's invitation.

After having read the Gospel story several times in a quiet place and given some time for personal engagement in the story, the individual's mind can reflect on the personal sense of God's presence at this moment and in his or her life. When sharing one's personal version of the story in a group or in a journal, the individual may find how readily one can speak of the nature of God's presence. Mental prayer prepares and transforms us, turning our hearts toward God to receive the gift of supernatural prayer.

### School of Supernatural Prayer

Zacchaeus has an experience of supernatural prayer when he hears Jesus calling him down from the tree and when he hears and comprehends the delightful invitation that Jesus must stay at his house that day. Angela speaks about this third school of prayer in this way:

I call prayer supernatural when God, bestowing this gift upon the soul and filling it with his presence, so elevates the soul that it is stretched, as it were, beyond its natural capacities. In this type of prayer, the soul understands more of God than would seem naturally possible. It knows that it cannot understand, and what it knows it cannot explain, because all that it sees and feels is beyond its own nature (p. 287).

This supernatural prayer is clearly a gift, that is, it is not something that is earned or forced, but the free and generous action of God. Zacchaeus experi-

enced the loving embrace of Jesus in that invitation, a loving, forgiving embrace which, knowing his sins, he did not deserve nor understand. Though he was a "small" man because of the low deeds he had done and the low kind of work in which he engaged—collecting taxes for the Romans and cheating some of his own people—he was elevated and made to feel "tall" by Jesus. His soul was "stretched beyond its natural capacities" to the point where he could distribute his wealth to the poor and pay back four-fold those he had defrauded. He was given new vision of his dignity, for it was no longer received from material wealth but from God. Zacchaeus's whole life was transformed in a way that all could see. Jesus called him a "son of Abraham," and this he could claim because of God's free gift to him.

In the personal retelling of the Gospel story, the individual may be affirmed in what has already been experienced of the presence of God. Or, God may gift the person with a new sense of God's presence and a new knowledge of God and of self. Supernatural prayer can often surprise the receiver of such a gift and make one grateful in this third school of prayer which both reveals knowledge of God and transforms lives.

## Fruits of the Schools of Prayer

One of the fruits and transforming graces of these three schools of prayer is humility, which is born from the knowledge of God and self and is something that is treasured in Franciscan spirituality. In the third of her *Instructions*, Angela teaches us about this:

The purpose of prayer is nothing other than to manifest God and self. And this manifestation of God and self leads to a state of perfect and true humility. For this humility is attained when the soul sees God and self (p. 236).

In humility one can live as the true self and grow to be more and more in the image of God who is increasingly revealed through these three schools of prayer. In Instruction 28, Angela shows how this transformation process is a work of love:

In these three schools of prayer you come to know who you are and who God is. From the fact that you know, you love. Loving, you desire to possess what you love. And this is the sign of true love: that the one who loves is transformed, not partially, but totally, into the Beloved (p. 287).

## Conclusion

The three schools of bodily, mental, and supernatural prayer serve to bring us in our modern and complex lives into a true knowledge of ourselves and God through devotedly engaging our bodies, recollecting our minds, and receiving the gift that God wishes to give us. Angela of Foligno, in her faithful practice of this life of prayer, learned to receive the gifts that brought her tremendous spiritual growth and the inspiration to record the instructions that teach us how to cultivate fruitful prayer lives. To be transformed into Christ one must persevere along the path of prayer which transforms and strengthens, which calls into new life and into witness of the good news that Jesus brings.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup>All references to Angela of Foligno's *Memorial and Instructions* are taken from *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*, trans. Paul Lachance (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).



In these three schools of prayer  
you come to know  
who you are  
and who God is.  
From the fact that you know,  
you love.  
Loving,  
you desire to possess what  
you love.  
And this is the sign of  
true love:  
that the one who loves is  
transformed,  
not partially,  
but totally,  
into the Beloved.

(Angela of Foligno: *Complete Works*, p. 287).

Artist unknown

## **Mary of the Passion: a Woman in the Franciscan Tradition**

Florine Lobo, FMM

Everything is possible for one who dreams, dares, takes risks, trusts,  
surrenders, suffers, is humble, is open to the signs of the times,  
and hopes for tomorrow.

This is the vibrating message of the early Franciscan women, who sowed the seed for future generations. They played an important role in Franciscan history; they kept the flame burning; they responded according to the signs of their times and passed on their courage to succeeding generations. Towards the second half of the nineteenth century, following the rich tradition of these women, Mary of the Passion, the Foundress of the Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, walked the path of truth in love. Her sisters continue to walk that path today in five continents of the world and in seventy-eight countries.

### **Early Life**

Helene de Chappotin, later called Mary of the Passion, was born in Nantes, in Brittany, in the North of France, on May 21, 1839. Her aristocratic, yet deeply Christian, family was known for its love and attachment to the pope and the Church as well as its unshaken loyalty to the King. It was a "joined" family—her aunt had six children and Helene's family had five children, she being the youngest. The four parents and eleven children lived in complete harmony. The boys were educated in the Jesuits' schools and the girls were educated at home. Helene loved her parents, so much so that when the Bishop of Nachaz visited her family and spoke about the need for missionaries, Helene immediately responded: "I don't want to leave my mother. . . . I'll be a Missionary."<sup>1</sup> These two phrases seem to be a contradiction, but they were actualized in her life. The image of her mother was very strong in her and she lived that image throughout her life.

Endowed with a very gifted nature, Helene was being prepared by God for her special role in life, that of a foundress of the first religious institute in the Church with a universal mission. A real genius, gifted with a strong temperament, she loved in a strong way and wanted to be loved in return. She had the qualities of a leader.

### **Daughter of Francis**

In 1859, at the age of twenty, Helene first encountered the spirit of Francis. One day, by chance, she entered the chapel of the Poor Clares at Nantes to pray and to seek orientation for her life. As if urged by an irresistible feeling, she asked to see the Mother Abbess. This was a decisive moment for her as she records it many years later:

Never before could I say, "Here is where I belong!" . . . But that day my vocation was settled, although not even I realized the fact. I became a child of St. Francis just then . . . and I have always remained one . . . in spite of everything that has happened.<sup>2</sup>

On December 9, 1860, Helene entered the Poor Clares. This was heaven for her, though short-lived. Having been with the Poor Clares only a little over a month, Helene had gone to the chapel to do some spiritual reading. She was startled as she sat in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament facing a big crucifix. She distinctly heard these words addressed to her: "Are you willing to be crucified in the place of the Holy Father?"<sup>3</sup> Years later she would say that she did not know whether she heard those words with her bodily ears or in her heart. She only knew that she was being questioned in the very depths of her being.

Persons of every generation have heard similar invitations to dedicate every fiber of their being to God's work in the world. They heard these invitations in terms of the situations in their time in history and according to their own experience of it. Francis heard this call as a man on the level of action: "Go, repair my house." Helene received this same call, but she heard it as a woman on the level of sacrifice and self-giving: "Are you willing to be crucified in the place of the Holy Father?" She heard the call as a nineteenth-century French noble-woman, in terms of suffering in the place of the Pope whom her family saw as being wrongly persecuted at that time.

Helene soon fell seriously ill and her father and brother insisted that she come home. When she was restored to health, she joined the Congregation of Mary Reparatrix, and as a novice was sent to India, where the Jesuit Fathers had invited the sisters to train Indian women in the religious life. Under the able leadership of Helene, who was now known as Mary of the Passion, the sisters undertook a variety of works for the welfare of the poor in India, especially women and children.

## The Birth of a New Congregation

Very soon there arose an internal crisis which left her no option but to leave the congregation along with nineteen of her thirty-three sisters. These sisters turned to her for leadership and guidance. At the age of thirty-seven, she traveled back to Rome by boat while suffering from a severe heart condition. She soon obtained permission from Pope Pius IX to found a new institute of sisters who would devote themselves exclusively to the missions—to go to any corner of the world, to render any service that might be needed. This was how the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary was born on January 6, 1877. Mary of the Passion did not want to be a foundress, but God had prepared her for this great mission. The new conditions of society required a more relaxed type of religious life rather than a very strict enclosure. In accord with the signs of her times, Mary of the Passion brought about in the Church an institute of consecrated women who would embrace a mixed way of life. When she died twenty-seven years later, the congregation had over two thousand women from four continents, serving in a variety of works—educational, medical, and social.

## Charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

The early years of Mary of the Passion reflect very clearly the five elements of the charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary—Adoration, Victimhood, Missionary, Marian, and Franciscan. The unity of these five elements shaped her spirituality. She said that “Adoration is the seal of our vocation.” In the nineteenth century, Eucharistic adoration was an expression of contemplative prayer. Victim-offering, a devotion of the nineteenth century, was for Mary of the Passion a state, a radical surrender to God. It was a living “yes” in which she saw a double attitude—a state of joy and a state of suffering.

All the years in India had made Mary of the Passion a strong missionary. Later in her life she recalled that those were her fruitful years. According to her, mission is in the heart before extending to activity. She said that her Institute was born for service, not only of one type, but any service which women could do. Once she was asked: “What is the limit of your apostolate?” Her prompt reply was: “What you as a woman can undertake is your limit.” She believed that the whole world was home.

The nineteenth century was called the Marian century, and devotion to Mary was encouraged by the pope. Mary of the Passion defined Mary as a way within the way—the special path leading to her Son. She wanted to make each community a Nazareth, in which the sisters would support one another and remain in silence. On her first profession day she asked for the gift of “Love for our Lady.”

Mary of the Passion had developed an attraction to Franciscanism when

she was with the Poor Clares. As soon as she became the Foundress of the Institute, therefore, she desired to enter into the Third Order of Francis and to be recognized by the Church as such. A providential encounter with the Franciscan friar Raphael Delarbre in June 1882 led her to begin the process. The immediate event which induced her to take such a step was the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Auspicato Concessum* (September 17, 1882) on the occasion of the seventh centenary of the birth of Francis. In the encyclical the pope spoke of the Third Order as a great gift of Francis to the whole world and of his hope to explain to the Christian world the application of Franciscan principles.

Imbued with an immense love for the Church, Mary hastened to obey the Pope's appeal to the whole Christian world. She asked to be received as a Franciscan Tertiary, and at the Aracoeli in October 1882 the Minister General, Father Bernardino, welcomed her into the Third Order.

## Affiliation to the Seraphic Order

It was not enough for Mary of the Passion to become a Franciscan herself; she wanted her sisters to share in the same favor and to become affiliated to the Third Order. In her written petition to Pope Leo XIII, she said among other things:

For twenty-two years the spirit of St. Francis has been attracting me. Having become Superior of our young congregation, I wish to preserve it from worldliness and to see it imbued with the spirit of charity, poverty and Gospel simplicity.<sup>4</sup>

Deeply convinced that God wanted the Institute itself to be Franciscan, Mary of the Passion wrote to Pope Leo XIII on February 18, 1883, asking him that the name “Franciscan” be accorded to the Missionaries of Mary. Her deeply cherished desire was brought to realization on August 12, 1885, by a decree that placed the Institute under Franciscan direction. On that same day, the constitutions written at the Coliseum received their first approbation by the Holy See. Thus the Institute became the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. In spite of difficulties and sufferings endured by Mary of the Passion, she possessed a true Franciscan spirit of joyful interior poverty. In one of her writings she said: “I have met many spiritualities. I have taken a little honey from each one and gathered together all this honey into the Franciscan one.” As a child she had had a passionate attachment to the Holy Father and to the Church. Later she saw her call and mission within the horizons of the Church. Reflecting further on the call of Francis in a period when the world was turned away from God and gave itself to wealth, prestige, power, and consumerism, she led a whole congregation to embrace the Gospel way of life.

## Personal Hardships and Triumphs

Mary of the Passion, had the courage to walk in Francis's footsteps. The beginning years of the foundation of the Institute were marked by tremendous struggles, sufferings, and misunderstandings. In 1883, in an order given by Leo XIII, Mary was deposed from her charge and the sisters were asked to elect another superior general. She was forbidden to communicate with her daughters in India.<sup>5</sup> In obedience, she resigned her office and placed her sacrifice at the feet of the Blessed Virgin who gave special protection to her little group for nearly a year. During this period, her love for the Eucharist was deepened and she found great peace. In spite of the humiliation, she remained joyful. With the arrival of Easter Sunday she remarked: "The Alleluia of the little missionaries is sad but nevertheless heaven may discover one consolation at least in our poor dwelling; there is a peace of agony, and it is here."<sup>6</sup>

Her charism, born out of the contradictory elements in her life, grew through her long period of silence and suffering. God had prepared her to live her charism through victimhood as her spiritual director assured her saying:

Your suffering and desolation are the blessing of your Institute. You must not be surprised at any mortification or trial. The plant takes root in the death of a seed and you are this seed.<sup>7</sup>

In 1884, having gone through all the documents of the case, the Holy See declared that Mary of the Passion was innocent of the charges of which she had been accused. Leo XIII now restored her to her daughters and provided for the future status of the Institute.<sup>8</sup> The re-election of Mary was in order, and a chapter was held immediately. The constitutions were revised and presented to the Congregation of Propaganda of the Faith and were approved very shortly thereafter. Mary of the Passion now turned her attention to the religious training of her young novices. Fifty of them welcomed her upon her return to Chatelets. With a deep feeling of gratitude, she contemplated the work of God and said: "Oh Lord, while I prayed and wept, you have made the desert bloom."<sup>9</sup>

In 1900, during the lifetime of Mary of the Passion, seven of her sisters were martyred in China. She loved her sisters tenderly, referred to these women as "my seven joys and seven sorrows," and said that their blood was the seed of the Institute—an expression similar to that of Francis of Assisi, when his first friars were martyred in Morocco.

Attentive to the signs of the times and with formation of her sisters a primary concern, Mary of the Passion sent the sisters on mission with this instruction: "Study our people's ways, try to understand the meaning behind their caste system. Learn the language and truly respect their customs."<sup>10</sup> She was also interested in all aspects of society and all that affected society. She

considered youth an important group. Therefore, she started vocational training centers for young girls so that, as women, they might have a positive influence on society. After the French Revolution, seeing the hopeless conditions of the working class, she worked for social justice because she realized that it was the foundation for all virtues. She also saw that it was important to educate the workers in both professional and human formation.

She labored for the promotion of women, starting workrooms where women were taught to earn their living in the dignity and grace of work. Every one of her houses had a workroom. She opened professional schools for women, encouraged rich women to form associations and to help the poor, and inspired the Church to discover the importance of the laity in society. When asked, she never refused to start any foundation in the missions to serve the poor and the lepers.

The journey of the early Franciscan women was a path to self-knowledge. Their years of experience and the desire to know and love God taught them a number of techniques for directing their own growth and shaping their lives in response to various situations in which they could be instruments to lead others to self-knowledge and to God. A Franciscan woman of her own time, Mary of the Passion had within her two contrasting elements. She was deeply rooted in tradition and was also open to the signs of the times. Her dynamic personality, exceptional power of organization, foresight and energy in the multiplication of convents, and her clear appreciation of the modern need for missionary zeal, were powerful forces that would affect contemporary and future generations. It was in the Franciscan charism that Mary of the Passion found the living environment in which her Institute could develop in unity its many effective elements.

---

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Georges Goyau, *Valiant Women*, trans. George Telford (London: Sheed & Ward, 1936), 9.

<sup>2</sup>Agnes Willmann, *Everywhere People Waiting* (North Quincy, MA: The Christopher Publishing House, 1973), 57.

<sup>3</sup>Goyau, 12.

<sup>4</sup>Willmann, 159.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas F. Cullen, *Mother Mary of the Passion* (Providence: Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, 1927), 70.

<sup>6</sup>Cullen, 64.

<sup>7</sup>Cullen, 63.

<sup>8</sup>Cullen, 69.

<sup>9</sup>Cullen, 72.

<sup>10</sup>Willmann, 73.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Anthony Carrozzo, OFM**, is a friar of Holy Name Province, New York. He is Vice-President for the Franciscan Charism at St. Bonaventure University and teaches courses in the School of Franciscan Studies. He has recently edited *In Solitude and Dialogue: Contemporary Franciscans Theologize* (The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

**André Cirino, OFM**, is a member of the Immaculate Conception province, New York. He lectures on a variety of Franciscan topics and is actively involved in developing Franciscan retreats. He co-authored with Josef Raischl *Franciscan Solitude* (The Franciscan Institute, 1995).

**James Fukes, OFMConv.**, is a friar of the Immaculate Conception Province, New York. He has been serving, for the past two and a half years, as a hospital chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, New York.

**Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF**, is a member of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, Reading, Pennsylvania. She is author of *Retrieving a Living Tradition: Angelina of Montegiove: Franciscan, Tertiary, Beguine* (Franciscan Institute, 1997). She is presently an adjunct faculty member at Alvernia College in Reading.

**Florine Lobo, FMM**, is a member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and a 1996 graduate of The Franciscan Institute. She serves as director of novices at Nava Deepthi Novitiate in Bangalore, India, in addition to teaching occasional courses on the Franciscan tradition.

**Robert F. Pawell, OFM**, is a friar of the Sacred Heart Province. An itinerant preacher, he travels with paper and pens, supplying *The Cord* with illustrations that come to him as he journeys and preaches.

**Maura Riley, OSF** (d. 1995), a sister of St. Francis of Millvale, Pennsylvania, received a Masters degree in theology at St. Bonaventure University in 1953 and taught Scripture for many years. She contributed a biographical series to *The Cord* in the early 50s.

**Frances Ann Thom, OSF**, is a Sister of the Third Order of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York. She is a long-time contributor to *The Cord*, has been on its editorial board, and is now poetry editor. She presently serves as Mission Educator in Honolulu, Hawaii, for her congregation's health care system.

**Rose Raymond Wagner, OSF**, is also a member of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York. She taught high school art for many years and now serves in spiritual ministry at Christ the King Retreat Center in Syracuse.

**Winifred Whelan, OSF**, a School Sister of St. Francis of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is on the theology faculty of St. Bonaventure University. She authored "Postmodernism in the Work of Julia Kristeva," in *Religious Education: An Interfaith Journal of Spirituality, Growth, and Transformation* (Summer, 1999).

## BOOK REVIEWS

Dava Sobel. *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith and Love*. New York: Walker and Company, 1999.

Since the Second Vatican Council's challenge to us to return to our sources, Franciscan scholars have analyzed, translated, and commented on the letters of St. Clare. Franciscan spiritual directors have used them as a source for retreat conferences and quiet reflection during directed retreats. While few in number, these letters are resplendent with insights into the mystical spirituality of St. Clare. They also reveal much about Poor Clare life in the thirteenth century. Now, thanks to the talent of Dava Sobel, we have another set of far more numerous letters that reveal much about seventeenth-century Poor Clare life. Sr. Maria Celeste writes these extraordinary letters to her famous and beloved father, Galileo Galilei. If the letters of Clare soar to mystical heights like the letters of St. John, the letters of Maria Celeste are far more like the letter of St. James in style and content.

These letters form the core of Dava Sobel's splendid book *Galileo's Daughter*, a sympathetic retelling of the Galileo story through the lens of his daughter. They are widely quoted throughout the book. They are also available in their entirety on the website <http://mariaceleste.rice.edu>. The letters reveal both significant similarities and differences between Clare and Maria Celeste. The differences are obvious in their attitudes toward their fathers and ultimately toward their calling. The similarities are evident in their understanding of the privilege of poverty and the contemplative experience.

We know well the stories of Clare's conversion: her attraction to the evangelical life of Francis, her desire to embrace poverty as a privilege, and the freedom arising from such a privilege. We also know that this choice unfortunately resulted in alienation from her family, as it had for Francis. Unlike Clare and Francis, young Virginia Galilei hardly had a choice. She became Sr. Maria Celeste because she was the illegitimate daughter of Galileo and his Venetian mistress, Marina Gamba. Such illegitimacy made it practically impossible for her to marry; so, like many of the young women of Florence, she entered the monastery. Unlike her younger sister, Livia, who became Sr. Arcangela, Maria Celeste not only accepted this lifestyle but embraced it as the letters clearly



indicate. She was both content as a Poor Clare nun and a productive member of the community.

Galileo described his daughter as a woman of "exquisite mind, singular goodness, and most tenderly attached to me." Unlike St. Clare, Sr. Maria Celeste maintained a loving relationship with her father throughout her life. This attachment is obvious throughout the 124 surviving letters, some of which detail her caring for her father by washing, bleaching, and repairing the white collars with which he is always portrayed. Some request his help in such simple things as the repair of a clock or in more complex matters as finding a suitable chaplain for the sisters. And in some very brave letters she supports her father's scientific findings.

Indeed, her father was correct when he observed that she had an exquisite mind. Not only was she aware of his studies of the heavens but she also commented on his positions and probably assisted him in rewriting his texts for publication. She was enthralled with his work, often encouraging him and sometimes cautioning him about his enemies in the Academy as well as in the Church. Her very name looked to the heavens. As Dava Sobel recently commented, Maria Celeste understood what her father believed, namely that the Bible is about how to go to heaven not how the heavens go. She knew the difference between revealed truth and discovered truth. She also knew that the proper interpretation of the Bible shows a relationship between the two.

Her father was also correct that his daughter possessed a singular goodness. This is evident not only in her care for her father but also in her care for her sisters whom she served as infirmarian and apocotherapist. Particularly touching and revealing is her concern for her blood sister, Sr. Arcangela, a seemingly fragile and melancholy Poor Clare. Astonishingly enough, Poor Clares in this seventeenth-century monastery could purchase private cells for themselves to escape dormitory living. It seems this was one way for this poverty-privileged monastery to raise money to accommodate the basic needs of the nuns. But these cells were few and far between. Maria Celeste purchased a very small one for herself but gave it to her sister who needed it not only because of her personal problems but also as an escape from her novice mistress!

Ultimately, however, this book is about the Galileo discovered through the letters of this wonderfully religious daughter. In writing the book from this fresh perspective, Sobel does not present us with another "issues book" of science versus religion. Rather she presents a highly religious portrait of a flamboyant and irascible Italian who was also a loyal son of the Church. Sobel fairly recounts the intrigue surrounding Galileo's trials and troubles. There are several tragedies here. But the greatest tragedy of Galileo's life is not to be found in his trials and imprisonments nor even in his failing health. Rather the

greatest tragedy of his life was the early and unexpected death of his beloved daughter, Sr. Maria Celeste. One can only imagine the sadness that this brought to his already difficult life.

Galileo is buried in a magnificent tomb in the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce in Florence. What we now know is that Sr. Maria Celeste, his beloved Virginia, is resting there with him, a tribute to a far more lasting relationship between father and daughter than Clare was ever able to have with her own father.

This book is well worth reading simply for its feminist take on a well-known tale. For Franciscans, particularly Poor Clares, it is also valuable for its portrait of Poor Clare life in the seventeenth century. Perhaps some budding Franciscan scholar will someday analyze these letters for us from this perspective.

Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

---

Franco Mormando. *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

The book is so well written, so intriguing and story-like, that there is no putting it down. At the same time, it is well-documented—from the writings of the Saint Bernardino of Siena himself, the scribes who took down his words as he preached, other writings about the saint, and historical sources regarding the Italian town of Siena and the surrounding cities. It tells riveting stories, as well as asks and attempts to answer the question, why was Bernardino so preoccupied with witches, "sodomites," and Jews?

Mormando concedes that much of the teaching concerning witches existed before the 1400s, but claims that Bernardino's preaching added to the flames of anti-witch rhetoric as well as to the actual mania for burning at the stake those accused of witchcraft. His sermons are filled with information about the ways of the witch. "She used to go before daybreak to St. Peter's Square, and she would have with her certain little jars of ointments made out of the plants that had been gathered on the feast of St. John the Baptist and on the Assumption" (61). Mormando points out that the feast of St. John the Baptist is on June 24, which is the traditional day for the ancient pagan seasonal festival of midsummer. Bernardino relates these "facts" and other stories he's heard, "manipulating them into the desired emotional responses, awe, fear and anger," which he then expected would be expressed in the form of witch hunts and executions (80). To Bernardino's dismay, the Siennese did not take up the challenge as quickly or as seriously as he would have liked. He said: "If only I

could make the same thing happen here in Siena! [as had happened in Rome] Oh, let's send up to the Lord God a little bit of the same incense right here in Siena!" (105-106), the incense, of course, being from the burning of the witches. Historians who study the growth of the witch craze all point to a dramatic rise in anti-witch literature and prosecution precisely at the time of Bernardino's preaching (108).

Another target of Bernardino's fiery preaching was the "sodomite." Mormando avoids the word homosexual, partly because the word did not exist in Bernardino's time, but mainly because the word sodomy had a different definition in his time. According to Bernardino, men become sodomites by not taking a wife (112). Anything "against nature" would be considered sodomy. For example, "What does 'against nature' mean? Every time you go against the natural use, that is, in such a way that conception and pregnancy cannot take place" (113).

Although sodomy was considered "the unmentionable sin," Bernardino spent much of his time talking about it and retelling stories he had heard. Sodomy is not only a sin against nature, but a sin against God. It is the "worst sin," even though at other times, the sin he happened to be preaching about was also the worst (121). In fact, sodomy was such an evil that it was better to die than to tolerate it. A wife must rather be killed than to allow her husband to go against nature, and women were urged not to allow their sons to associate with sodomites, but rather they should send their daughters. "Female sexual violation, even the gang rape of one's own adolescent daughters, was deemed a lesser evil than male sodomy" (123). Who was to blame for boys becoming sodomites? It was mainly their mothers who effeminize them by the way they dress them (135).

One of the fascinating aspects of Mormando's book is that he asks the question why Bernardino was so against witches and sodomites. He is quick to admit that he doesn't know, but he speaks of his suspicions on the matter. He goes back to Bernardino's childhood in which both parents died when he was very young. As a result, his childhood was dominated by women relatives. One author refers to this as his "petticoat government," because of the lack of any male role model. Mormando also wonders whether Bernardino himself might have experienced sodomy, since the practice was so very prevalent at the time. Men did not marry as a rule until they were thirty years old.

The last "demon" in Bernardino's life discussed in the book is the Jews. Traditionally, St. Bernardino has been quoted as being totally anti-Jew. But Mormando does not think that the preacher added any new flames to this fire. Only nine or ten pages of printed text among the several thousand pages of his published collected works are explicitly anti-Jewish (208). The laws had already forbidden Christians to eat or drink with Jews, to seek help from a Jew-

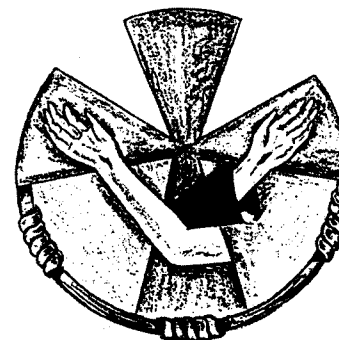
ish doctor, or to bathe in the company of Jews. Jews might not build new synagogues, nor enlarge old ones, etc. In Padua, the people were not insisting that the Jews wear their identifying badges, causing Bernardino to chide them. But in general, Bernardino preached love for the Jews. If a Jewish person was in need, the Christian should be ready to help, loving the sinner, but hating the sin. "I ask whether one is ever permitted to do good to Jews or to love them. I respond that, in so far as general love is concerned, yes, it is permitted to love them, but where special love is concerned, no, it is not; you must avoid loving them with a special love" (171).

What Bernardino did preach against vehemently was usury. This has been taken by other historians to mean Jews. But Mormando counters that there were many Christians who practiced usury as well. One Christian listener came to Bernardino and complained that he had sent them all to hell by his preaching against usury. It seems that Bernardino was more concerned about how usury affected the poor. He says: "It is usually the case that when wealth and money are concentrated into fewer and fewer hands and purses, it is a sign of the deteriorating state of the city and the land" (189). As a result of his preaching, Siena passed a law against usury, but only two years later, the law was overturned (201).

The book ends by drawing some intriguing conclusions: "Since the dawn of recorded history, and most likely even before, human action and reaction, even when masked by arrogance, bravado and aggression, have in great part been determined by this one emotion, fear. Human history has too often been the sad spectacle of men and women, individually and collectively—the high and the mighty no less than the humble and the lowly—moving about and responding to their environment and other human beings out of undisguised animal fear" (234). Fear, it turns out, is the preacher's demon. Julia Kristeva, in *Strangers To Ourselves*, concludes that the reason we are afraid of "other" kinds

of people is that we are afraid to look at the otherness in ourselves. Mormando echoes this when he says: "How much easier and gratifying it was for people to blame sodomites for the present woes and tribulations, rather than God, the mysterious forces of nature, or themselves" (163).

Winifred Whelan, OSF



Rose Raymond Wagner, OSF

From *The Franciscan Institute*

**FRANCISCAN STUDIES,  
THE DIFFERENCE WOMEN ARE MAKING.**

Volume 8 of Spirit and Life Series

Edited by Margaret Carney, OSF, and Elise Saggau, OSF

- Adele Thibaudeau* Pentecost Still Happens  
*Dominic Monti* Roots of the Tradition  
*Ilia Delio* The Renaissance of Franciscan Theology:  
Retrieving the Tradition of the Good  
*Gabriele Üblein* Speaking a Woman's Vision:  
Feminist and/or Franciscan?  
*Paul Lachance* Studies of Medieval Franciscan Women:  
Current French and Italian Scholarship  
*Margaret Carney* Women and Franciscan Studies:  
The State of the Question  
*Elise Saggau* The Franciscan Federation as a Promoter  
of Women's Scholarship  
*Roberta McKelvie* A Personal Experience  
*Maria Calisi* Bonaventure's Trinitarian Theology  
as a Feminist Resource

\*Price \$12.00. 130 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-164-6

**RETRIEVING A LIVING TRADITION:  
ANGELINA OF MONTEGIOVE  
FRANCISCAN, TERTIARY, BEGUINE**

by Roberta Agnes McKelvie, OSF

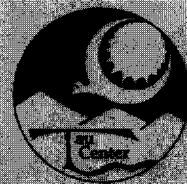
*The story of Angelina and the religious movement associated with her from within the tradition—an expanded and revised perspective on the historical significance of Angelina as a Franciscan tertiary and Italian Beguine.*

*This book represents a significant step forward in telling one of the many untold stories of a leader among Third Order Franciscan women.*

\*\$13.00 211 pages paper

ISBN: 1-57659-131-x

\*Prices are subject to change.



**TAU CENTER**

A Place for Franciscans  
to nurture and  
strengthen their charism.

**FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

*June 2 - June 9, 2000*

*Presenter: Gabriele Üblein, OSF*

Dedicated spiritual practices enhance appreciation of the holy in daily life and provide a means for individual development and integration effective at both a personal and planetary level. Informed by a rich Franciscan theological tradition and a contemporary Jungian psychological perspective, this retreat offers opportunity to participate in the transforming mystery of divine energy and grace.

Cost: \$350.00

Registration deadline: May 26

**GOD'S WAYS SEEN THROUGH BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES**

*July 4 - July 11, 2000*

*Presenter: Paul Johnson, OP*

The retreat conferences will revolve around particular people in the Scriptures. The reflection will lift up God's surprising and at times puzzling ways. It will sift and distill those ways in which personalities speak to us in our day. One conference a day, Eucharistic liturgy, and communal prayer in the morning and evening provide worship opportunities and input for private meditation.

Cost: \$350.00

Registration deadline: June 27

**FRANCISCAN CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

*July 30 - August 5, 2000*

*Presenters: Valerie Kilian, OSF, Ramona Miller, OSF*

This retreat provides opportunity to hear the voices of Franciscan mystics. One conference each day will suggest readings from their writings. Eucharistic liturgy and communal morning and evening prayer with faith sharing options will provide a rhythm for each day's contemplative prayer.

Cost: \$350.00

Registration deadline: July 21

For more information or to register, please contact:

**TAU CENTER**  
511 Hilbert Street  
Winona, MN 55987  
Ph. (507) 454-2993 FAX: (507) 453-0910  
e-mail: [taucenr@luminet.net](mailto:taucenr@luminet.net)

## Celebrating the Life and Holiness of Mother Marianne of Molokai

Two beautiful, factual books  
about the legacy of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF

### *Mother Marianne of Molokai*

*by Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan*

This book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF. It is a book that will inspire and uplift the soul of every reader. The author, Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan, is a member of the same order as Mother Marianne and has written this book with great love and devotion. The book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF.

### *Valiant Woman of Hawaii* *Mother Marianne of Molokai*

*by Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan*

This book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF. It is a book that will inspire and uplift the soul of every reader. The author, Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan, is a member of the same order as Mother Marianne and has written this book with great love and devotion. The book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF.

## *The Franciscan Institute*

*Franciscan Institute*  
*St. Bonaventure University*  
*St. Bonaventure, NY 14778*

### *Franciscan Deeds of Mercy*

*by Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan*  
*St. Bonaventure University*  
*St. Bonaventure, NY 14778*

This book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF. It is a book that will inspire and uplift the soul of every reader. The author, Sister Mary Margaret M. O'Sullivan, is a member of the same order as Mother Marianne and has written this book with great love and devotion. The book is a beautiful, factual account of the life and holiness of Mother Marianne Cape, OSF.

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Ph.: 716-375-2105 FAX: 716-375-2156



New! *From The Franciscan Institute* New!

AVAILABLE NOW!

## *In Solitude and Dialogue* *Contemporary Franciscans Theologize*

Edited with an Introduction by  
Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

Gerald M. Dolan  
Gabriele Üblein  
Jane Kopas

Words of Hope in Troubled Times  
Creation: A Franciscan Conversion Conversation  
Mortal Diamond: The Body in Theological

Anthropology

Regis A. Duffy  
John J. Burkhard  
Xavier J. Seubert

Contexts for a Franciscan Theology of the Eucharist  
Being a Person in the Church  
The Cross and Death of Jesus: A Franciscan

Interpretation

Joan Mueller

Models of Evangelical Poverty: Eschatological  
Implications

Adapted from the editor's Introduction:

Francis's *Rule for Hermitages* offers Franciscan scholars a theological method—a call to gather together, to pray in community, to explore thoughts, feelings, and desires for contemporary Franciscan life based upon their own intellectual *journeys into God*. This book came to be precisely out of such a process. . . . We could not simply transport our heritage into our postmodern world. The truths may be the same; the issues certainly are not. We needed to articulate the encounter between knowledge and love, wisdom and compassion. What we discovered in solitude we explored in fraternity. What we discovered in fraternity enriched our solitude. May these insights enrich the Franciscan life and vocation of our readers.

ISBN: 1-57659-167-0

*The Franciscan Institute*

ANNOUNCES

A FORUM

ON

## WORDS OF PENANCE DEEDS OF PEACE

FRANCISCAN MISSION IN  
OUR NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT

June 6-11, 2000

Colorado Springs, Colorado  
The Franciscan Center

- Exploring mission from the Franciscan perspective in the United States' changing cultural landscape.
- Addressing the theological foundations for Franciscan mission.
- Investigating strategies for the effective use of the newly revised international study on the Franciscan missionary charism known in the United States as BUILD WITH LIVING STONES.

Cost: \$600.00 inclusive of registration, forum, housing, meals.

# FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

## MILLENNIUM CONFERENCE

August 14-17, 2000

Albuquerque, New Mexico

### Theme:

**Overflowing Goodness  
A Gift of the Trinity**

### Place:

Hyatt Regency Albuquerque  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Maria Calisi, Ph.D.  
Margaret Carney, OSF  
Joseph Chinnici, OFM



**FRANCISCAN FEDERATION  
THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY  
1965-2000**

2000

## FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

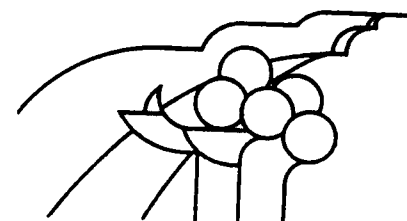
2000

in  
**Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats**

**All sessions in 2000 will be conducted  
for Franciscans in the Far East and Africa  
to celebrate the Millennium.**

A three-month ministerial and experiential program born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors, parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, missionaries, community leadership, personal renewal.



*For more information contact:*

Tom Speier, ofm; Marilyn Joyce, osf  
St. Francis Extension  
2014 Springdale Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45231  
Phone: (513) 825-0674 Fax: (513) 541-9347



### FRANCISCAN SOLITUDE

April 13-16, 2000  
André Cirino, OFM  
Based on his book  
Cost: \$225.00

### CONFERENCE RETREAT

June 2-9, 2000  
Timothy Fitzgerald, CP  
Cost: \$275.00

### TRIDUUM RETREAT

April 20-23, 2000  
J. Lora Dambroski, OSF  
Bernard Tickerboof, TOR  
Cost: \$150.00

### DIRECTED RETREAT

June 11-17, 2000  
J. Lora Dambroski, OSF  
Malachy Broderick, FSC  
Joseph Markalonis, TOR  
Bernard Tickerboof, TOR  
Cost: \$300.00

For further information, contact:

Mimi DeGregory, Office Manager  
Franciscan Spirit and Life Center

3605 McRoberts Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15234

412-881-9207; e-mail: FSLCCOM@aol.com

### THE FRANCISCAN THIRD ORDER REGULAR IN THE UNITED STATES: ORIGINS, EARLY YEARS, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

by Margaret Slowick, OSF

This book is the thesis work of Margaret Slowick, OSF, of Tiffin, Ohio. It offers for the first time a chronology of the founding of all existing congregations of the Third Order Regular in the United States, a brief narrative describing the beginnings of each foundation, and some recent developments.

*"Readers . . . will find themselves overwhelmed at the magnitude of the obstacles overcome, the persistent hope in the face of bigotry and rejection, the multitude of acts of heroic service that came to define many of the congregations that survived their first years. . . . Religious who were unsinkable and insatiable emerge from this overview to haunt us as we struggle with questions of vision and viability in the century to come" (Margaret Carney, OSF, Foreword).*

This is a "must" resource for  
all Third Order Regular archives and libraries.

129 pp. +xii, paper

\$15.00  
plus shipping and handling

Order from: The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Ph.: 716-375-2105 FAX: 716-375-2156



## THE FRANCISCAN CENTER



of the

## WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION

CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE  
IN A WEEKEND CONFERENCE

### *Francis and Clare: New Evidence and New Images*

*A teaching symposium that will explore Francis and Clare based on new research. Primary emphasis will be given to the first volume of the new Omnibus: Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*

### *May 27 - 28, 2000*

Speakers include:

*Wayne Hellman, OFM Conv; Dominic Monti, OFM;  
Ingrid Peterson, OSF; Bill Short, OFM*

Registration fee: \$25.00

Conference fee: \$75.00

*The Franciscan Center at WTU was created over ten years ago to enrich our gospel ministries with contemporary studies in the Franciscan charism.*

For more information write:

The Franciscan Center of the  
Washington Theological Union  
6896 Laurel Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20012

# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation  
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix  
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor  
Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, and reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: franstor@genevaonline.com

\$16.50 per copy plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.



## **Franciscan Spiritual Center**

Summer Retreat Offerings 2000

### **Preached Retreat: The Mysteries of the Rosary - The Mysteries of Life**

May 26-June 2

*Presenter: Rev. Paul G. Mast*

Registration Deadline: May 1 \$310 (\$50 deposit)

### **Directed Retreat July 5-12**

*Directors: Clare A. D'Auria, OSF, Frank Doyle, OSA,  
Kathleen Gannon, OSF, Julie McCole, OSF*

Registration Deadline: June 15 \$350 (\$50 deposit)

### **Guided Retreat: Jesus' Beatitudes and Our Response July 16-23**

*Presenter: Michael Crosby, OFM Cap.*

Registration Deadline: June 22 \$325 (\$50 deposit)

### **T'ai Chi Chih Retreat: A Moving Meditation August 2-9**

*Presenters: Antonia Cooper, OSF, and Celeste Crine, OSF*

Registration Deadline: June 30 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

### **Praying with the Feminine Face of God September 6-13**

*Director: Kathryn O'Connell Cleary*

Registration Deadline: August 6 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

### **Directed Retreat September 6-13**

*Directors: Clare A. D'Auria, OSF, Ellen Duffy, OSF, Beth Flannery, RSM*

Registration Deadline: August 6 \$300 (\$50 deposit)

The Franciscan Spiritual Center is situated in the southeast wing of Our Lady of Angels Convent, the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Located about 20 miles south of Philadelphia and just north of the Delaware state line, the Center consists of 21 bedrooms with private bath, 10 bedrooms sharing a common bath, lounge, kitchenette, large meeting space, spiritual direction rooms, prayer room, and a ground-level multipurpose space which houses a second lounge as well as library, listening center, arts and crafts area, and exercise corner. There is an elevator to all levels but a few additional stairs to the multipurpose space and some spiritual direction rooms. The Center is fully climate controlled and handicapped accessible from the outside. Quiet, shaded grounds provide ample space for walking and solitude. Reservations are requested.

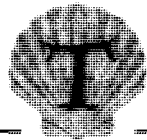
For more information on these or other programs or to register, contact:

### **Franciscan Spiritual Center**

609 S. Convent Road  
Aston, PA 19014

Phone: 610-558-6152; Fax: 612-558-6122; E-mail: fsc@osfphila.org





## *Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs*

Jubilee 2000 marks our 29th year. The Franciscan Pilgrimage Experience is a cross-cultural journeying in the Spirit of Francis and Clare to nurture an encounter with Jesus Christ through the spirituality of place. We commit ourselves to serve as sisters and brothers, fostering conversion to a deeper Gospel life and promoting the future vitality of the Franciscan heritage.

### **JUBILEE 2000 PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCES**

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimages to Assisi & Rome**

May 8 - 23 / Sixteen Days • July 1 - 16 / Sixteen Days  
September 14 - 23 / Eleven Days  
October 13 - 25 / Twelve Days • October 27 - November 5 / Ten Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land**

April 29 - May 13 / Fifteen Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage and the Arts**

May 3 - 18 / Sixteen Days

#### **Franciscan Study Pilgrimages**

June 3 - July 5 / Twenty-eight Days  
September 15 - October 8 / Twenty-four Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to Prague**

June 30 - July 9 / Ten Days

#### **Pilgrimage on Franciscan Solitude**

July 15 - August 4 / Twenty-one Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to Southern California Missions**

October 22 - 29 / Eight Days

#### **Pilgrimage Staff**

John Abela OFM	Roberta McKelvie OSF
Anne Amati OSF	Ramona Miller OSF
Tom Barton OSF	Roch Niemier OFM
Murray Bodo OFM	John Petrikovic OFMCap.
Margaret Carney OSF	Joanne Schatzlein OSF
André Cirino OFM	Giles Schinelli TOR
Benet Fonck OFM	Joseph Schwab OFM
Sue Koepf	Joseph Wood OFMConv.
Tod Lavery OFM	John Wojtowicz OFM

For more information,  
please contact:

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs  
1648 S. 37th St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53215

414-383-9870 Fx: 414-383-0335  
www.FranciscanPilgrimages.com  
georgiag@execpc.com

## INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

A distance learning program  
responding to the desire of Secular Franciscans  
to learn more about their unique identity as Franciscans  
in the contemporary world.

*offered through:*



OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

*currently offering:*

FRAN 201 Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World  
FRAN 202 The Franciscans: A Family History  
FRAN 204 Franciscan Spirituality

*Currently in preparation:*

Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings  
Servant Leadership for Secular Franciscans  
The Franciscan Sources

*proposed courses include:*

Christian and Franciscan Tradition  
Writings of Francis of Assisi  
Franciscan Ministry: Challenge and Response  
Integrative Project

*For more information contact:*

Saint Francis College Office of Continuing Education  
Loretto, PA 15940-0600 ~ phone: (814) 472-3219 ~ e-mail: ICFL@SFCPA.EDU

## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events, 2000

### Saturday, April 1

**Rebirth of a Charism**, at Friars' Spiritual Retreat Center, Graymoor, NY. Contact the Franciscan Federation, P.O. Box 29080, Washington, DC 20017; Ph. 202-529-2334 Fax: 202-529-7016

### Friday, April 7-Monday, April 10

**Franciscan Hermitage Experience**. With Mary Jo Chaves, OSF, Kathleen Dausen, OSF, Mary Smith, OSF. Contact: Phyllis Morris, OSF, 0858 SW Palatine Hill Rd., Portland, OR 97219; ph. 503-636-1590; email: frc@teleport.com

### Thursday, April 13-Sunday, April 16

**Franciscan Solitude**. With André Cirino, OFM; based on his book. At Spirit and Life Center. Contact: Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207.

### Saturday, April 15-Sunday, April 23

**Holy Week Retreat and Easter Triduum**. With Tod Laverty, OFM, and Tau staff. Tau Center, 511 Hilbert St., Winona, MN 55987; ph. 507-454-2993; fax 507-453-0910.

### Wednesday, April 19-Sunday, April 23

**Triduum Retreat**. With J. Lora Dambroski, OSF, and Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. At Spirit and Life Center. (See above.)

### Thursday, May 4-Monday, May 8

**Franciscan Challenge**. With Bill Hugo, OFMCap., Cathy Nelson, Ramona Miller, OSF. At Tau Center. Contact: (see above.)

### Friday, May 5-Sunday, May 7

**Franciscan Theme Weekend**. At Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Saturday, May 27-Sunday, May 28

**Francis and Clare: New Evidence and New Images**. With Wayne Hellman, OFMConv., Dominic Monti, OFM, Ingrid Peterson, OSF, Bill Short, OFM. At Washington Theological Union. Contact: The Franciscan Center of the Washington Theological Union, 6896 Laurel St. NW, Washington, DC 20012.

### Sunday, June 4-Friday, June 9

**Franciscan Spirituality for the New Millennium**. With Gabriele Uhlein, OSF. At Tau Center. Contact: (see above.)

### Tuesday, June 6-Sunday, June 11

**Words of Penance, Deeds of Peace**. Forum on Franciscan Mission. Sponsored by The Franciscan Institute. At The Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs. Contact: Noel Riggs, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778; ph. 716-375-2105; fax: 716-375-2156.

### Sunday, June 11-Saturday, June 17

**Directed Retreat**. With J. Lora Dambroski, OSF, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR, and Joseph Markalonis, TOR. At Spirit and Life Center. (See above.)

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenBern	Blessing for Brother Bernard	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	Test	Testament
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	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
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	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

**School of Franciscan Studies**  
**The Franciscan Institute**  
 June 26-July 28, 2000

JOIN US FOR  
 SUMMER SESSION  
 2000

**Courses:**

Robert Karris, OFM: *To Live the Gospel* (June 26-July 27)  
 Joseph Chinnici, OFM: *Franciscan Movement II* (June 26-July 7)  
 Dominic Monti, OFM: *Franciscan Movement I* (July 10-28)  
 Robert Stewart, OFM: *Francis: His Life and Charism* (June 26-July 7)  
 Ingrid Peterson, OSF: *Clare and Franciscan Women* (July 10-28)  
 Regis Duffy, OFM: *Franciscan Theology of the Word* (June 26-July 7)  
 David Haack, OFM: *Franciscan Paintings I: 13th-15th Centuries* (July 10-28)  
 Margaret Carney, OSF: *Franciscan Leadership* (June 27-July 7)  
 Anthony Carrozzo, OFM: *Formation in the Franciscan Tradition* (July 10-28)  
 Edward Coughlin, OFM: *Franciscan Spiritual Direction* (July 10-28)

For more information or for  
 application material please contact:



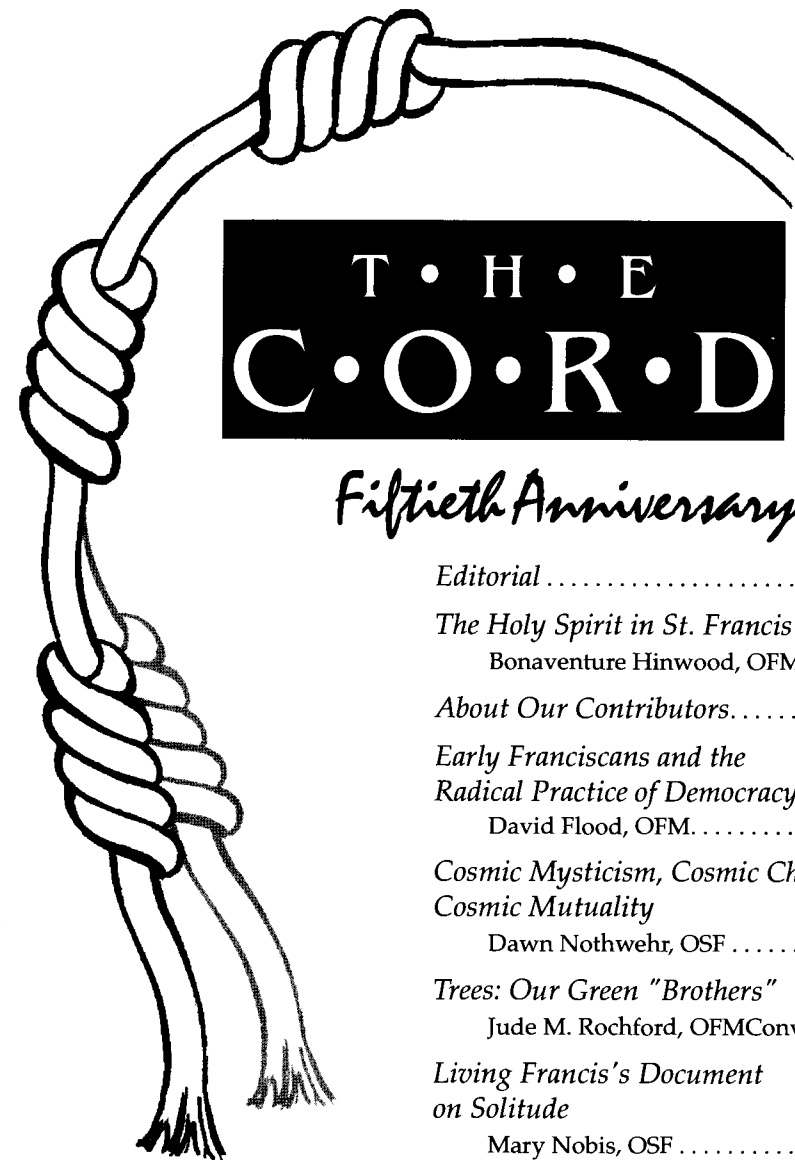
The Franciscan Institute  
 St. Bonaventure University  
 St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
 Phone: 716-375-2105  
 Fax: 716-375-2156

The Cord  
 The Franciscan Institute  
 St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid  
 at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
 and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:

PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR DESTROY THIS PERIODICAL  
 Return Postage Guaranteed.



T • H • E  
 C • O • R • D

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

Editorial .....	109
<i>The Holy Spirit in St. Francis</i> Bonaventure Hinwood, OFM .....	110
<i>About Our Contributors</i> .....	118
<i>Early Franciscans and the Radical Practice of Democracy</i> David Flood, OFM. ....	119
<i>Cosmic Mysticism, Cosmic Christ, Cosmic Mutuality</i> Dawn Nothwehr, OSF .....	125
<i>Trees: Our Green "Brothers"</i> Jude M. Rochford, OFMConv. ....	138
<i>Living Francis's Document on Solitude</i> Mary Nobis, OSF .....	143
<i>Voices from the Past</i> .....	148
<i>Book Review</i> Michael Blastic, OFM. ....	149
<i>Announcements</i> .....	154
<i>On the Franciscan Circuit</i> .....	164

**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF  
Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF  
Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM  
Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs  
Production Assistant: Geoffrey Lee

Editorial Board: Marie Beha, OSC, Murray Bodo, OFM, Mary C. Gurley, OSF  
Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR, Joseph Wood, OFM Conv.,  
and Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

**No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.**

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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). (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2). (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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.3 (2000)

## Editorial

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

Robert Karris, discussing Admonition 12, describes Francis's view of God:

God is All Good, Supreme Good. And God's gifts are just that, God's gifts. The Spirit empowers us to glory in our profoundly human condition of being a poor, humble beggar before God, the giver of All good. Why should we beggars exalt ourselves over other beggars? Should not our attitude be one of profound gratitude for all that the good God has given us?<sup>1</sup>

In this season of Pentecost, we focus again on how our human condition has been and is being transformed by the power of God at work in us. This Divine Compassion has entered our human situation in and through Jesus Christ, who, having lived a perfect human life, calls us to live as he did. Francis's impassioned desire to follow the Lord Jesus, to image him in his own imperfect way, to experience complete union with him, transformed him personally and broke him open as gift for the sake of others. Francis and his followers become in turn a spiritual gift to the Church and to the world. This is the "economy of gift" that characterizes our God whose very being is a dynamic of self-diffusive Love. The annual celebration of the Paschal Mysteries renews in us the impulse to contemplate our God as the Trinitarian Source of our own being. Our Franciscan tradition is rich with this impulse, calling us to a life of gratitude and praise.

In this issue of *The Cord*, we enjoy a variety of ways in which our brothers and sisters contemplate this reality. Bonaventure Hinwood explicitly considers how St. Bonaventure sees the Divine Spirit as profoundly active in the life of Francis. David Flood probes the issue of the early brothers' challenge to be faithful to their call to "live by the spirit which had arisen and developed in the brotherhood." Dawn Nothwehr considers how Francis's cosmic spirituality offers a model for the kind of mutuality that must undergird contemporary ecotheology. Jude Rochford simply contemplates trees, seeing in our treatment of them a challenge to our Franciscan spirituality. Mary Nobis describes for us the experience of sisters who have committed themselves to a life-in-the-spirit in a hermitage situation.

From the far-flung reaches of space to the root of a tree, our Franciscan spiritual heritage awakens us to meaning, to awareness of how all is gift. Once more we are called to give thanks in all humility.

*Elise Saggau, OSF*

<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Karris, *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1999), 130.

## The Holy Spirit in St. Francis according to St. Bonaventure's *Major Life of St. Francis*

Bonaventure Hinwood, OFM

### The Holy Spirit: Giver and Gift

If we had all the rest of St. Bonaventure's writings, but without this longer life of St. Francis, we would have only a theoretical version of Bonaventure's teaching on the Holy Spirit. In his other writings, which fill many books, Bonaventure's main focus is on the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son in the life of the Trinity. It is in his *Major Life of St. Francis* that he speaks in detail about the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual human person.

It may help us to see the full force of what Bonaventure says about the Holy Spirit in the life of Francis if we look quickly at what he says about the Holy Spirit in his other writings. Bonaventure starts out from St. Augustine's teaching that the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son. For this reason Bonaventure speaks of the Holy Spirit as "bond" and "gift": the bond in whom the Father and the Son are united to each other, the gift in whom the Father and the Son are totally given to each other.<sup>1</sup>

Even in our ordinary human experience a genuine gift is an expression of generosity. We all know from experience that someone is only a full human person when that person knows how to love. We also know from experience that no one can force a person to love. If you and I love, it is because we choose to love. So love has to do with the will. When we love someone, our natural tendency is to give to that person. We give things, we give our thoughts in spoken or written words, we give our energy in service, we give ourselves.

By this we can see how Bonaventure moves from the Holy Spirit as the love of the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit as the generous giver and as

the gift of the divine Self in whom all other spiritual gifts are given to us.<sup>2</sup> The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit—wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord—are new capacities or abilities implanted in the human person. These gifts make it possible for us to grow in the spiritual life. They do this in several ways.

First we must remember that every sin in some way deforms the human personality. It twists the mind so that the sinner cannot think clearly about moral and spiritual matters; it twists the emotions so that the feelings become more and more self-centered; and it weakens the determination of the will to let love always control its decisions. The gifts of the Holy Spirit correct these deformities. For example, Bonaventure says that the gift of courage helps against laziness which destroys our power for doing good, the gift of counsel helps against wanting things and money, and the gift of understanding helps us to control gluttony.

Second, the seven gifts also make our power for doing good stronger. So the gift of piety helps us to overcome envy of other people and makes us generous in loving God. The gift of fear leads us to use things in moderation because it helps us to control our wants and desires out of reverence for the Creator.

Third, the seven gifts help us to suffer with the same patience which Jesus had. The gift of understanding helps us to see the Father's will in what we suffer, the gift of wisdom inflames us to love this suffering, and the gift of fear leads us to reverence it as a means of union with Jesus. The gift of knowledge makes it possible for us, like Jesus, to see how our sufferings can help others, and the gift of piety brings out that compassion which makes us want to suffer for sake of others by uniting our sufferings with those of Jesus. The gift of counsel directed Jesus in his choice, and the gift of courage enabled him to carry out his choice to the end. These gifts do the same for us.

Fourth, the seven gifts help us act more effectively by turning us away from evil and pointing us towards carrying out God's law. For instance the gift of understanding opens us up to truth, and the gift of wisdom draws us towards the peace which comes from pleasing God.

Fifth, the gifts also help us to contemplate. The contemplative life develops as we become more purified, more filled with divine light, and more perfectly Christ-like. For this to happen the gift of fear must purify our hearts, the gift of knowledge cleanse us of our ignorance, and the gift of courage free us from our laziness. The gift of counsel gives us the light to see how we must put right the wrong we have done in the past; and the gift of understanding gives us the light to see clearly what sort of people God wants us to be. The gift of wisdom brings us to that oneness with God which is the goal of contemplation.

Bonaventure, in his sermon on *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* says that the Holy Spirit shows his character as gift by generously pouring out on us many charismatic graces.<sup>3</sup> These gifts provide us with the capacities or abilities to perform certain specific tasks God wants us to carry out and they also bring us to be completely what God wants us to be.<sup>4</sup> So Bonaventure speaks about the Holy Spirit as the "Fulfiller," that is, the One who enables us to become perfect.<sup>5</sup> As Fulfiller, the Holy Spirit leads us back to the Father,<sup>6</sup> because union with the Father through our oneness with Christ in the Holy Spirit is the purpose of human life.

## The Holy Spirit, Love and Joy

We have spoken about the Holy Spirit as love. We know from our own human experience that joy comes mainly from loving others and knowing that we ourselves are loved. Love in the Trinity is associated with the Holy Spirit, and so is joy—joy within the love community of the Trinity as well as joy which the Holy Spirit shares with us.<sup>7</sup> Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed by St. Paul (Gal. 5:22).

When speaking about the Holy Spirit as love, we immediately think of will. We connect will with power, because it is the person with a strong will who overcomes the obstacles which stand in the way of accomplishing one's goals. So Bonaventure sees the Holy Spirit as the One who empowers created persons to win out over all evil spiritual forces and to destroy their influence.<sup>8</sup>

St. Paul tells us that it is only the Spirit of God who knows the hidden things of God (1Cor. 2, 10-11). So for Bonaventure it is the Holy Spirit who reveals God's secrets to human beings.<sup>9</sup> This is why he sees the Holy Spirit as the finger of God who wrote the ten commandments as an expression of God's plan for how we should live.<sup>10</sup> Sin, which is a human attack on the divine laws and disobedience to God's commandments, leads to our losing the grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Words which Bonaventure associates with the Holy Spirit gives some indication of the Spirit's character as reflected in people who are open to Him: goodness, joyfulness, warmth, activity, prayerfulness, beauty, fulfillment, fervor, fruitfulness, virility, incorruptibility, and godly love.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps no passage in Bonaventure's works gives as concentrated a picture of the Holy Spirit's work as does this reference to the effects of the Pentecost event:

There descended upon the group of a hundred and twenty people the likeness of tongues of fire, to give to the mouth the fire of speech, to the mind that of light, and to the heart that of love. . . . The Holy

Spirit . . . taught them all truth, inflamed them with all love, and strengthened them in every virtue. Assisted by his grace, enlightened by his teaching, and strengthened by his might, the disciples, few and simple as they were, planted the Church in their blood throughout the world, with their fiery words, the perfection of their example, and their astonishing miracles.<sup>13</sup>

## The Holy Spirit at Work through Francis

One of the Holy Spirit's activities is leading people back to unity with the Trinity. The first place that we see the Holy Spirit at work in Francis's life is in his conversion, what Bonaventure calls the "anointing of the Holy Spirit" (LM 1:2). Francis had been prepared for this by his long illness, which took him away from the activities of his father's business and his various entertainments. It was this long period of being quiet which made it possible for the Holy Spirit to illuminate Francis so that he could begin to contemplate the things of heaven and get a taste of how satisfying God could be. The Holy Spirit gives this interior light through the gifts of counsel and understanding.

Because the body is an intrinsic dimension of human being on earth, the Holy Spirit shows his presence and activity in a person by external signs. In Francis's case, the influence of the Holy Spirit was evident in Francis's compassion for the poor knight to whom he gave his own expensive clothes and in the detachment from possessions which this shows. It is through the gifts of counsel and the fear of the Lord that the Holy Spirit brings about such attitudes.

Bonaventure does not see the Holy Spirit at work only in Francis's conversion. He sees the Holy Spirit acting also in the conversion of those others who followed Francis in his poor lifestyle. Obviously echoing the words of the Nicene Creed about the Incarnation, Bonaventure puts into Francis's mouth the words: "They have been born of a poor mother by the power of the Holy Spirit in the image of Christ the King, and they will be begotten by the spirit of poverty in our poor little Order" (LM 3:10).

Bonaventure also attributes to the Holy Spirit the conversion of the cruel husband who tried to stop his God-fearing wife from serving Christ:

A wealthy woman, who was a good practicing catholic, came to St. Francis to explain her trouble to him and ask for his help. She had a cruel husband who did not like her practicing her religion and serving Jesus. She asked St. Francis to pray for her husband so that God in his goodness would open his heart. When Francis heard this, he said to her: "Go in peace, and do not doubt that your husband will soon be a support to you in your life of faith." And St. Francis added: "Tell your

husband from God and from me, that now is the time of mercy, but later will be the time of judgment." After receiving a blessing the woman went home and gave her husband the message. The *Holy Spirit come upon him* (Acts 10: 44) making him a new man and bringing him to answer with gentleness: "My dear wife, let us serve the Lord and save our souls" (LM 11:6).

Conversion from a life focused on the things of this world to a feeling for the things of God opens a person to hear God's call and to answer it. Bonaventure records that it was under the influence of the Holy Spirit that Francis went into the church of San Damiano where Jesus called to him from the crucifix. As we know, Francis first understood this call in the obvious, material sense of rebuilding that little chapel. It was the Holy Spirit who led him to see the deeper meaning of that call, which was to rebuild the "Church which Christ purchased by his own blood" (LM 2:1). So Francis is an example of the Holy Spirit bringing someone to be the sort of person God wants that person to be.

In the same way Bonaventure understands the Holy Spirit to have been responsible for the call of Francis's first follower, Bernard of Quintavalle, and of the five who came after him. If the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person active in the call of Francis and his first six followers, we can take it that this applies to all later followers of Francis, and so to you and me.

We find Bonaventure ascribing to the Holy Spirit the joy and comfort which Francis experienced at Bernard's conversion (LM 3:3). It was not only in particular events like Bernard's conversion that Francis experienced joy. He also experienced joy in prayer:

One day as he was weeping as he looked back over his past years of bitterness, the joy of the Holy Spirit came over him and he was assured that all his sins were completely forgiven. Then he was rapt in ecstasy and totally absorbed in a wonderful light, his heart was expanded and he clearly saw what would transpire for himself and his friars in the future (LM 3:6).

This is not the only occasion on which Bonaventure speaks about the working of the Holy Spirit in Francis's prayer life drawing him into that deep intimacy with the Trinity, which he calls "ecstasy." He gives a further example later on in the biography:

He was accustomed to pass over negligently any visitation of the Spirit. When he was rapt, he followed it and, as long as the Lord allowed, he enjoyed the sweetness offered him. When he was on a

journey and felt the breathing of the divine Spirit, letting his companions go ahead, he would stand still and render this new inspiration fruitful, not receiving the grace in vain. Many times he was lifted up in ecstatic contemplation so that, rapt out of himself and experiencing what is beyond human understanding, he was unaware of what went on around him (LM 10:2).

But this sort of experience needs preparation. We have already seen how the Holy Spirit was able to bring about Francis's conversion after Francis had been sick for a long time and so had been taken out of his ordinary activities. As time went on, Francis understood more clearly that to come away out of "the noise of worldly affairs" made it easier for the Holy Spirit to work in one's life. This is why Francis would look for more isolated places and churches so that he could pray there in peace (LM 10:3).

Bonaventure also tells us that when Francis, filled with the Spirit, prayed alone in such places, he had to fight violent battles with the devils who tried to upset his prayer. He overcame them by his courage and confidence in Christ (LM 10:3). This kind of courage and piety are among the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit did not work in Francis only for the sake of Francis's own interior or spiritual life. The Holy Spirit also empowered him to preach and sent him out to preach. The same Holy Spirit put into his mind and heart the message which he was to give as well as striking words for preaching it (LM 4:5, 12:7). Here we see happening what Jesus had promised—that at the very moment we need to speak, the Holy Spirit will give us the right words (Mk. 13:11). This does not mean that Christian preachers and teachers do not have to prepare thoroughly. It means that they must not let their feeling of being inadequate make them afraid to speak.

The same Holy Spirit who sent Francis to preach also gave him the knowledge which he needed for his preaching ministry. Bonaventure specifically mentions that the Holy Spirit opened up divine revelation to Francis (LM 12:7) and in his heart taught him the meaning of the Scriptures (11:3). The Holy Spirit enabled Francis to know many things which the human understanding, left to itself, cannot reach and instructed him in things beyond the capacity of human teaching (LM 4:4, 12:12). The Holy Spirit also taught Francis what virtues God considers the most important (LM 12:1). In terms of what Bonaventure said about the gifts of the Holy Spirit earlier, this took place through the gifts of knowledge and understanding.

Bonaventure adds that the Holy Spirit did not only work in the preacher, but also in those who listened. What use are the most inspired words if they fall on ears which are spiritually deaf and a heart hardened against God? The Holy Spirit gave to Francis's words the power to pierce through this layer of

resistance to the things of God and get deep into people's hearts (LM 12:7) so that, full of wonder at his message calling them to repentance, they too were converted (LM 3:2). It is for this reason that we should always pray for people to whom we speak, that the Holy Spirit might make our words effective.

When it came to teaching his brothers the gospel way of life, Francis also acted under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that, as time went by, many passages from the gospels were added to Francis's Rule, to the point that it became long and clumsy. This is how Bonaventure describes the writing of the final Rule, the one still in use today:

Since the profusion of texts from the Gospel had lengthened the rule unduly, Francis wished to condense it into a more concentrated form. . . . Led by the Holy Spirit he went up to a certain mountain with two of his companions where he fasted on bread and water and dictated the rule as the Holy Spirit suggested to him in prayer (LM 4:11).

What has been said about conversion and call shows that the Holy Spirit was not only at work in Francis but in other people as well, to whom was given the gift of understanding. People whom Bonaventure mentions as having no great book learning and who, together with Francis, were taught by the Holy Spirit, were "David, the most distinguished of the prophets" in the Old Testament, and "Peter, the prince of the apostles" in the New (LM 1:1, 4).

The same happened to others more closely connected with Francis. When Francis asked the Pope to approve the way of life of himself and his early companions, the Pope asked the advice of the cardinals. Bonaventure tells us that

There was among the cardinals a most venerable man, John of St. Paul, bishop of Sabina, a lover of holiness and helper of Christ's poor. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he said to the Supreme Pontiff and his brother cardinals: "If we refuse the request of this poor man as novel and too difficult, when all he asks is to be allowed to lead the Gospel life, we must be on our guard lest we commit an offense against Christ's Gospel. For if anyone says that there is something novel and irrational or impossible to observe in this man's desire to live according to the perfection of the Gospel, he is guilty of blasphemy against Christ, the author of the Gospel."

When he heard this, Pope Innocent III gave his approval to the new way of life (LM 3:9).

Early on in his religious life, Francis was uncertain as to whether he and his brothers should lead a purely contemplative life or also be involved in preaching. So he sent two friars to ask advice in this matter from *Silvester* and *Clare*.

Through the miraculous revelation of the Holy Spirit, the venerable priest and the virgin dedicated to God came to the same conclusion: that it was God's good pleasure that Francis should preach as the herald of Christ (LM 12:2).

Although Francis could not be physically present at all the provincial chapters held in the Order, he was present in spirit in a way which could be felt and at times even seen. It was the Holy Spirit who made it possible for the friars to know that Francis was with them. Bonaventure tells us that "All the friars felt themselves filled with such unusual inner consolation that it was clear the Spirit was giving them certain testimony that their holy father had been really present" (LM 3:10).

Just as Bonaventure attributes the apostles' miracles to the Holy Spirit's action, so he attributes to the Holy Spirit Francis's ability to work the miracles which made his life a light to other people (LM 12:7). In particular Bonaventure says that it was the Holy Spirit who inspired Francis to prepare the medicine by which Morico, a religious of the Order of the Holy Cross, was straight away cured (LM 4:8). It is likewise to the Holy Spirit that Bonaventure attributes Francis having the "seal of the likeness . . . of Christ crucified . . . imprinted on his body" (LM Pref. 2), probably the greatest miracle associated with Francis.

## Conclusion

So Bonaventure sees the Holy Spirit at work throughout Francis's life, from his conversion to the end. It is also clear, from occasional references to other people, that Bonaventure did not consider this to be so only for Francis. In the light of the introduction, it is not stretching the evidence to see this working of the Holy Spirit as normal in the life of people who allow that same Spirit to draw them closer to Christ and in him to hear and respond to God's call. Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, then, is necessary if we are to grow in the spiritual life—to enjoy greater intimacy with the Persons of the Trinity and to carry out the work God wants us to do. Devotion to the Holy Spirit is a normal part of life in union with Jesus.

If you and I are to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in this way, it is good that we remember St. Bonaventure's words about the example given us by St. Francis:

He had learned in prayer that the presence of the Holy Spirit for which he longed was granted more intimately to those who invoke him, the more the Holy Spirit found them withdrawn from the noise of worldly affairs. Therefore seeking out lonely places, he used to go to deserted areas and abandoned churches to pray (10:3).



## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>*Breviloquium* 1:3; *Disputed Questions on the Trinity*, 57.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. *Journey of the Soul into God*, 4:2.

<sup>3</sup>"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," in *Rooted in Faith, Homilies to a Contemporary World* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 63.

<sup>4</sup>"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," 66.

<sup>5</sup>*Breviloquium* 1:6.

<sup>6</sup>E. H. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald, Press, 1978), 130.

<sup>7</sup>*Collations on the Six Says*, 21:20.

<sup>8</sup>*Collations on the Six Days*, 21:23.

<sup>9</sup>*Collations on the Six Days*, 21:20.

<sup>10</sup>*Collations on the Ten Commandments*, 4:3.

<sup>11</sup>*Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, 5:8.

<sup>12</sup>"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," 62-63; *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, 6:10.

<sup>13</sup>*The Tree of Life*, 10:39.

## Contributors

**Michael Blastic, OFM Conv.**, a friar of St. Bonaventure Province, Chicago, is currently teaching at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University. He edits the scholarly annual, *Franciscan Studies*.

**David Flood, OFM**, of the Montreal province, co-authored with Thaddée Matura *The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis* (Franciscan Press, 1975). He also wrote *Work for Everyone* (Quezon City: CCFMC Office for Asia/Oceania, 1997).

**Bonaventure Hinwood, OFM**, is a friar of the Province of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Southern Africa. Born in Johannesburg, he joined the Franciscans in 1954 and taught theology for many years at St. John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria. He occasionally lectures at St. Augustine College and is parish priest of St. Pius X Parish in Pretoria.

**Mary Nobis, OSF**, is a Sister of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York. Presently engaged in social ministries, she is, at the same time, a member of the congregation's Franciscan Hermitage community.

**Dawn Nothwehr, OSF**, a Franciscan Sister of Rochester, Minnesota, is a specialist in feminist theology and theologies of liberation. She is author of *Mutuality: A Formal Norm for Christian Social Ethics* (Catholic Scholars Press, 1998). She presently teaches at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

**Jude M. Rochford, OFMConv.**, of Our Lady of Consolation Province, has been in Zambia since 1967 serving in various administrative capacities. He is presently a lecturer of philosophy at St. Bonaventure College and serves in his local friary as guardian and formator

**Rose Raymond Wagner, OSF**, is a member of the Sister of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York. She taught high school art for many years and now serves in spiritual ministry at Christ the King Retreat Center in Syracuse.

## Early Franciscans and the Radical Practice of Democracy.

David Flood, OFM

The Early Rule demands of all Franciscans democratic involvement in the brotherhood's welfare. In Chapter Five, it enjoins on everyone the task of monitoring the spirit in which the ministers carry out their service. The brothers together shall consider the activities of their "ministers and servants" in the light of their common commitment. Then, should they judge that a minister is carrying out his service in a worldly and not in a Franciscan way, they are to speak up; they are not to desist until the case has been satisfactorily resolved. The passage empowers the brothers and commits them to public campaigning for an honest movement and its role in history.

### Living by the Spirit

This passage in the Early Rule puts clearly the criterion which, in their criticism, the brothers bring into play. They set out to correct the minister when they find him acting "carnally and not spiritually." Taking the whole Rule as context, along with other early writings, we have no difficulty describing the origins and the meaning of the criterion. Living by the flesh meant living as the influential people of Assisi and its surroundings were living, whereas living spiritually meant living by the spirit which had arisen and developed in the brotherhood. And if any brothers had no more than a loose sense of that spirit, they got a crash course in its specifics and consequences when a group of brothers spoke up in that spirit about one minister's worldliness. The more some brothers went public, as Chapter Five told them to, the better for the brotherhood as a whole. To cast the process in contemporary terms, Franciscan formation resulted from democratic control of a minister's service.

In this passage from the Early Rule, we have the answer to a much-debated question. How did that change come about which T. Desbonnets has well characterized as the passage from a fraternity to an order? It came about

because the brothers did not abide by the task they set themselves in this section of their common document. They put these and other lines into their basic text around 1220. Historians in general and K. Esser in particular propose that the brotherhood broke itself up into provinces in 1217-1218. At a general chapter, the brothers inserted Chapter Four and the end of Chapter Five into their "rule and life." Then, at a later chapter, on the basis of a brief experience with the newly designated ministers, they added the first part of Chapter Five, which explains, among other things, democratic control of their "ministers and servants." We conclude that the brothers lectured themselves on their responsibility for fidelity to the spirit after 1217-1218. That means around 1220. No matter what the social pressures to adapt Franciscan ways to the world about them, the brothers had mobilized themselves around 1220 to watch and pray, to judge and act in order to keep the brotherhood on course. They failed. For change did come about, change from a democratic form of life to a hierarchical form, to stay with Desbonnets' explanations. And yet nothing kept the early Franciscans, then or later, and even very much later, from recouping. They only had to fall back on the principle of Chapter Five in the Early Rule. Salvation comes from a democratic scrutiny of Scripture (to put the reference to the spirit that way). Democratic revolutions are not only possible, but, by Franciscan rule, mandatory.

### The Movement for Change

"Around 1220"; the date has implications. The implications have to do with a much-loved story about Francis. He came to chapter one day, and the time is usually designated as around 1220, and there he spoke up in romantic terms against the learned ministers who wanted to push through a few adaptations. This story usually gets brought up when we set out to discuss the question of change in the Franciscan organization. It suggests that Francis could no longer cope with the challenges and the inevitable changes facing the brotherhood. And so begins a very bad argument and the ensuing apology for alteration.

Yet the Early Rule gives us hard evidence which dates to the same time. "Around 1220" the brothers lectured themselves on democratic action and the spirit guiding their community. They faced and dealt with the organizational challenges of the brotherhood's growing numbers. If we hold fast to this evidence, we can begin to understand the stakes on the table at the chapter of 1230. Whereas Haymo of Faversham called for more rules, John Parenti said he saw no need. We do not know what John Parenti had in mind. If he was relying on the active involvement of the brothers, as prescribed around 1220, then he had both reason and spirit on his side. But numbers enough did not rally to support him, and a stand-off ensued. Someone had the treacherous

idea of resolving the difference procedurally, and a commission was put together to seek the help of Pope Gregory IX, Cardinal Hugolino in an earlier incarnation. The result was *Quo elongati*, which replaced spirit with law.

### Early Documents vs. Later Accounts

When we consider early Franciscan history, documents from that time have to take precedence over later accounts. The early writings, and the Early Rule in particular, tell us about those times, whereas the stories about Francis, from 1228 on, have all disconnected from those years. Those stories are monetizing memory for their different purposes. We can spell out the purposes of such accounts as Thomas of Celano's first life and of the Anonymous of Perugia's simple stories, and worthy purposes they were. Those and other accounts fit into the circumstances of their day. They raise a narrative curtain between their audience and the early events of Franciscan history.

That historiographical principle, precedence of early document over later account, has come to the fore recently in the debate about the Cold War. CNN has put together an account of the Cold War in twenty-four one-hour episodes. One critic (Bruce Cumings, who did a documentary on the Korean War) has pointed up the weakness of the vast and diligent research behind the series. Since the researchers were gathering information without much idea of what might lie in archives, all of which are not accessible anyway, they inevitably came up with "the received wisdom." As he argued his views, Cumings proposed the above principle, the precedence of early document over later accounts. He relied on his own study of the Korea, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars when he explained: "Having compared contemporary interviews with those recorded at the time of the event with the same person, I have next to no trust in individual memory." He was especially adamant in declaring that "a policymaker from the time should not be the historian of his own actions, with no one to challenge him." We can use Cumings's experience to help us place better the narratives about the early Franciscan years, as well as to assess Pope Gregory IX's historical introduction to the bull of 1230, *Quo elongati*.

We have good reason, consequently, to stress the importance of the passage from Chapter Five of the Early Rule in the changing fortunes of the early Franciscan organization. And we have no difficulty detailing the experience on which the brothers relied when they urged themselves to control organizational authority democratically. Chapter Seven and Chapter Fourteen of the Early Rule allow us to conclude that the brothers interacted with the people of their day with respect for the interests and the opinions of others. As a consequence, they strengthened their civil identity. The brothers' commitment to work as service and their readiness to share with others posited the basis for a common effort to "return all good things to God."

## Democracy vs. the Establishment

Democratic action has to contend with the tendency of people to seize power and to promote and establish their limited interests. That is happening in our day with globalization—the inclusion of the whole world in a marketplace dominated by Western corporations with attendant problems economic, social, and environmental. (In *Specters of Marx*, J. Derrida lists the ten plagues of “the new world order”: new forms of unemployment, growing exclusions of the poor, the problem of foreign debt with hunger and despair its consequences, the centrality of the arms industry to research and the economy, and so on.) Democracy, which speaks up for the many, faces today the established interests of an ethically indifferent economy. If we want, and if we refuse the various arguments about “the end of history,” we can see how the powers which now rule established themselves. In a similar fashion, on a small scale and with more immediacy, there arose in Assisi in the early years of the thirteenth century a new communal order. It rapidly solidified into the established world with its favors to some and its exclusion of the many.

We know a great deal about Assisi in the early 1200s. Much of that data was reviewed and developed in a book on Assisi (*Assisi al tempo di San Francesco*, 1978) and, as things go, more has come to light and undergone scrutiny since then. Consequently, we can speak about the history of the city in those years with a good idea of what was going on. That is all the more the case, seeing as the developments in Assisi fit into the history of central Italy at that time. Context helps us read particular documents carefully. We all know how the Assisians destroyed the Roca Maggiore as the symbol and the very instrument of outside domination over Assisi. We know less about the processes and terms of inclusion in the new social order of Assisi. We know less, even though we have two sources which speak eloquently to that story—the two municipal documents of 1203 and 1210. The charter of peace, as the 1203 text is called, puts more explicitly than usually happens the agreement among the city’s powerful individuals. Since warring factions were compromising, in the interests of their common welfare, they had to state the basis of their accord explicitly. The new Assisi arose through the mutual agreement of the city’s wealthy to hold onto and to extend their properties. Circumstances constrained Assisi’s key figures to say so baldly. And so we have no difficulty detailing the processes and terms of exclusion from the city’s new social order.

When the early brothers worked as “subject to all,” they engaged in action which had others’ spiritual and material interests at heart. They spoke a democratic language at work and out among people. Such action results in popular empowerment and a wish and a claim for inclusion. The action had to contend with the newly established order which some had imposed on the city. Behind Chapter Seventeen of the Early Rule lies the attempt on the part of

Assisi’s key figures to include the Franciscans as estimable Christians while still excluding the denizens of Assisi’s poorhouses. That political strategy the brothers resolutely unmasked and rejected. If we take Chapter Seven of the Early Rule, with the brothers at work, and Chapter Fourteen, whereby the brothers commit themselves to an active participation in the happenings of the day, we have grounds to conclude that early Franciscan life was a democratic movement. It called into question, in practice and by theory, the way the propertyholders seized the opportunity, following on the destruction of feudal control over their city, to establish a new communal order.

## Evidence from Francis’s Writings

In 1994, in the papers published by the Società internazionale di studi francescani, A. Bartoli Langeli examined closely the three autographs of Francis which have come down to us. Bartoli Langeli’s expertise lies in the study of thirteenth-century writing in and around Assisi. He explained how Francis, in the material by his hand which has survived, was not using the sort of writing practiced in centers of learning. Historians have supposed that was the case when giving him low marks for penmanship. Francis was using the way of writing particular to the region’s businessmen. And, by Bartoli Langeli’s judgment, he both used it satisfactorily and tried to improve his ability. Francis understood the importance and the possibility of written communication. At the end of his Message to the Penitents, Francis asked his readers to copy and distribute the text. He wanted them to support the movement. That is, he wanted more democracy.

Bartoli Langeli’s argument raises a further question about Francis. If Francis used and improved his writing skills in pursuing the movement’s ideal of service, to what degree did he use as well his experience of Assisi’s economic and social ways in working out the early brotherhood’s agreements? He knew how good Assisians would look on service in almshouses and among lepers. He knew how readily good Assisians handed out hard-won earnings to people who begged. In sum, he knew such things from his former life within the new order of Assisi. The Early Rule as a whole construes in ever more explicit determinations the common way against the pressure of its social surroundings, both communal and ecclesiastical. We have to conclude that Francis took part in the discernment and decision at the origins of the Rule with an acute knowledge of repercussions in the world of his day. He helped produce a way of life capable of challenging and transcending the new order of central Italy succeeding to feudal times. In that way, while helping in his brothers’ struggle, he won his own freedom for the various historical and personal accomplishments of his life. Any essay on Francis has to begin from within the ways of a democratic movement. Otherwise it has no history to stand on.

People become democratic. They refuse the established order; they claim freedom as their birthright; and then, then! they have to earn it. They end up joining. They may end up joining a privileged system and forget their journey to success; they may join a democratic society which has to become more democratic; or they may join with all their sisters and brothers and claim for everyone a place in God's world. It is the final ideal which Francis celebrates in his Salutation of the Virtues. The text explains clearly opposition to the limited (Francis's word was "blind") interests of the new communal order (14), then demands the discipline needed to figure out together what is to be done. The obedience in which the text culminates can be described as a hymn to democracy. What else is obedience to one's brother and to the spirit? It sort of sounds like another hymn to democracy: "Did you suppose democracy was only for elections, for politics and for a party name? I say democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruit in manners, in the highest form of interaction between men, and their beliefs—in religion, literature, colleges, and schools—democracy in all public and private life" (Walt Whitman).

Francis belonged to the discussion and the conclusion which put the passage on democratic control of "ministers and servants" into the movement's written agreement. He thought that way. He had a democratic cast of mind. Just how thoroughly he thought that way we can see in the Salutation of the Virtues. By the time he wrote that piece, he knew that the simple, democratic ways of himself and his brothers and sisters (among the Penitents) were capable of dissolving systems of exclusion and bringing on the new day, such a day as envisaged by Walt Whitman in his American tones.

## Conclusion

The later narratives about Francis unfold within an established world; they have lost the democratic dynamic which characterized the early years. (Franciscan apocalypticism opened the possibility of a different context for remembering the past. More about that another time.) The many essays written about Francis today also presume and confirm an established order, both in the early Franciscan age and at present. They proceed from a point of view distinct from that of the early Franciscan years and have no historical ground to stand on. The inherently revolutionary spirit of democracy remains the necessary context of Franciscan discourse which respects its origins. It is critically inconceivable that the Franciscans of Chapter Five, Early Rule, could accept the established order of our day.

*A servant of God may be recognized as possessing the Spirit of the Lord in this way:  
if the flesh does not pride itself when the Lord performs some  
good through him (Admonition 12: 1-2).*

## Cosmic Mysticism, Cosmic Christ, Cosmic Mutuality

Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF

It is not without reason that in November 1979 Pope John Paul II declared Francis of Assisi the patron saint of ecology. Here the wealth of the Franciscan charism for ecotheology will be examined. To begin, we will see how the Franciscan charism, particularly through the integration of personal love mysticism and cosmic mysticism in the experience of Francis of Assisi, offers a basis for the modern feminist concept of mutuality. Next, we will review how Francis's spirituality is expressed and undergirded in the Christocentric theology of Bonaventure and the *baecceitas* of Duns Scotus. Then we will explore how modern Christian feminists give practical expression to these Franciscan notions. There is a need to include mutuality as a formal norm within the Christian social ethical framework which governs our current thinking and decision-making on ecological issues. Finally, the overall contribution of the Franciscan charism to ecotheology will be summarized.

The Franciscan charism can be defined as that gift of the Holy Spirit given to the world in the person of Francis of Assisi and his early followers for the common good. Three distinguishing features of the charism of Francis that pertain to ecotheology are: (1) his intimate love for the crucified Christ, (2) his articulation of the familial relationship of all creatures, and (3) his experience of cosmic union.

## The Cosmic Mysticism of Francis of Assisi

Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) was absolutely captivated by the fact of the Incarnation. God's profound and faithful love, shown from the stable to the cross, drew Francis to "follow in the footprints of Jesus" and ultimately into union with the Crucified One (RegNB 1:1). That union with the Crucified

Jesus was most fully realized when Francis received the stigmata on Mount LaVerna. Standing before the crucified Christ, Francis was keenly aware of his creaturely status with all of its imperfections. Nonetheless, in the Fifth Admonition Francis exhorts: "Consider . . . how excellent the Lord made you, for he created and formed you to the image of his beloved Son according to the body and to his own likeness according to the spirit."<sup>1</sup> By extension, Francis understood that we all are kindred creatures, sisters and brothers, mutually obeying each other in love.

Even a cursory reading of the early Franciscan sources reveals St. Francis's unique love affair with all of creation (see 1Cel 58-61; 2Cel 165-66, 168-70, 494-98; LP 49, 51, 84, 90, 110). However, these sources, especially the classic *Canticle of Brother Sun*, must never be read apart from Francis's profound personal insight into the significance of the Incarnation. Indeed, the events immediately prior to the composition of the *Canticle* are important for our understanding (LP 43).<sup>2</sup> Suffering from an eye disease that had left him blind and in excruciating pain, Francis lay in a mouse-infested cell. There he had a vision in which he was offered a golden globe of the earth in exchange for his infirmities, and he was assured of eternal life. The alchemical symbolism of the earth changing to gold stood for Francis's conversion. That conversion was brought about by two critical experiences.<sup>3</sup>

The first event was his renunciation of his father, Pietro Bernadone, before the Bishop of Assisi. There Francis cast himself, naked, totally into the care of his Heavenly Father: "Until now I have called you my father, but from now on I can say without reserve, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' He is my wealth and I place my confidence in him" (LM 2: 4). Having embraced radical poverty, rejecting possession in any form, Francis was also able to embrace the common Source of all creation, and thus know as well the radical relatedness of the entire cosmos. "The realization that everything comes from the same source filled Francis with greater affection than ever and he called even the most insignificant creatures his brothers and sisters, because he knew they had the same origin as himself" (LM 8:6). In the *Salutation to the Virtues*, Francis shows that the fitting relationship among all creatures is one of obedience:

... [the person who possesses holy Obedience] is subject and submissive to all persons in the world and not to man only but even to all beasts and wild animals so that they may do whatever they want with him inasmuch as it has been given to them from above by the Lord (SalVirt 16-18).

Roger D. Sorrell speaks of this relationship as "mutual deference."<sup>4</sup> I suggest that deference addresses the dynamics of power in a relationship. This notion of deference is related to another important idea, namely, "cosmic mutuality," which I will address later.

The second movement toward Francis's conversion prior to writing the *Canticle* is his encounter with the Crucified One at San Damiano. There he discovered that not only is God the glorious Creator, but God loves to the extent that "the Word of God became flesh." This realization served to deepen Francis's sense of the sacredness of creation: "Oh, how holy and how loving, pleasing, humble, peaceful, sweet, lovable and desirable above all things to have such a Brother and such a Son: our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave up His life for His sheep. . . ." (1EpFid 12). Not only are humans sisters and brothers to one another, they are sisters and brothers of Jesus. And as Jesus is related to the rocks and the worms, so are humans sisters and brothers to rocks and worms, as well.

[Francis] called all creatures *brother*, and in a most extraordinary manner, a manner never experienced by others, he discerned the hidden things of nature with his sensitive heart, as one already escaped *into the freedom of the glory of the Sons of God* (1Cel 28:81).

Francis's union with nature is distinct from the parabolic associations of God with nature in the New Testament, the pantheistic identification of God and nature of the Renaissance, or the ecstatic joy over nature of the Greeks.<sup>5</sup>

It is from Francis's deep faith in the crucified and glorified Savior that the Christocentric theology of the Franciscan school emerged; and it is from his life in the *imitatio Christi* and mystical union that Franciscan spirituality draws its distinctiveness. Franciscan theology and Franciscan spirituality are inextricably bound.<sup>6</sup> We note this bond precisely because it is in a mystical experience that Francis was given the revelation of cosmic union. For purposes of ecotheology, it is important to recognize that not only did the Franciscan School amplify the reverence Francis experienced in knowing that the world is sacred as God's self-expression, but also followed Francis's knowledge of the intimate link between himself and the physical universe. We have, in Francis, the integration of the physical and the spiritual, counteracting the dualism of Western thought regarding creation. This charism of Francis stands behind Bonaventure's theological reflection.<sup>7</sup>

## Bonaventure and the Cosmic Christ

Bonaventure's point of departure was Christ as the revealer of God. Among his earliest works was a commentary on the Gospel of John, and Johannine influence is visible in his later works, particularly in his Christology and Trinitarian theology.<sup>8</sup> Bonaventure expands on his early Johannine commentary, stating in his *Collations on the Six Days of Creation* that one must move "from the center, which is Christ; for if this Center is overlooked, no result will be obtained."<sup>9</sup>

Bonaventure joins theological and metaphysical notions to ground his understanding of Christ as the center in the Trinity:

The root of Bonaventure's doctrine lies in his conception of the Father as dynamic, fecund source of the Trinitarian processions. In examining the Father, Bonaventure employs two principles: the principle of fecund primordiality and the principle of the self-diffusion of the good. Both of these principles he applies to the divinity in relation to creation and to the Father in the Trinity. . . . For Bonaventure God's self-sufficiency and self-communication are so intimately united that his principle can be stated as follows: Because he is self-sufficient, he is both of these principles he applies to the divinity in relation to creation and to the Father in the Trinity. . . . For Bonaventure God's self-sufficiency and self-communication are so intimately united that his principle can be stated as follows: Because he is self-sufficient, he is absolutely self-communicating.<sup>10</sup>

Beginning with the Pseudo-Dionysian tenet that the first name of God is "Good," Bonaventure defines perfect and complete self-diffusion as the first phase of the inner life of the Trinity. The Father is the *fontalis plenitudo*. The Son is the primal diffusion of the Father, his self-knowledge, Word or Image. The Word expresses and represents the ideas of all created things. The inner life of the Trinity is consummated in the love between the Father and the Son which is the Holy Spirit. Thus, the inner life of the Trinity represents a complete process of emanation, exemplarity, and consummation. Through the Word, God is the prototype of all that exists and God is expressed in all creatures. Therefore, all creatures participate in the life of the Trinity through Christ, Word and Exemplar.<sup>11</sup>

In short, "God is love" (1Jn. 4: 8, 16). Bonaventure uncovers Christ as the creative and sustaining principle of created reality in which all things are grounded. This notion certainly limits how we construe human power and authority, especially in our relations with non-human creation. Indeed, in his *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, Bonaventure shows how, at the root of the Gospel mandate of poverty, lies a recognition that all things, including human life, are "pure gift from the loving creative power of God."<sup>12</sup> From the Uncreated Lover comes an unlimited variety of ways in which love is communicated, and in Christ Incarnate the entire cosmos is united and transformed.<sup>13</sup>

Just how widely and deeply are the various elements of creation related to one another? Bonaventure states:

All things are said to be transformed in the transfiguration of Christ. For as a human being, Christ has something in common with all creatures. With the stone he shares existence; with plants he shares life;

with animals he shares sensation; and with the angels he shares intelligence. Therefore, all things are said to be transformed in Christ since—in his human nature—he embraces something of every creature.<sup>14</sup>

In *The Soul's Journey into God*, Bonaventure extends Francis's insight of cosmic union. Not only does Bonaventure see union with God reflected in the external world, but also "in the inner act of sensation, in aesthetic experience, in the activities of memory, understanding, and will, and in the contemplation of Being and self-diffusive goodness."<sup>15</sup>

. . . the entire world is a shadow, a road, a vestige, and it is also a book written without (Ex. 2:8; Ap. 5:1). For in every creature there is a shining forth of the divine exemplar, but mixed with the darkness. Hence creatures are a kind of darkness mixed with light. Also they are a road leading to the exemplar. Just as you see a ray of light entering through a window is colored in different ways according to the colors of the various parts, so the divine ray shines forth in each and every creature in different ways and in different properties; it is said in Wisdom: "In her ways she shows herself" (Wis. 6:17). Also creatures are a vestige of the wisdom of God. Hence creatures are a kind of representation and statue of the wisdom of God. And in view of all of this, they are a kind of book written without.<sup>16</sup>

In Bonaventure's theology, creation (emanation) was executed by God like an artist who conceives an imaginative idea and then expresses it externally. God created everything from nothing, setting the cosmos on a journey that moves from God and returns to God, revealing God's self along the way. The role of the material and natural world is to arouse the human consciousness to praise and love God. In turn, humanity is to serve nature by giving it a voice that would not otherwise be heard in the cosmos.<sup>17</sup> God is the One Divine Idea which is given expression through the Word of God. The Word, Jesus Christ, is the exemplar of all external expressions of the Divine Idea, God.<sup>18</sup> All other elements of creation are an analogy of God insofar as each is made according to its pattern as found in God, the Divine Idea. Thus, through his doctrine of universal analogy, Bonaventure shows how all of creation bears the mark of the Creator as shadow, vestige, or image of God through Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Bonaventure thus demonstrates how there is an intimate relationship between God and each creature of the cosmos and of each of them with one another through Christ. Humans, created in the *imago Dei*, have been given the faculties of memory, intellect, and will. Through these, they are able to comprehend nature as revelation of the Creator and to value it as sacred in the panentheistic sense. Humans thus find their role as mediators between God

and creation and as guardians of the multiple manifestations of God's self-revelation.<sup>20</sup>

## John Duns Scotus and Cosmic Mutuality

One of the finest minds to recognize the Creator through the study of creation was John Duns Scotus (1266-1308). In his work *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, he reviewed the vast array of creation and asked: What is the nature of the cause of all that has been produced here? From this question Scotus worked back to discover the primary efficient cause, which he calls God, the first principle.<sup>21</sup> Scotus also concludes that God did not *have* to create anything and is thus both absolutely free and absolutely necessary.

### Creation and *Imago Dei*

Even though humans may come to realize that their source is God, they cannot, by purely natural means, fully grasp the image of God within the human soul. The limitations of human cognition allow humans to know only one aspect of the God/human relationship—that which exists on the human side. Revelation is needed in order for humans to grasp more fully how they are related to God.<sup>22</sup> Scotus, in his discussion of the divine action *ad extra*, specifically the Incarnation, relies on revelation to explicate further the relationship between God and humans.

### *Haecceitas*

In order for one subject to be related to another, it must first be known for what it is in itself. Scotus's principle of *haecceitas*<sup>23</sup> (individuation or "thisness") provides the philosophical foundation for the specificity of all created reality. *Haecceitas* designates what a singular thing is and differentiates it from all other things to which it may be compared.<sup>24</sup> For our purposes, *haecceitas* is important because it makes possible individuation and establishes mutuality as a relationship between or among distinct beings.<sup>25</sup> Scotus draws attention to the sacredness of each cosmic element in particular. God embraces everything and everyone, including the natural and the imperfect. *Haecceitas* affects human relating in general because it affects how one understands contingent reality, one's capacity for the beatific vision, God, freedom, and the value of all elements of the cosmos. Not only is each element of the cosmos different from all others in its accidental characteristics, each is distinct in its very essence. The implications for ecology are vast.

### Incarnation

Scotus maintains that the Word would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned.<sup>26</sup> He stresses the importance of the humanity of Jesus as pre-

ordained for the glory of union with the second person of the Trinity.<sup>27</sup> This foreordaining of Christ was part of the manifestation of divine glory and God's intent to raise human nature to the highest point of glory by uniting it with divine nature.

In Scotus's view, to claim that the Incarnation was necessitated by the human choice to sin effectively subjects God to the permission of sin. Rather, the first reason for the Incarnation was God's free and eternal decision to have (outside God's self) someone who could love God perfectly. Understood in this way, the Incarnation is a paradigm for human beings as partners with God in the ongoing co-creation and co-redemption of the world (generative mutuality).

Mutuality between God and humanity was foreseen from eternity, begun in the Incarnation and is to be fully realized in the future when Christ will be "all in all." The summit of creation is the communion of all persons with one another and with God. . . . Christ is the very person in whom the human and divine achieve mutuality.<sup>28</sup>

Christ embodies the divine message that humans are loved by God; human persons and human actions are pleasing to God. The fact that God's freedom and liberality inspired the Incarnation provides a positive enhancement of human nature that is not possible in a sin-centric understanding of the doctrine. God is a creative artist who selected human nature as the "material" most fitting to receive the highest glory of subsisting in the person of the Word.<sup>29</sup>

One strong implication for ecology suggested by this understanding of the Incarnation is that humans are both challenged and empowered to play a Christ-like role in the cosmos. That role is to love God in oneself and in the entire cosmos, which is God's self-expression. Because the entire cosmos in some way resembles Christ, the "first born of all creation," we must cherish creation as we reverence Christ. This is the finest example of orthodox panentheism.

Now we turn to contemporary feminists to see how these Franciscan notions support their claim that mutuality is normative and needs to be included in the Christian ethical framework.

## A Feminist View of Power and Mutuality

The ecological crisis poses questions of relationship and survival which are ultimately questions of power. The facticity and even the ontological status of mutuality is increasingly being recognized.<sup>30</sup> Christian feminists give mutuality the status of a formal norm when shaping their ethical arguments.<sup>31</sup>



In order to appreciate their claims concerning mutuality, we must first understand what they mean by "power."

As early as 1924, Mary Parker Follett made a distinction between "power-with" and "power-over."<sup>32</sup> "Power-with" is the capacity for being acted upon or for undergoing an effect in a side-by-side relationship with others. "Power-over" indicates control, authority, or influence over others from a hierarchical position. Carter Heyward holds that "using power-with is good. Using power-over is evil."<sup>33</sup> Beverly Wildung Harrison expands this understanding of power: "To have power means to have access to physical resources and wealth, to knowledge, and to the loci of social decision-making and to be able to impact institutional and social policy."<sup>34</sup>

Traditionally, power relationships have been understood within an ethical framework according to the formal norms of love and justice. Indeed, throughout the canon of scripture, love and justice are viewed as coordinates of the same plane:

"Sow for yourselves justice and reap the fruit of steadfast love" (Hos. 10: 12). The dichotomy between love and justice is spurious. The two are naturally related. Justice goes before love, insisting on the minimal prerequisites for survival. But then it makes common cause with love upon discovering that surviving without thriving is not surviving at all.<sup>35</sup>

#### Mutuality: a Corrective and Complementary Norm

It is precisely in the consideration of what constitutes "thriving" that the need arises for mutuality as a formal norm to complement and correct love and justice in the Christian social ethical framework. Failure to consider mutuality as a norm has left many significant questions unexplored or inadequately considered. I mention, for example, the concrete aspects of the reality-revealing questions,<sup>36</sup> the dynamics of power and the shaping of those dynamics to serve "power-with," and concern for the thriving and flourishing of *all* involved in a situation. Thus, in the past, some interpretations of the Christian tradition in relation to enormously complex issues actually permitted, tolerated, or promoted violations of human well-being. Nevertheless these were considered ethically adequate for their time. Now, however, when mutuality is added to the equation, the conditions for optimum human flourishing are more adequately revealed and measured.<sup>37</sup>

So just what is mutuality? It can be defined as "the sharing of 'power-with' by and among all parties in a relationship that recognizes the wholeness and particular experience of each participant toward the end of optimum flourishing of all."<sup>38</sup>

#### A Consensus: Relationship of Mutuality, Love, and Justice

Mutuality is a necessary condition for genuine love and/or justice. When mutuality accompanies love and justice, the dynamic of power becomes limited to "power-with."<sup>39</sup> Generally, theories of justice can be classified in three categories: rationalist<sup>40</sup> and natural law theories, analytical and positivist theories, and utilitarian and other theories.<sup>41</sup> However, mutuality requires a more critical view of hierarchy than is commonly found in natural law traditions. Mutuality shifts the criterion for justice from pure legalism to include the concrete and dynamic needs of the other as basic to thriving. It requires consideration of the good/needs of all beings and elements of the universe in relation to one another, not merely the greatest good for the greatest number. Thus is excluded any construal of justice that fails to include the participation of all parties in deciding its limits or any interpretation of sacrificial love that is morally destructive to any party. Any sacrifice must be chosen in freedom, cognizant of its consequences, with full integrity of the person and toward the goal of a greater mutuality in the relationship.

#### A Consensus for the Normative Status of Mutuality

Mutuality, then, is a formal norm for Christian social ethics. It is one of the definitive relationships of Trinitarian life and is a model for the relationships that ought to prevail between Christians and others. Humans created in the image and likeness of God have the innate capacity for mutuality and thus the ability to live as God lives. Jesus' capacity for mutuality lies at the heart of who he is for Christians, and he is the norm for Christian life. Mutuality, finally, is a construct that is characteristic of the Reign of God toward which all Christians strive. This contemporary rendering of mutuality as a formal norm for Christian social ethics has deep roots within the Christian tradition and is particularly visible in Franciscan theological reflection. The concept of the Christocentric origin of creation and the primacy of Christ places humans in constant relationship with God and the entire cosmos, setting the dynamic of "power-with" in place.

#### The Complexity of Mutuality

In its complexity, the notion of "mutuality" is comparable to the tripartite theory of justice, which interrelates social, distributive, and commutative justice.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, mutuality interrelates four key loci of expression—cosmic, gender, generative, and social. Cosmic mutuality is found in the relation between God and the whole of creation and in the fact that humans are mutually related to everything in the entire cosmos by virtue of their relationship with God. "Cosmic mutuality [is] the sharing of 'power-with' by and among the



Creator, human beings, all earth elements, and the entire cosmos in a way that recognizes their interdependence and reverences all."<sup>43</sup>

Evidence for cosmic mutuality is adduced from the natural sciences including astrophysics, ecology, and quantum physics. Also, eco-feminist theory holds that the natural environment asserts itself as a living aspect of "our bodies, ourselves." The environment answers back when humans defile nature.<sup>44</sup> The most effective social analysis takes into account how power impacts the most disadvantaged as well as all elements of the ecosystem in the interest of attaining the well-being of all. The Franciscan charism expresses the traditional Judeo-Christian cosmology which asserts the relatedness of the created order and the social order. The phrase, "God in the world and the world in God," expresses the sort of panentheism that has been recognized for centuries as orthodox. The fact that God enters into creation as Creator, Vivifier, Redeemer, etc., shows that, in a certain analogous sense, God "needs" such a relationship. If we acknowledge the kinship of all creation, then the command to "love thy neighbor" must be extended to everything and everyone. All of this points to cosmic mutuality.

#### Feminists' Notion of Cosmic Mutuality in Scotus's Thought

We can see how Scotus's thought supports cosmic mutuality as normative. His positive view of creation and the Incarnation includes not only humans, but the entire cosmos. The notion of *haecceitas* not only defines individuality, but also points to an aspect of each element known only to God. "Thisness" denotes the profound uniqueness of each element that shapes the relationship between God and the whole of creation. "Thisness" is enhanced by the Incarnation insofar as all are joined in the One who fulfills "God's hidden plan" (Eph. 1: 3-10). We discover here in Scotus the basis for a fluid dynamism between God and all creation that respects the boundaries of individual elements, yet also empowers each element toward the maximal thriving of all in proper relation to God.

#### Conclusions: the Probative Value of Mutuality

Why though is cosmic mutuality vital for ecotheology? First and foremost, mutuality requires that the moral agent deal concretely in moral reflection and moral decision-making. Specific and careful attention needs to be given to the reality-revealing questions—what? why? how? who? where? when?—in relationship to foreseeable effects and viable alternatives, in the concrete, as well as in the abstract. Second, mutuality requires the moral agent to probe the dynamics of power as active in an ethical dilemma and to seek ways of shaping those dynamics for the service of "power-with." Third, en-

gaging the norm of mutuality presses the moral agent toward inclusivity, drawing into the process of moral reflection concern for the thriving and flourishing of all involved.

Engaging the concerns of mutuality personalizes and concretizes situations, blatantly reminding the moral agents that they are dealing with the relationships of real lives and real people. Such probing also raises the necessity of an historical perspective since relationships between humans, non-humans, the earth, and the cosmos have a history with a beginning, middle, and end. Since probing relationships reveals a cosmic interconnectedness, the norm of mutuality brings a wider worldview into play. Because mutuality assumes the wholeness of the individual parties in a relationship, it demands honesty and integrity from those involved. Without such integrity, relationships are destructive for all, including the perpetrators of force of any kind.

#### Summary

The fundamental bequest of the Franciscan School to ecotheology is to shift the essential question of Christianity from redemption and sacrifice to creation and empowerment. The world God saved is first the world God created.

Before anything is, we have the "form" of the world, the "form" of the body of Christ. . . . This means that, in the first chapter of *Genesis*, sun, moon, trees, animals, stones, all have life only in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ, for, "in the beginning was the Word" (Jn. 1:1). All in the material bodily world are Christological and express what the body of Christ is like. Everything out there—trees, clouds, all—is formed to give us part of the picture of who Christ is in the Incarnation, the concreteness of God.<sup>45</sup>

Through the manifold particularities of God's self-revelation in nature, humans come to know God. In turn, humans use their gift of reason to engage in the great doxology of participation in sustaining creation. In our ecologically ravaged world, to believe that Christ is at the heart of every creature is to shift our understanding of power dynamics within the entire cosmos. Humans can no longer construe themselves as the sole brokers of power over all others. Rather, they must embrace the stance of cosmic mutuality by "the sharing of power-with by and among the Creator, human beings, all earth elements, and the entire cosmos in a way that recognizes their interdependence and reverences all."<sup>46</sup>

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, references to Francis's writings and the early biographies are from Marion A. Habig, *Omnibus of Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983).

<sup>2</sup>See Ewert Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century* (Rockport, MA: Element, Inc., 1992), 143-44.

<sup>3</sup>Zachary Hayes, "St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: A Model for a 21st Century Spirituality," Unpublished Manuscript, 8-16.

<sup>4</sup>See Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 74.

<sup>5</sup>Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath, (Hamden, CT: The Shoestring Press, Inc., 1970), 90.

<sup>6</sup>It is no accident that many of the Franciscan theologians were also mystics, for example St. Anthony of Padua and St. Bonaventure.

<sup>7</sup>*The Works of Bonaventure: Collations on the Six Days*, I.10, Vol. V, trans. Jose de Vinck, (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970), 5-6.

<sup>8</sup>Zachary Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," *The Cord* 46.1 (Jan./Feb., 1996): 9.

<sup>9</sup>Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," (quoting Bonaventure, *Collations on the Six Days of Creation*, 1, n.1.), 7-8.

<sup>10</sup>Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 101-102.

<sup>11</sup>See Leonard J. Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *Journal of Religion* 55 (April 1975): 181-85.

<sup>12</sup>Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," 11.

<sup>13</sup>Here we can see the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on Bonaventure. See Jose de Vinck, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. J. Guy Bougerol, (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1972), 40.

<sup>14</sup>Bonaventure, *Sermo I, Dom II*, in Quad. IX, 215-19, quoted in Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," 13.

<sup>15</sup>Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century*, 151.

<sup>16</sup>Bonaventure, *Hexaem.* XII, 14, quoted in Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century*, 152.

<sup>17</sup>Bonaventure, *Brevil.* 2.4 (V, 221), cited by Zachary Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 67-68.

<sup>18</sup>Phil Hoebing, "St. Bonaventure and Ecology," in *The Cord*, 40.11 (Dec., 1990): 341-42.

<sup>19</sup>Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," 74.

<sup>20</sup>Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century*, 152-55.

<sup>21</sup>Armond A. Mauer, *Medieval Philosophy*, The Etienne Gilson Series 4, Second Edition, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 223-24.

<sup>22</sup>John Duns Scotus, Quodlibet 14, nn. 23-24 (Alluntis 1: 83) in *John Duns Scotus: God and Creatures, The Quodlibetal Questions*, trans. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 338-9.

<sup>23</sup>Alluntis/Wolter, "Glossary," *God and Creatures*, 511: *haecceitas*, (from the Latin *haec*, this). The term means literally, "thisness." It designates the unique formal principle of individuation that makes the nature, which all individuals of the same species have in common, to be just this or that individual and no other.

<sup>24</sup>Eric Doyle, "Duns Scotus and Ecumenism," *De Doctrina I. Duns Scoti*, vol. III, Acta Congressus Scotistici Internationalis Oxonii et Edimburgi, 11-17 September 1966 celebrati, Camille Bérubé, ed., (Roma: Cura Commissionis Scotisticae, 1968), 460: "The uniqueness, the unrepeatable something of all things, is what gives them their intrinsic and eternal value. There is about everything, every person, an originality that gives new insight into reality, another aspect that has never

been seen before. Each person enters into a new enriching relationship of knowledge and love with every new person met, with every new thing encountered."

<sup>25</sup>Mary Elizabeth Ingham, "Integrated Vision," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994), 210.

<sup>26</sup>See Robert North, "The Scotist Cosmic Christ," in *De Doctrina Ioannis Duns Scoti*, vol. III, 194-198.

<sup>27</sup>Scotus's position on the Incarnation is articulated in his *Reportatio* and *Ordinatio* III.7.3. See Allan B. Wolter, "John Duns Scotus on the Primacy and Personality of Christ," in *Franciscan Christology*, ed. Damian McElraith (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1980), 147-55.

<sup>28</sup>Ingham, "Integrated Vision," 222.

<sup>29</sup>John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III.7.q.3, trans. Wolter, "On the Primacy," 151.

<sup>30</sup>See Dawn M. Nothwehr, *Mutuality: A Formal Norm For Christian Social Ethics* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, June 1998).

<sup>31</sup>See especially Rosemary Radford Ruether, Carter Heyward, Beverly Wildung Harrison, and Elizabeth A. Johnson,

<sup>32</sup>Beverly Wildung Harrison, "The Politics of Energy Policy," in *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 175 and Carter Heyward, *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic and the Love of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 191.

<sup>33</sup>Heyward defines "mutuality" and "power" in the glossary of her *Touching Our Strength*, 191. "Power" is defined as "the ability to move, effect, make a difference; the energy to create or destroy, call forth or put down. Outside of a particular context, power bears neither positive nor negative connotations. Power can be used for good or for ill."

<sup>34</sup>Beverly Wildung Harrison, "Human Sexuality and Mutuality: A Fresh Paradigm," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 6 (1983): 152-53. See also *Making the Connections*, 290, n. 5 where Harrison defines power as "the ability to act on and effectively shape the world around us, particularly through collective actions and institutional policy. To have power means to have access to physical resources and wealth, to knowledge, and to loci of social decision-making and to be able to impact institutional and social policy."

<sup>35</sup>Daniel C. Maguire, "The Primacy of Justice in Moral Theology," *Horizons* 10 (1983): 77.

<sup>36</sup>Daniel C. Maguire and A. Nicholas Fagnoli, *On Moral Grounds: The Art/Science of Ethics* (New York: Crossroads, 1991), 49-72.

<sup>37</sup>See Nothwehr, Introduction.

<sup>38</sup>See Nothwehr, 233.

<sup>39</sup>See Nothwehr, 233 and Introduction.

<sup>40</sup>Peter A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "rationalism;" s.v. "law, natural;" s.v. "analytic philosophy;" s.v. "positivism, logical;" and s.v. "utilitarianism:"

<sup>41</sup>*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "justice."

<sup>42</sup>A thorough discussion of the nature of justice is found in Daniel C. Maguire, *A New American Justice* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980), especially 55-84.

<sup>43</sup>See Nothwehr, 233.

<sup>44</sup>Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth and Healing*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 2-3.

<sup>45</sup>William Short, "The Good, Good World," an address presented at the Institute on Evangelical Life, Tau Center, Winona, MN, June 8, 1994.

<sup>46</sup>See Nothwehr, 233.

*We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our  
Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit  
(1EpFid 1:8).*

## Trees: Our "Green Brothers"

Jude M. Rochford, OFM Conv.

New interest in the environment has taken on global attention since John Paul II visited Assisi on October 27, 1986, for a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace. With him for this very special day were representatives of all the world's religions. They came to Assisi as "the works, the teachings and the figure of St. Francis are at the center of many values that people hold in common."<sup>1</sup> John Paul II visited Assisi again on January 9-10, 1993, in the Meeting for Peace in Europe which included the presence of many religious representatives. This was a revival of the great 1986 Day of Peace. Prior to this event, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been held in Rio, June 3-14, 1992. This conference, drawing representatives from countries worldwide, confirmed the importance of environment and more so of trees and forests. They should be managed in such a way as to "meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural, and spiritual human needs of present and future generations" (Principle, 2.b).

### Concern for the Environment

Global conflicts, worries, concerns for peace among men and women are not just an emotional reaction but a reality to conserve the environment, a defense for people, animals, flora, and the earth's ecosystems. Thus, there is emerging a greater solidarity among men and women to live in peace among themselves within their natural surroundings. The trend with much emphasis among governments today is given to peace among its citizens and to the environment in which they live. This is seen in the promotion and preservation of national parks, recreational areas, and botanical gardens. They realize that only peace among peoples can achieve this.

Franciscans, too, are not isolationists but view the importance of natural surroundings, the landscape in general. They see Francis's values—as did John

Paul II and the religious leaders with him in Assisi and the Rio Conference Global—represented in the symbolic value of trees that "live together in a form of material and spiritual 'multiple symbiosis,'" as if to indicate that even peace among trees is a complex, interlaced reality brought about by nature, a reality that humans are searching to create with God's help.

At St. Bonaventure College in Lusaka, Zambia, Franciscans of the three First Order families have planted trees of various species from the flame tree, bush-broom, acacia, fig, palm, bamboo, cedar, mulberry, Japanese poinsettia, reed, Mexican apple, peach, papyrus, passionflower, pine, rose, and vine to many fruit trees such as the orange, avocado-pear, lemon, mango, coffee, paw-paw, guava, and banana. Since the college's inception in 1991 there has been an annual tree planting day, Arbor Day, at the Franciscan Formation Center.

These trees are needed not only to produce fruit but also to improve the physical ecosystem of the Institute's surroundings. They command respect—almost veneration—both for profane and religious reasons. From earliest times in Africa, and Zambia in particular, certain trees and groves were held sacred by the indigenous people. There they would offer worship and prayers to Lesa, God. In the Bible, too, God's people in the Old Testament and New Testament held in esteem the allegorical symbolism of trees, as for example the cedar, the reed, acacia, cypress, palm, fig, and others. Briefly some trees mentioned in this holy, noble, and sacred book are also found in Africa and are native to Zambia.

### Cedar of Lebanon

This tree, *Cedrus libani* Loud., belongs to the order *Pinales*, the family *Pinaceae*, and the genus *Cedrus*. "In the ancient world, because of its size, the cedar was a symbol of greatness, nobility, strength, immortality, and incorruptibility. Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans would often use this wood to carve statues of gods and ancestors."

In the Bible, Solomon, son of David, built the Temple of the Lord with cedar and fir wood (1Kings 5:1-26; see also Ez. 17:22-23; Sir. 24:13; 1Kings 6:18). In Christian art, the cedar is a symbol of Christ's incorruptible flesh. The tree is seen in crucifixion scenes.

### The Reed

The biblical reed is of the genera *Arundo* and *Phragmites*, of the order *Graminales*, and of the family *Graminaceae*. "The reed is the common symbol of fragility and flexibility; but, it is considered especially by oriental peoples to be a symbol of life because, after dry spells, it is the first plant to spring up along river banks."

In the Bible, the reed is used to measure the new temple foreseen by the prophet Ezekiel (40:4ff). He calls Egypt a splintered reed which Israel relies on (29:6-7). Isaiah uses similar words: "There you are, relying on that broken reed, Egypt, which pricks and pierces the hand of the person who leans on it" (36:6). Isaiah, in the first Song of the Servant of Yahweh, describes the Savior as one who "does not cry out or raise his voice, his voice is not heard in the street; he does not break the crushed reed" (42:2-3; see also Luke 7:24). In Christian art, the reed is a symbol of the passion of Christ, e.g., *Ecce Homo*.

## The Acacia

The acacia of the Bible is said to be *Acacia raddiana* Savi. The genus *Acacia* belongs to the *Rosales* order in the family of *leguminosae* plants. "The acacia are trees of resistant wood, generally of yellow color. The latter is sacred in oriental religions."

In the Bible, the book of Exodus tells us that the Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood (37:1, 4, 10-11). Isaiah foretells changes in nature with the coming of the Savior in these words: "I shall plant the desert with cedar trees, acacias. . ." (Ps. 41:19). Acacia branches, according to tradition, were used to weave Christ's crown of thorns.

## Cypress

The cypress in the Bible is the *Cupressus sempervirem*. It belongs to the genus *Cupressus*, the order *Pinales*, and the family *Cupressaceae*. "The Greek and Romans considered the cypress a symbol of the divinities of hell and, in general, of the underworld. For this reason, it was connected with the cult of Pluto, the Lord of the underworld. Even today, in many parts of the world, the tree is used to embellish cemeteries." Shintoists of Japan, however, consider it to be a symbol of incorruptibility and purity.

The Bible tells us the Temple was rebuilt also with cypress wood: "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, cypress . . . to adorn the site of my sanctuary" (Is. 60:13). Sirach compares divine Wisdom to a cypress on Mount Hermon (24:17). "In Byzantine art, the cypress was given particular importance as the tree of Life." In art, trees of this kind are depicted surrounding the Cross or forming the vegetation of the Heavenly Jerusalem."

## Palm

The palm tree is the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), belonging to the order *Principes*, the family *Palmae*, and the genus *Phoenix*. "The very adjective *phoenix*, a word of great antiquity, defines the specific type of palm which, for the

ancient Egyptians, was a symbol of fertility and, for the Greeks and Hebrews, a symbol of triumph. The last meaning is found in the Gospel narratives which describe the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and by the Christian celebration of Palm Sunday."

In the Bible there are many references to this tree. In Leviticus, reference is made to the Feast of Tabernacles and the building of booths with palm branches (23:33-43). The Psalmist compares the just person to a palm: "The upright will flourish like a palm tree, will grow like a cedar of Lebanon" (92[93]:12). In the Canticle of Canticles, the groom exalts the beauty of the bride using the image of a palm (7:8-9). At the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, John writes: "They took branches of palm and went out to receive him, shouting 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who is coming in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel!'" (John 12:12-13; see also 1Kings 6:29; 7:36).

In Christian art, especially in the Roman catacombs, there exist frescoes which narrate the death of martyrs. These have the engraved palm united with a monogram of Christ to indicate those who have won the palm of victory by dying for the faith.

## The Fig

The fig is the *Ficus Carica* of the genus *Ficus*, order *Urticales* and family *Moraceae*. "For hermits of ancient Egypt, the fig was a symbol of religious initiation. Indeed, they ate it because it was a symbol of religious knowledge."

In the Old Testament, the fig, together with the vine, is a symbol not only of fertility, but also of the joyous life in the Messianic Kingdom. After the fall of Adam and Eve, the earth is cursed (Gen. 8:17), but, looking toward the Messianic future, Joel foresees a fertile and thriving land: "The trees bear fruit, vine and fig tree yield their riches" (2:22). The prophet Micah writes: "Nation will not lift sword against nation or ever again be trained to make war. But each man will sit under his vine and fig tree with no one to trouble him" (4:4; Zech. 3:10; see also Mt. 21:18; Gen. 3:7). In Christian art, Adam and Eve cover their nakedness with fig leaves after having sinned against the Lord's command not to eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden.

## The Mystery of Trees

Many of these trees, such as the olive (a symbol of regeneration and peace) and the vine ("the tree of life"), still represent the Christian, Jewish, and Moslem religions. Francis of Assisi, like other holy men and women, was also connected to trees, animals, and birds and would dialog with them. His followers, too, see the "transcendent" attributes that various religions have recognized in trees from the earliest times. A mystery surrounds trees which makes us think

## Living Francis's Document on Solitude

Mary Nobis, OSF

*Those who wish to live religiously in hermitages should be three brothers or four at the most; two of these should be mothers and they may have two sons or at least one (RegEr 1).*

### Background

This year (1998)) marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the hermitage at Alverna Heights near Syracuse, New York. We who live there, members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Syracuse, have often been asked why we chose this style of life. What is the attraction? Of what does our life consist? The call to the Franciscan evangelical life presupposes a desire to develop one's relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters. At the hermitage we hold in balance two explicit intentions by which we order our lives—solitude and fraternity. Purposely, we compose our lives in such a way that God and sister are primary.

Our life consists of living together simply with an intentional group focus on our relationship with God: "You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mt. 22:37). This supports the central position of solitude in the Franciscan eremitical movement. In being together with God we experience our evangelical life, which is the second cornerstone of a Franciscan hermitage: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:39). God takes our hearts and says: "I will give them a single heart and I will put a new spirit in them; I will remove the heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh instead" (Ez. 11:19-20a).

With this new heart we become increasingly aware of God as our constant companion in our sisters. Our ordinarieness is where God works, where God prefers to be. If we cannot see the face of the Creator in everyday things, then

of the relation of humans to trees. "Trees are our green 'brothers', 'guardian angels' along our journey and after death, protagonists of the continuity of life," says Alfonso Alessandrini, Italy's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (1993).

"Trees of Life" at St. Bonaventure's in Zambia not only offer shade and prevent erosion of soil, but they are the occasion of meditation and peace. In their silence they mirror the grandeur of their Creator. The various species found on the grounds are but a reflection, too, of paradise, which, according to its etymological sense, means a garden or enclosed park.

Trees are a way in which the three Franciscan families at the Formation Center can express their Franciscan conviviality without any ambition or need to stand in opposition or competition with one another. This context symbolizes the consecrated life the friars embrace by living together, finding harmony in diversity, almost like the natural encounter of trees in a forest, a park, or on the campus.

This encounter with trees is celebrated especially during the annual Arbor Day at the beginning of the rains and later at the end of the three year program when a representative friar from the graduating class plants a tree. It is meant to arouse an interest among the newly professed friars from eastern, southern, or western Africa in the religious and cultural value of plants and trees. Upon completion of their studies these same friars, in their various ministries, can inform and educate their brothers and sisters to protect trees and forests in their respective African countries. For, as John Paul II, world religious leaders, the Rio Conference, and Franciscans realize, it is only in a peaceful, harmonious environment between peoples of different races and creeds that fundamental spiritual, human needs can be met. In such an environment, the beauty, nobility, and power of God's creation in this universe can be truly appreciated, loved, and preserved, and God can be praised through it as Francis of Assisi sang in his *Canticle of the Creatures*.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> All quotations in this article are from *Ara Viridis: Trees and Plants in Religious cultures*, ed. Bernard J. Pnewozny, OFM Conv. (Centro Franciscano di Studi Ambientali [CFSA]: Rome, 1993).

*Since I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer to them the fragrant words of my Lord. Therefore . . . I have proposed to set before you in this present letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life (Jn. 6:64) (2EpFid 2-3).*

we will not see God in the miraculous. The God we experience in solitude enables us to see with a "fleshy" heart the God in all things, especially God within our brothers and sisters.

Francis's Rule for Hermitages is much more than a relic of the past. It is a fluid document dealing with our life together in the context of our relationship with God—solitude and fraternity. This was Francis's vision of the eremetical life. His idea of being a hermit conflicts with our common image of a solitary figure communing with God in some deserted place. Francis combined the concept of the solitary person with the concept of community. The remarkable insight of Francis into the integral relationship between ourselves, God, and others is reflected here: "Beloved, if God loved us, we also must love one another. No one has seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us" (1Jn. 4:11-12). That is why we hermits prefer to call Francis's Rule for Hermitages the "Document on Solitude." So join us in this article as we share with you the simple lifestyle we enjoy and from which we gather much fruit!

## A Day in Our Life Together

Weekday mornings start early at the Hermitage. A glance out the window at dark clouds moving across the sky suggests a snowy day. The smell of coffee leaves a warm feeling in one's bones as each of the four hermits rises and begins her personal prayer: "... and they may have an enclosure in which each one may have his small cell in which he may pray and sleep" (RegEr 2). This is a wonderful time! It is a time to greet God with hopes, dreams, and love; to invigorate the core relationship of their lives. It is a time of solitude with God, part of the bedrock which keeps the hermits focused on the One who is so focused on them that even the hairs on their heads are counted! This is such a sacred space it can be difficult to leave. The hermits place no limit on how much time one spends in prayer with God. They trust each other's personal desire and gift from God in this matter, recognizing that there are differences. Silence is an integral part of our communing with God, so the upstairs area of the house is dedicated to it. In the silence of this space, God's voice is heard.

Eventually the sisters gather for Morning Praise: "... and they should be eager to keep silence, and to say their hours" (RegEr 3). In the spirit of evangelical living, the community gathers to pray with one voice. Here they are bound together in a mystical union and strengthened in their ties to humanity and to God. This morning the music sings of creation, the rhythm begging us to strike our instruments, to play and dance along! Make a joyful noise! And what a noise! One sister picks up a small drum, another a tambourine, and still another, maracas! Jeanne can't keep a beat on the drum, but no matter. Everyone laughs, happy to dance before the Lord. During the office someone reads

a prepared passage from a book. Typically the books used are concerned with spirituality, Franciscanism, or social justice. The sisters have also agreed to try focusing on a common theme each day, so after the office Kathleen gives a short reflection. Each member takes a turn sharing God's word spoken to her heart.

The daily cadence begins to pick up. The sisters dress and get things together for their varied ministries. Each hermit is aware that she needs to be mindful of God's presence so she can bring that presence to others in the course of the day. Three of the hermits have fulltime ministries requiring forty or more hours per week: "... and let them seek first of all the kingdom of God and his justice" (RegEr 3).

The pressure of fulltime ministry often clashes with the lifestyle of the hermits. They recognize that their relationship with God in the context of solitude needs time as well as physical space. There is the daily struggle of trying to make everything fit into a twenty-four-hour period. Each in her own way desires greater intimacy with God. The thirst to be with God never seems satiated within the restrictions of time. Priorities have to be made. This causes a "stripping away" of many of the distractions in one's life. To let go of some things for the sake of God causes an investment and commitment of one's self. Those things which do not support the relationship gradually fall away. Those which support it are reinforced and built up. Distractions often take the form of things which are good. Discernment between a number of good things can be difficult. One hermit has let go of a commitment to a time-consuming committee. Another has limited her social engagements, while another does not do as much gardening as before.

Mary is the first to leave for work. A social worker by profession, she is employed at the congregation's hospital and works with dialysis patients. Crisis intervention, counseling, calls to social service, and paperwork will make up her day. Two of the hermits breakfast together while the third begins her exercise regime. The sisters have been discussing health and eating habits recently and are trying to improve their responses in these areas.

Soon Jeanne leaves for the hour drive to her place of ministry in a small rural town. As a nurse practitioner she serves the health needs of the population. Her work often requires her to address spiritual needs, addictions, chronic disease, and issues associated with dying. In an area not remarkable for excellent healthcare, Jeanne has established high standards and has earned the affection and regard of the people. She has made the most of her long drives, viewing her car as an extension of her "cell" and as a place to think and speak to the Lord.

Kathleen soon leaves for Francis House, which she founded as a home for the dying. Carey, the cocker spaniel, goes with her eagerly, enjoying her animal ministry with the guests who reside there and happily eating any snacks

offered. As Director, Kathleen is busy with speaking engagements, fund raising, and other administrative tasks. But what she loves best is her time with the guests, speaking to them of God's love and easing their anxieties over their dying.

Raphael, after attending Mass, comes home to continue working on another community art project. Gathering her creativity, she envisions works of art which speak to the inner soul. She is the only "full-time" hermit: "The two who are mothers should follow the life of Martha, while the two sons should follow the life of Mary" (RegEr 2). She will be meeting with a laywoman at noon who will come for an afternoon of solitude. Raphael will serve as her "mother" so the woman can spend the day at the Lord's feet like Mary: "Because of the obedience to their minister they should protect their sons from everyone, so that no one can talk with them" (RegEr 8).

Upon arriving home from work, there is time before supper for the hermits to relax. Mary begins her exercise regime on the Nordic Track. Raphael is getting the birthday postcards ready to be mailed. Each day the sisters and associates of the community who are celebrating birthdays are remembered in prayer by the hermits. Kathleen is "Martha" tonight, busy preparing a meal of pasta. Raphael is the other "Martha," helping Kathleen with supper and clean-up. "The sons, however, should sometimes assume the role of the mothers, as from time to time it may seem good to them to exchange roles" (RegEr 10).

Jeanne, enjoying her time home as a "Mary," goes to "Little Portion" where she can be with the Lord and unwind from work. While there she enjoys the natural beauty of the surrounding area. The hermitage is located on two hundred acres of farmland, which also contains a small woods. Next to the farm is Green Lakes State Park, which provides access to over two thousand acres of old growth forest and two merimetric lakes. The God of Creation literally explodes into view throughout the area.

The hermits take turns daily being "mothers" and "sons" to each other. Every week one sister is designated as the "Mary" and has the use of a small building named "Little Portion." This prayer shelter, built two years ago, provides much needed space away from the cramped living quarters and allows the hermits a better experience of solitude. "And in the enclosure, where they live, they should not permit any person to enter, nor should they eat there" (RegEr 7). "And the sons should not talk with any person except with their mothers and with the minister. . ." (RegEr 9). Unlike the rough prayer shelters in the woods, the "Little Portion" is provided with heat and electricity so it can be used year round. On the occasional weekends when outside persons come and join in the lifestyle, the "Little Portion" is a popular place for those wishing to spend time in solitude with God.

After work and supper, the hermits celebrate Evening Praise. One night a week evening prayer takes the form of "heart sharing," during which each one

shares what is important to her: "And let them say Prime at the proper time, and after Terce they may be free from silence, and they may speak with their mothers" (RegEr 4). This practice begins at supper when the "Martha" decides whether the meal will be eaten in silence or accompanied by sharing. On this evening, Kathleen decided on silence. The hermits find the "heart-sharing" time to be productive for community building. It increases their sense of intimacy and trust with one another. After the meal, with coffee mugs in hand, the sisters retire to the living room. Raphael shares excitedly about her latest art project as each one listens and encourages her creativity. Mary touches on how she had been blessed with a special sense of God's love while watching the deer that morning. The sharing continues until each one has had a chance to speak. The atmosphere is relaxed, nothing is forced; a sister can choose simply to listen.

The sharing is followed by reflections on a scripture passage chosen by the prayer leader. The sisters are nourished by God's word and by each other: "Whenever it pleases them, they can seek alms from them as little poor ones, for the love of God" (RegEr 5). God's word spoken through each sister's heart and given as gift to the others draws each one to a deeper appreciation of Scripture and the Spirit.

At the end of the evening each one retires to her room. The speaking of God's word to them in fraternity has given birth to a common desire to rest alone with God in solitude. Jeanne is able to spend the night in "Little Portion." The night-time quiet settles over the Hermitage as each sister drifts off to sleep very much aware of the God who surrounds her.



Rose Raymond Wagner, OSF

*And they should be eager to keep silence, and to say their hours, and to rise for Matins; and let them seek first of all the kingdom of God and His justice (RegEr 3)*

## Voices from the Past

Excerpt from a "Letter from the Editor," Philotheus Boehner, OFM. (January 1955, pages 29-30.)

At the recent meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference a questionnaire relative to *The Cord* was distributed. About forty answered it, representing (we hope) the opinion of the various Franciscan Sisterhoods. The comments without exception were favorable, and the suggestions for improving *The Cord* were quite helpful. We feel encouraged to continue the policy adopted at the beginning of this enterprise, that is, to cling tenaciously to our own Franciscan tradition and heritage, without forgetting that according to the holy Gospel there should be *nova et vetera*. We know that many improvements are still to be made, but we shall conscientiously refrain from making *The Cord* a fashionable modern magazine. . . .

It is our fervent hope that *The Cord* will make us all more conscious of our Franciscan heritage, and especially that we in turn may give it to the poor suffering world that so badly needs it. May the Lord give you peace.

---

Excerpt from a conference by Allan B. Wolter on Chapter 5, Article 14 of the Third Order Regular Rule of 1927. (*The Cord*, June, 1953, pages 158-165.)

*Since the Brothers and Sisters of the Fraternity are called the Order of Penance, they should daily carry the cross of mortification as becomes true penitents.*

The test of true penance will always be: Does it bear fruit in charity? In his Letter to All the Faithful, Francis wrote: "Let us bring forth fruits worthy of penance and love our neighbors as ourselves." Viewed in this light, the opening passage of his Testament speaks volumes: "The Lord gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance; for when I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers, and the Lord Himself led me amongst them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul." If our practice of penance is according to the mind of Francis, it will have a two-fold effect. It will make God sweet to us, and it will make us merciful to others.

## Book Review

Zachary Hayes. *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings*. A Spiritual Legacy Book. New York: Crossroad, 1999. 152pp.

No reader of *The Cord* should have any difficulty recognizing either the author or the subject matter of this wonderful book. For Franciscan readers today, the names Zachary Hayes and Bonaventure belong together like those of Isaiah and Yahweh! And yet, as John Farina, the general editor of the Crossroad Spiritual Legacy series suggests, Bonaventure is not as familiar to the general reader as are Augustine, Aquinas, Ignatius Loyola, and other figures of the Christian tradition (9). The stated purpose of this series is "to make the spiritual masters accessible to today's reader" (back cover). In Hayes's book we are given access to St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and are all beneficiaries of a rich, fruitful, and loving study of the saint, presented here in a succinct and challenging manner, yet accessible to both those familiar and those unfamiliar with the life and work of this thirteenth-century Franciscan Master.

The book is composed of an Introduction, six chapters, a Conclusion, and a Selected Bibliography. The format of the book places significant texts of Bonaventure in an "expository context" (11). And, as the subtitle of the volume indicates, the focus and context is on the mystical dimension of Bonaventure's thought. Rather than introduce the many texts of Bonaventure that deal with this, Hayes uses the structure of *The Journey of the Soul into God* as the central thread for his presentation while drawing other texts into the discussion to enrich the topic. He provides his own translations of all the Bonaventure texts included. The richness of the vision described is thus enhanced by the variety of texts and sources that are introduced throughout the course of the journey. Selections from almost all of Bonaventure's works, from his *Sentence Commentary* to the *Collations on the Six Days*, are included.

In the Introduction, Hayes sketches the life of Bonaventure as well as the thirteenth-century context in which his thought developed. Hayes articulates at the outset the qualities of Bonaventure's work. These qualities describe the various lenses through which Hayes views the achievement of Bonaventure and become in turn the very dimensions of his exposition of Bonaventure's thought throughout the text. As Hayes summarizes it, Bonaventure's vision is



deeply rooted in the spiritual experience of Francis and in the Scriptures. It is a mystically oriented vision, in the sense of "experiential knowledge," and is an intellectual tradition conversant with the theological and philosophical currents of its time (21-26). At each step of the spiritual journey, Hayes explicitly connects Bonaventure's thought to those four named qualities. He says: "[Bonaventure] took the concerns of a rich tradition of spirituality and theology together with the claims of a spiritual vision grounded in the religious experience of St. Francis of Assisi and brought these into a creative engagement with some of the dominant categories of the increasingly critical and secular culture of his time" (26). Also in the Introduction, Hayes describes the religious experience of Francis at some length (26-35), drawing out the implications for Bonaventure's spirituality and theology.

Chapter One presents an overview of "Bonaventure's Program." The distinctive form of Bonaventure's wisdom theology takes its shape from the interaction of the spiritual experience of Francis, from the Christian intellectual and spiritual tradition as it had developed to that point, and from the historical context of the Aristotelian movement of thirteenth-century Paris. As a wisdom theology, its focus is on knowledge in relation to life, the goal being love, expressing Bonaventure's conviction that wisdom is ultimately found in union with God—a mystical union. As all of reality is grounded in the mystery of the Word, the center of the Trinity, so from this center emerge the components of Bonaventure's theological metaphysics of emanation, exemplarity, and consummation, described by Hayes as a "theology of revelational history" (47).

The point of departure for the spiritual journey derives from the fact that all of creation is on a journey from and to the Father, through the Word, in the power of the Spirit. The specific mission of the Spirit is to bring human persons more and more into the mystery of the Word, manifested explicitly in the incarnation, wherein "the center of God becomes present as the center of creation" (49). The human person as microcosm within the macrocosm of the world has the necessary equipment to make the journey (i.e., the powers for perceiving the corporeal, the inner, and the higher worlds) with the six functions of the soul (sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence, synderesis), through which one arrives at the point of integration necessary for mystical experience.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four treat respectively the journey through "The World Outside" to "The World Inside" and up to "The World Above." In each of these chapters, Hayes makes explicit connections between the thought of Bonaventure and the religious experience of Francis. It is Francis's experience of God as the loving source of all that is and Francis's experience of the universe structured in familial relations that find expression in Bonaventure's description of God as the mystery of primal goodness and fontal fullness and

in a created world which reflects the trace, image, and likeness of God. The cosmos is experienced as the language of God, in which not only the powerful and awesome elements but also the small and insignificant elements speak of God.

"The World Inside" treats of the soul and its functions. At this level of the journey Hayes points to the contemplative dimension of Francis's experience, especially the event on La Verna, as the "epitome and summary of St. Francis's life" (81). He develops this within the context of the Augustinian tradition of the inner way and seeing the soul as an image of the Trinity. According to Bonaventure, there lies at the depths of the soul, which images the Trinity as memory, understanding, and will, an openness to receive a deeper communication of the divine. The image can become likeness as the effect of grace. For the soul in its fallen state, Christ becomes a ladder to restore what was first broken in Adam. Growth in grace finds expression in the practice of the virtues, which effectively shape the human person into the image of the Son. Thus, Bonaventure understands the human person as image in a dynamic manner—a task to be accomplished.

"The World Above" treats of the two names of God, first "Being"—the name revealed to Moses at the burning bush—and then, most appropriately, "the Good," the highest name of God. This mystery of goodness is the Trinity as free, generous, self-diffusive love poured out in creation. Bonaventure stretches thought and speech about the mystery of God in paradoxical ways, witnessed most clearly in the mystery of God-made-flesh in Jesus—the hypostatic union—the mercy seat on the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies in the temple, "that point in the temple at which the mystery of the divine presence is most sharply focused" (114).

Chapter Five develops the role of "Christ the Center" in this spiritual journey. Francis's focus on the humanity of Jesus leads Bonaventure to approach the illuminative dimension of the spiritual journey in terms of the imitation of Christ. Citing Ewert Cousins's mysticism of the historical event (119), Hayes describes how for Bonaventure the events of Christ's life take on archetypal significance as the "symbolic expression of the mystery of the eternal Word" (118). For Francis, meditation on the life of Christ led him to La Verna and the Stigmata. Likewise, for those on the journey, meditation on the life of Christ can lead to mystical experience. Focusing his attention on the origins, the life, the passion, death, and cross of Jesus leads Bonaventure, following Francis, to describe the goal of the spiritual journey as loving compassion. Progress in the journey can be determined by the degree of compassionate love shared. The passing over into God, the highest stage of the journey, takes place through Christ Crucified.

Chapter Six describes the dynamics of the "Goal of the Journey." Bonaventure presents this goal in terms of "Sabbath rest" and "peace," to-

gether with and entering into darkness and silence—all of which is a “taste” of God. Bonaventure presents this experience as ecstasy rather than rapture. As Hayes states: “Bonaventure is talking about an experience of a person who stands within history. It is here described as a very intense experience of loving, transforming union with God, which here comes to some level of awareness or consciousness” (136-137) and is best described as “experiential wisdom” (138). This paradoxical language leads to silence because ultimately the experience is incommunicable; it is a gift beyond the categories of cognition, the “radically transformative power of a love that moves beyond mere knowledge” (139).

In the Conclusion, Hayes suggests some of the implications emerging from this dynamic and compelling vision of Bonaventure. The metaphor of the journey is archetypal and common to many world religions so that Bonaventure’s approach to the journey might serve as a point of departure for inter-religious dialogue. Bonaventure’s is a tradition and a vision that fosters awareness of the nature and dignity of the human person in his or her multiple dimensions, challenging contemporary reductionistic approaches to the human. Bonaventure also takes seriously the religious significance of material reality and urges humanity “to be aware and to be respectful” (148) in its relation with the world. He weaves the mystery of Christ deeply into the fabric of the cosmos. From here, the door opens to a rich form of Christian humanism, drawing all the human arts and sciences into the spiritual journey. And finally, Bonaventure’s journey goes the way of the mind and the intellect—it is rigorously reflective. But knowledge is not the final word. In the end, reality is most adequately approached as a mystery of love.

This summary does not begin to communicate the contours of the vision that Hayes presents in the pages of this book. While offering readers a synthesis of Bonaventure from the perspective of the mystical journey, Hayes does much, much more than merely communicate information. He takes us from the many different texts and contexts of this thirteenth-century Franciscan Master and leads us into Bonaventure’s underlying experience and spirit, thus allowing us a “taste” of his heart and soul. Having offered us this experience of Bonaventure, he then leads us back into our own world. Hayes does not simply reconstruct a system of the past, he compels the reader to set out on the journey in order to articulate a Franciscan vision and experience of God, of human beings, and of the world for today. Simply to repeat what Bonaventure said is to miss the point. But at the same time, to speak of and to the world today without humanly engaging (with both mind and heart!) the experience of Francis and Bonaventure is to miss the most fundamental insights of the Franciscan tradition. In this book, Hayes has described the task that lies before Franciscans at the threshold of the new millennium.

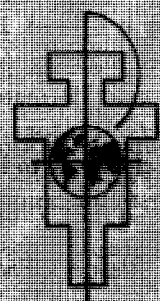
So, who should read this book? It is for anyone interested in or engaged in the Franciscan Mission, in whatever form and wherever it is lived. It is for every Franciscan involved in anything, from social justice ministry to health care. It is for leaders and educators, pastors and parishioners, formators and jubilarians, singers and dancers, and scientists and farmers. It is for the family—a work of wisdom, of love, and of conviction. It is a challenge to be what we say we are for the world and Church of the twenty-first millennium!

Michael W. Blastic, OFM Conv  
St. Bonaventure University

## Books Received

- Celano, Thomas. *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi and The Treatise on Miracles*. Trans. Catherine Bolton. Assisi: Editrice Minerva, 1997. 404 pp.
- . *The Life of St. Clare, Virgin*. Trans. Catherine Bolton Magrini. Assisi: Editrice Minerva, 1996. 100 pp.
- Della Porta, P. M., E. Genovesi, and E. Lunghi. *Guide to Assisi: History and Art*. Trans. Mary O’Bringer and Julia Perry. Assisi: Editrice Minerva, 1992. 219 pp.
- Jarmak, Claude M., OFM Conv. *If You Seek Miracles: Reflections of Saint Anthony of Padua*. Padova: Messaggero di S. Antonio, 1998. 237 pp.
- Talbot, John Michael and Steve Rabey. *The Lessons of St. Francis: How to Bring Simplicity and Spirituality into Your Daily Life*. New York: Dutton, 1997. 255pp.
- Unamuno, Miguel de. *The Christ of Velázquez: A Poem*. Translated from the Spanish by Jaime R. Vidal. Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1999. 112 pp.

*We, therefore, pray to the most kind Father through you, his only-begotten Son, who for us became man, was crucified and glorified, that he send us out of his treasures the Spirit of sevenfold grace who rested upon you in all fullness. . . .*  
*For you have wished that we ask for these things in that sacred prayer which you have taught us; and now we ask to obtain them, through your cross, for the praise of your most holy name. To you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, thanksgiving, beauty and power, forever and ever. Amen.*  
*(From Bonaventure, The Tree of Life 49.)*



## FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

### THIRD ORDER REGULAR

OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES  
ANNOUNCES A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM

## THE CANTICLE OF CONVERSION: SINGING THE COSMIC SYMPHONY

"Christ comes to be the fullness of the universe when each person comes to be in the fullness of Christ. This is the center of the Franciscan Theology."

Bl. John, OSF

#### Includes:

- Contemporary celebration of our changing universe through the Canticum of Creation
- Reflection on our personal change-of-heart experiences
- Presentation on the Franciscan tradition of conversion
- Application of our evolving conversions in the present world
- Quiet time to touch the mystery of God in our life stories
- Appearance and dialog with a figure from our heritage
- Interpretation of our individual and cosmic stories to bring the future to birth
- Invitation to enter into the grasping and transforming of the cosmos

#### Program dates and places:

September 29-October 1, 2000—Franciscan Center, Aston, PA  
October 20-22, 2000—Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI  
November 17-19, 2000—Tau Center, Winona, MN  
February 9-11, 2001—Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, CO  
March 16-18, 2001—St. Joseph Center, Tiffin, OH  
April 27-29, 2001—Franciscan Center, Andover, MA  
May 4-6, 2001—Millvale Motherhouse, Pittsburgh, PA  
September 21-23, 2001—Holy Spirit Center, San Antonio, TX  
October 5-7, 2001—Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL  
November 2-4, 2001—Center of Renewal, Stella Niagara, NY  
November 30-December 2, 2001—Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC

Cash \$115—Room, meals, program, materials (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Concession rates \$100—Program, material, meals (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

#### Contact:

The Franciscan Federation  
Attn: Margie Fogarty  
PO Box 79080, Washington, DC 20017  
Ph: 202-329-2334, fax: 202-329-7016

## The Franciscan Institute

### IN SOLITUDE AND DIALOGUE: CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCANS THEOLOGIZE

Edited with an Introduction by Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

#### Contributors:

Gerald M. Dolan	<i>Words of Hope in Troubled Times</i>
Gabriele Uhlein	<i>Creation: A Franciscan Conversion Conversation</i>
Jane Kopas	<i>Mortal Diamond: The Body in Theological Anthropology</i>
Regis A. Duffy	<i>Contexts for a Franciscan Theology of the Eucharist</i>
John J. Burkhard	<i>Being a Person in the Church</i>
Xavier J. Seubert	<i>The Cross and Death of Jesus: A Franciscan Interpretation</i>
Joan Mueller	<i>Models of Evangelical Poverty: Eschatological Implications</i>

\*Price \$22.00. 208 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-167-0

### THE ADMONITIONS OF ST. FRANCIS:

#### SOURCES AND MEANINGS

by Robert J. Karris, OFM

The author examines similarities between these writings of Francis and other spiritual writings of the Christian tradition. He looks at how Francis uses the Scriptures and how he adapts his spiritual legacy in creative ways. A new translation of each Admonition and a commentary on each verse, concluding with practical reflections.

Price \$28.00. 312+xxv pages, paper.

ISBN 1-57659-166-2

### FRANCISCANS DOING THEOLOGY: AN INDEPENDENT STUDY

#### PROGRAM TO ACCOMPANY *THE HISTORY OF FRANCISCAN THEOLOGY*

Resource prepared by Mary C. Gurley, OSF

This set of materials captures the content and the dynamics of the National Franciscan Forum held in Colorado Springs in June, 1997. It provides an in-depth focus on the major conference presentations and guides the users through the process used at the Forum. Presentations by: *Michael Blastic, Zachary Hayes, William Short, Margaret Guider, Kenan Osborne, Margaret Carney, Edward Coughlin, Anthony Carrozzo, OFM.*

An excellent resource for ongoing formation.

\*Price \$70.00. 232 pages, loose-leaf format; five videos.

ISBN: 1-57659-165-4

\*Prices are subject to change.



# The Franciscan Heritage

Producers: Mary Abam, FACM, John Kiehl, OFM;  
Don Riley, OFM, Margaret Cooney, OSE, Thomas Blum, OFM;  
Edward Coniglia, OFM, Charles Finnegan, OFM;  
Edward and Mary Zolner, SOD.

1. Franciscan Heritage  
2. Franciscan Heritage  
3. Franciscan Heritage  
4. Franciscan Heritage  
5. Franciscan Heritage  
6. Franciscan Heritage  
7. Franciscan Heritage  
8. Franciscan Heritage  
9. Franciscan Heritage  
10. Franciscan Heritage

# FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

## MILLENNIUM CONFERENCE

August 14-17, 2000  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

THEME:  
Overflowing Goodness  
The Gift of the Trinity

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Maria Calisi, Ph.D.  
Margaret Carney, OSF  
Joseph Chinnici, OFM

### At the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque

Registration: \$275 per Federation member  
\$250 per Federation member (if two or  
more persons from same congregation attend.)



**FRANCISCAN FEDERATION**  
**THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**  
**1965-2000**

For hotel reservations contact

Hyatt Regency Albuquerque  
330 Tijeras NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Ph: 505-842-1234 Fax: 505-842-1184

Website: [www.hyatt.com/usa/albuquerque/hotels](http://www.hyatt.com/usa/albuquerque/hotels)

Hotel cost: \$105 per night (one or two in room)  
\$115 per night (three or four in room)

When making reservations, be sure to indicate that  
you are attending the Franciscan Federation

## FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

2000

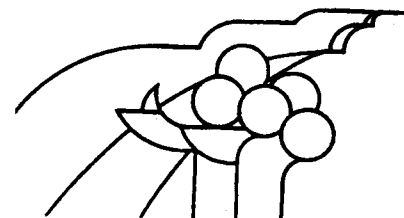
2000

in  
Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats

All sessions in 2000 will be conducted  
for Franciscans in the Far East and Africa  
to celebrate the Millennium.

A three-month ministerial and experiential program  
born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism  
enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach  
to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors,  
parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, mission-  
aries, community leadership, personal renewal.



*For more information contact:*

Tom Speier, ofm; Marilyn Joyce, osf  
St. Francis Extension  
2014 Springdale Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45231  
Phone: (513) 825-0674 Fax: (513) 541-9347

# Franciscan

## GERMAIN GRISEZ

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume III: Difficult Moral Questions*

In this **newest** volume, Grisez answers 200 practical, moral questions raised by the readers of the first two volumes.

ISBN 0981-5 927 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume II: Living A Christian Life*

Prof. Grisez deals with the specific questions that concern all or most Catholics.

ISBN 0961-0 950 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume I: Christian Moral Principles*

Treats the foundations of Christian morality.

ISBN 0861-4 971 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

**Buy all three volumes for \$90.00!**

### *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life*

Margaret Carney, ofm

A scholarly study of Clare's Rule.

ISBN 0962-9 261 p. (paper) \$12.95

### *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*

Ingrid Peterson, ofm

Drawing from historical, sociological, spiritual, theological, and ecclesiological backgrounds and specialists, Ingrid Peterson created the definitive biographical study of Clare of Assisi.

ISBN 0964-H 436 p. (cloth) \$23.50

### *A Dwelling Place for the Most High: Meditations with Francis of Assisi*

Fr. Thaddée Matura, ofm

Pau. Lachance, ofm, trans.

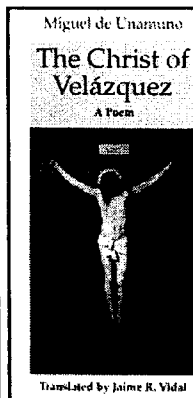
This work is a brief synthesis of a distinguished Franciscan scholar's thoughts on the life and example of the founder.

ISBN 0985-8 101 p. (paper) \$11.95

## NEW!

### *The Christ of Velázquez*

Miguel de Unamuno, Jaime Vidal, Ph.D., trans.



A classic of 20th century spirituality and a classic of Spanish literature, *The Christ of Velázquez* is a poetic meditation on Velázquez's painting of Christ Crucified by an outstanding figure of 20th century existentialist philosophy.

phv.

ISBN 0992-0 112 p. (hardcover) \$19.95

### *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion: A Commentary on St. Bonaventure's 'Breviloquium'*

Sister Paula Jean Miller, fse

A new and original study of St. Bonaventure's theology of marriage as it is expressed in his *Breviloquium*.

ISBN 0967-X 268 p. (paper) \$24.95

## NEW!

### *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*

Sr. Ilia Delio, ofm

This work examines the essential role of the crucified Christ in Bonaventure's mystical theology. Bonaventure advocated a type of mysticism that necessitated radical conformity to the suffering Christ.

ISBN 0988-2 268 p. (paper) \$15.95

# Press

Call or write for a free catalog.

## Francis in America



A Catalogue of Early Italian Paintings of St. Francis of Assisi in the United States and Canada

William R. Cook

ISBN 0984-X

\$39.95

193 p. (hardcover)

50 full page illustrations/22 in color 8 1/2 x 11

### *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*

(2nd series, 2nd edition) John M. Huels, ofm, jcd

ISBN 0968-8 432 p. (paper) \$25.00

## Now in 2-volume paperback!

### *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources: Writings and Early Biographies*

Marion A. Habig, ofm, ed.

The classic English resource for primary texts on the life of St. Francis.

ISBN 0862-2 1665 p. (paper) \$35.00

### *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Russian Trinitarian Thought from Vladimir Solov'ev to Sergius Bulgakov*

Michael Aksionov Meerson

This monograph studies the emergence of the love paradigm in contemporary trinitarian doctrines, giving special emphasis to tracing this paradigm's development in modern Russian philosophy and theology. This paradigm explains the triune relationship of the Divine hypostases by the ontological love within God.

ISBN 0987-4 255 p. (paper) \$15.95

## SFO Resource Library

*SFO Resource Library*, coordinated by Benet Fonck, is a complete reference library for members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Vol. V & VI are yet to be printed.

**Vol. I: Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Assistants' Commentary Commission**

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0975-0 139 p. (paper) \$15.95

**Vol. II: Called to Rebuild the Church: A Spiritual Commentary on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order**

Lester Bach, ofm Cap.

ISBN 0976-9 206 p. (paper) \$16.95

**Vol. III: Called to Live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel**

Philip Marquard, ofm

ISBN 0977-7 1203 p. (paper) \$13.95

**Vol. IV: Called to Proclaim Christ**

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0982-3 60 p. (paper) \$12.95

For more information on these and FHP backlist titles write:

## Franciscan Press

Quincy University

1800 College Avenue

Quincy, IL 62301-2699

Telephone: 217-228-5670

Fax: 217-228-5672

Web site: [www.quincy.edu/fpress](http://www.quincy.edu/fpress)

# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation

Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix

Josef Raischl, SFO, editor

Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, and reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: [franstor@genevaonline.com](mailto:franstor@genevaonline.com)

\$16.50 per copy plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.



## **Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs**

Jubilee 2000 marks our 29th year. The Franciscan Pilgrimage Experience is a cross-cultural journeying in the Spirit of Francis and Clare to nurture an encounter with Jesus Christ through the spirituality of place. We commit ourselves to serve as sisters and brothers, fostering conversion to a deeper Gospel life and promoting the future vitality of the Franciscan heritage.

### **JUBILEE 2000 PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCES**

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimages to Assisi & Rome**

May 8 - 23 / Sixteen Days • July 1 - 16 / Sixteen Days

September 14 - 23 / Eleven Days

October 13 - 25 / Twelve Days • October 27 - November 5 / Ten Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land**

April 29 - May 13 / Fifteen Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage and the Arts**

May 3 - 18 / Sixteen Days

#### **Franciscan Study Pilgrimages**

June 3 - July 5 / Twenty-eight Days

September 15 - October 8 / Twenty-four Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to Prague**

June 30 - July 9 / Ten Days

#### **Pilgrimage on Franciscan Solitude**

July 15 - August 4 / Twenty-one Days

#### **Franciscan Pilgrimage to Southern California Missions**

October 22 - 29 / Eight Days

#### **Pilgrimage Staff**

John Abela OFM  
Anne Amati OSF  
Tom Barton OSF  
Murray Bodo OFM  
Margaret Carney OSF  
André Cirino OFM  
Benet Fonck OFM  
Sue Koepf  
Tod Laverty OFM

Roberta McKelvie OSF  
Ramona Miller OSF  
Roch Niemier OFM  
John Petrikovic OFMConv.  
Joanne Schatzlein OSF  
Giles Schinelli TOR  
Joseph Schwab OFM  
Joseph Wood OFMConv.  
John Wojtowicz OFM

For more information,  
please contact:

Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs  
1648 S. 37th St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53215

414-383-9870 Fx: 414-383-0335  
[www.FranciscanPilgrimages.com](http://www.FranciscanPilgrimages.com)  
[georgiag@excepc.com](mailto:georgiag@excepc.com)

Coming soon from THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE . . .  
Two new issues of SPIRIT AND LIFE . . . Volumes 9 & 10

Daniel Dwyer, OFM, and Hugh Hines, OFM, eds. *Islam and Franciscanism: A Dialogue*. Spirit and Life, Volume 9, 2000. 120 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-169-7. \$14.00.\*

A set of essays dealing with the relationship between Islam and Franciscanism, past and present. By Daniel Dwyer, Imam Mohammad Bashir Arafat, Fareed Munir, François Paquette, Thomas Mooren, and Anselm Moons.

Michael F. Cusato, OFM, and Keith Warner, OFM. *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*. Spirit and Life, Volume 10, 2000. 175 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-171-9. \$14.00. \*

Presents issues arising from the tension between where the early friars should live and how they might be faithful to a prayerful life in fraternity. Looks at how the Order did, and still does, attempt to resolve, or at least live creatively, with this tension.

\*Prices subject to change.

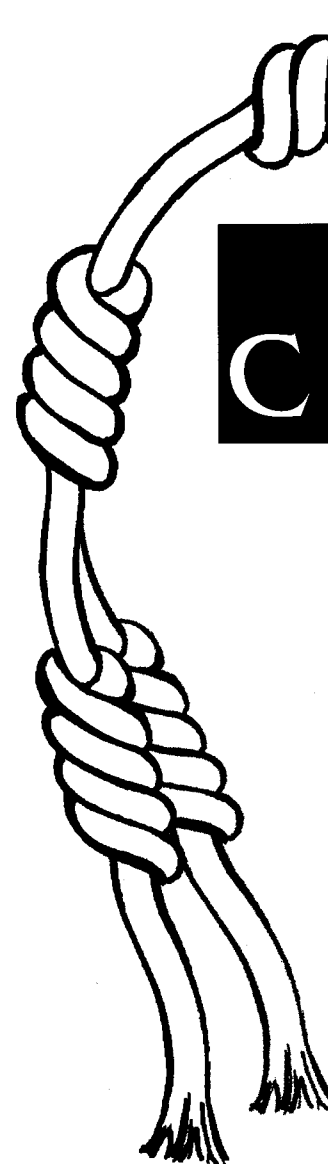
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Phone: 716-375-2105  
Fax: 716-375-2156



The Cord  
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid  
at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:  
PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR DESTROY THIS PERIODICAL  
Return Postage Guaranteed.



# T • H • E C • O • R • D

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

Editorial .....	165
Clare's Prayer: Office of the Passion Marie Beha, OSC .....	166
Habits of the Heart Thomas Barton, OSF .....	175
Clare of Assisi and Beauty Janet Snyder, OSF .....	177
The Modernity of St. Clare Lothar Hardick, OFM .....	186
St. Clare of Assisi: Rooted in the Passion of Christ Mary Regina Buchanan, PCC .....	189
Visiting Agnes's Prague: A Pilgrim's Report Joan Mueller, OSF .....	192
About Our Contributors .....	199
Book Review Anthony Carrozzo, OFM .....	200
Announcements .....	202
On the Franciscan Circuit .....	212



**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF  
Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF  
Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM  
Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs  
Production Assistant: Geoffrey Lee

Editorial Board: Mary C. Gurley, OSF, Patricia Hutchison, OSF,  
Robert Karris, OFM, Beth Lynn, OSC, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR,  
Joseph Wood, OFM Conv., Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

**No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.**

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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).      (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2).      (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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.4 (2000)

## Editorial

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

We share here, as a guest editorial, an excerpt from an upcoming publication prepared by the Poor Clares of the Holy Name and the Bentivoglio Federations. Entitled *Doing What is Ours to Do: A Clarian Theology of Life*, it gathers the results of an intense theological reflection process facilitated by Margaret Guider, OSF. This selection is from an essay prepared by Claire André Gagliardi, OSC, of the Monastery of St. Clare, Bordentown, New Jersey, entitled "The Unity of All Things in God: A Relational Theology" (52-53).

So much of our image of self and our image of each other depends on our image of God. Once one knows God as loving and caring, one is able to recognize and attend to God's constant self-giving in Love. Such a realization of love enables us to touch our intrinsic worth and see our dignity and our potential for goodness. It also enables us to face our shadow side, see our sinfulness, and be willing to do the hard work that growth requires. Teaching people to live in relationship with God by *mirroring* such living is a real contribution to the world today.

Consumerism attacks on every side. The commercials on television, the advertisements in magazines, and the billboards on our highways, all tell us of the things that we absolutely must have in order to be happy. We [however] profess that less is more! Who we are is more important than what we have! . . . Our life teaches appreciation for the little things: a single flower, a homemade birthday card, fresh bread, and the smile of another.

Our prayer is a prayer of the ordinary. We claim a mysticism of everyday. It is not a form of prayer reserved for the special, the gifted, or the holier. Everyone is called to walk in the presence of God. Our ordinary mysticism is within the reach of all people.

We live in a hurting world! Suffering overwhelms people. . . . We cannot remove or take away all the pain we witness. Life is messy and even Jesus did not clean up all the messiness in the lives of the people whom he encountered on the road, in the villages, on the hillsides, at the seashore.

Our life, however, does teach us to bring the messiness to God. God teaches us what we need to know. . . . Our contemplative life teaches that answers are not always clearly visible or even available, . . . [but it] also teaches a way of living peacefully with the questions. Our way of life . . . is a way of faith! It is a way of knowing that God is bigger than we are! It is a way of believing that God always comes through. Circumstances do not always change! Cures do not always happen, but faith, hope, and love change situations and people. Inherent in the Poor Clare vocation is the call to be healers! Helping others to be whole is to show them the way to holiness.

## Clare's Prayer: The Office of the Passion

Sister Marie Beha

Prayer is so personal that objectifying it risks obliterating it altogether. This is true of our own prayer when we subject it to too much scrutiny; truer still when we make some feeble attempts to describe our prayer to another; and truest of all when we are bold enough to speculate about someone else's prayer. Yet with all these caveats we are still curious. How do other people pray? Do they have some secrets of success which we could incorporate into our own prayer? And how do saints pray, since their prayer is clearly "successful"? Unfortunately, those whom we consider living saints are not likely to answer our probing questions; and those who are no longer alive were often no more vocal on the subject during their lifetime unless they were among the few who wrote specifically on the subject.

Clare of Assisi was not one of those who wrote about her prayer. We have no treatise of hers on prayer, nor does she seem to have described her own prayer in any detail even to her closest followers. She did leave a few hints, however, in her four extant Letters to Agnes of Prague. Rather than simply read between the lines of that valuable correspondence, I would like to look at one particular prayer that we know was part of Clare's devotional life, the Office of the Passion, which she had received from Francis. As we learn in the Legend of Clare, she "learned the Office of the Cross as Francis, that lover of the cross, had established it, and recited it with similar devotion" (CL 30).<sup>1</sup>

We realize from our own experience that any prayer frequently repeated begins to form and shape our hearts. It becomes part of our conscious and unconscious response to God at work in our lives. In deliberately choosing to make a certain prayer our own, we reveal something of the way we perceive God's call and how we wish to respond. At the same time we also come into contact with the divine attraction which lies below the level of consciousness and is at the center of that self known fully to God alone. So choice of a par-

ticular devotion hints at the mystery of divine-human interaction that is our personal vocation. And sheer repetition of that prayer continues to shape the unfolding of grace in our lives since the habits we choose form, over time, the person we are.

What we wish to examine here is how Clare's life of prayer is both revealed in and shaped by her devotion to Francis's Office of the Passion. Renewed interest among Franciscans in that Office occasions our inquiry. Our hope is that the wealth contained in this observance can give further depth to our own prayer response to God in our hearts.

## Francis's Office of the Passion

What was this Office of the Cross which Francis composed (or Office of the Passion as it is more commonly known)? It was one of those so called "little" offices that were originally prayed chorally as additions to the Church's Liturgy of the Hours. By the time of Francis and Clare these were considered private devotional prayers. Describing Francis's own usage, the editors of *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* point out that "first he used to say the Psalms of Saint Mary (the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary); afterwards he used to recite the other psalms which he had chosen, and at the end of the psalms he had recited, said the Psalms of the Passion."<sup>2</sup> In other words Francis, itinerant though he was, spent a good deal of his time on the road praying the Liturgy of the Hours including two devotional offices along with the regularly appointed psalmody.

The first of these, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, is patterned on the canonical Liturgy of the Hours with a set sequence of psalms taken from the common of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Before Vatican II with its renewed emphasis on liturgical participation, this was the office of choice for many apostolic congregations and for Third Orders, though today most of these groups pray some part of the Church's Liturgy of the Hours.

Francis's Office of the Passion has a quite different and distinctive format. It begins with the praying of the Our Father and continues with a doxology of praise rather like the hymn that presently concludes the Office of Readings. The refrain of this hymn gives a taste of its character: "Let us praise and exalt God above all forever."

Following this is an antiphon in honor of Mary reflecting some of Francis's special devotions to our Lady. Then come the psalms which are proper to each of the canonical hours, with five variations for the different liturgical seasons—the last three days of Holy Week and the weekdays throughout the year, the Paschal season, Sundays and feast days throughout the year, the Advent and the Christmas seasons.

Each of the seven hours focuses on a special mystery in the Passion of Jesus—Compline centers on Christ's agony in the Garden; Matins, the night office, includes all the events of that night especially the scene of Christ before the High Priest; Prime suggests Christ before Pilate; Terce, his scourging and crowning with thorns; Sext, the nailing to the cross; and None, his death. Vespers has a very different tone, anticipating Easter joy with emphasis on Christ's victory.

What is particularly noteworthy is the way in which the psalms for all these various hours and seasons are structured. Rather than simply selecting an appropriate psalm from the Psalter, Francis composed his own, using verses from different Biblical psalms and also some brief passages of Scripture. So what we have is a collage of quotations selected because they describe a particular event in Jesus' passion that Francis wished to commemorate, but also chosen because they were specially meaningful to the saint himself.

### Clare's Prayer in the Office of the Passion

When Clare prayed the Office of the Passion, she began each hour, as did Francis himself, with the "Our Father." This "Lord's Prayer" must have helped to shape her understanding of living "according to the form of the holy gospel," since its central petitions reflect evangelical themes like the coming of the kingdom and doing the Father's will. It also emphasizes such incarnational concerns as daily bread and forgiveness of sin, realities that Clare enfleshed in her life by blessing and multiplying bread for her Sisters (Proc 6:16) and by exhorting them in her "Form of Life" to be quick to forgive each other's faults (RCl 9:6-10). How Clare prayed was also how she lived.

The "Our Father" also influenced how Clare named God as her "most high heavenly Father" (RCl 6:1), the "Father of all perfection." But this "glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (TestCl 2) is no remote being centered solely in heaven; he is also the "Father of mercies" (TestCl 15), very close to the concerns of all who love him. So Clare writes to Ermentrude: "Do not be afraid, daughter. God, who is faithful in all his words and holy in all his deeds, will pour his blessings upon you and your sisters" (LEr 15, 16). Clare understood the kind of trust needed to provide a strong foundation for the risks that a life of absolute poverty necessarily entailed.

After this introductory "Our Father," Clare, following the custom of Francis and the early friars, recited "The Praise to be Said at All the Hours," which was a canticle of praise and thanksgiving based on texts chosen mainly from Revelation. Its refrain, "Let us praise and glorify Him forever" (Rev. 4:8), was taken from that same book. Though Clare did not quote extensively from Revelation in her own writings, at least not from the same early part of the text

that Francis used, still the splendor of the heavenly vision described there must have impressed itself on her heart, providing strength to persevere by hinting at the glory that lay ahead. So Clare encouraged Agnes in her own vocational choice to despise "the splendor of an earthly kingdom" and consider "of little value the offers of an imperial marriage" (2 LAg 6), preferring "that perfection with which the King himself will take you to himself in the heavenly bridal chamber where he is seated in glory on a starry throne" (2 LAg 5). These same eschatological themes are found in the last of her letters written shortly before her death. In it she wishes Agnes "health and a prayer that she may sing a new song with the other most holy virgins before the throne of God and the Lamb and follow the Lamb wherever He may go" (4 LAg 3). Here Clare is not only quoting from Revelation but also echoing the same focus: "The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, wisdom and strength" (Rev. 5:12, Praises, 3).

After the Praises, Clare, like Francis, would have prayed the Antiphon in honor of "Holy Virgin Mary." In it Francis invoked Mary as "Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King, . . . Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit" and asks that she "pray for us with Michael the Archangel, all the powers of heaven and all the saints" (OffPass 2, 3).

These same themes so shaped Clare's heart that they are restated in her writing. Because devotion to Mary was integral to her following of Jesus, Clare instinctively links Mary and Jesus in her contemplation of the Incarnation and of the Passion, often speaking of "following in her footprints, especially those of poverty and humility" (3 LAg 25). So with typical practicality she begs her sisters "out of love of the most holy and beloved Child who was wrapped in such poor little swaddling clothes and laid in a manger and of his most holy Mother . . . always to wear poor garments" (RCl 2, 24). And in another place she urges: "Meditate constantly on the mysteries of the cross and the agonies of his mother standing at the foot of the cross" (LEr 12). It was what Clare herself did all her life. One of the witnesses at the canonization process describes how, on her death bed, Clare saw that the "Blessed Virgin Mary was especially preparing some of her garments for clothing this new saint" (Proc 11: 4).

Not only did Clare have devotion to Mary, but she also, like Francis in the Marian antiphon of this Office of the Passion, linked it with dedication to Michael the Archangel. So her Blessing begs: "Our Lord Jesus Christ through His mercy and the intercession of His most holy Mother Mary and blessed Michael the Archangel and all the holy angels of God, of our blessed Father Francis and all men and women saints, that the heavenly Father give you and confirm for you this most holy blessing in heaven and on earth" (BCl 7).

Another way in which Clare's life and prayer were shaped by praying the Office of the Passion is found in her use of the same titles with which Francis had addressed Mary, calling her "Daughter and servant of the most high and supreme King, . . . Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit." These were the identical relationships Clare tried to foster in the hearts of her Sisters, urging Agnes to be "sister, spouse and mother of the Son of the Most High Father and of the glorious Virgin" (1LAg 1:24). In similar ways she describes the role of abbess as being sister and mother to the other Sisters in community (TestC 63, 66). As Mary was for Jesus, so the abbess and indeed all the Sisters were to be for each other.

We come now to the main part of the Office of the Passion, the psalms that Francis composed using various texts from Scripture, applying them to a particular mystery of the Passion commemorated at the various Hours of the Office. How this collage of texts must have nourished Clare's prayer when she "gazed, considered, and contemplated" Jesus passing through the passion events of that first Good Friday!

Before looking at the psalms that Francis composed and that Clare prayed so faithfully, it may be beneficial to point out that there seems little direct interdependence between these two co-founders of the Order, since the psalm verses used by Francis in his Office of the Passion were not those most frequently quoted by Clare in her writings. Francis, for example, quoted extensively from psalms 22 and 69 while Clare does not cite them in any of her extant writings, even those which describe the same passion scenes. So Clare did not simply repeat Francis's devotion. What she did do was enter into the mysteries of the passion so vividly expressed by Francis's psalms that her whole person was totally caught up in contemplative union with the suffering Jesus. Once, as one of the witnesses at the process of her canonization describes it, "while thinking about the Passion of the Lord, she was almost insensible throughout that entire day and a large part of the following day" (Proc 3:25). The Office of the Passion was realized, not only in her prayer, but also in her life.

How did Clare relate to the suffering of Jesus? Her extant writings, together with the testimony of the Sisters who lived with her so closely and knew her so well, give some indication. We know for instance that her whole life's devotion centered around the Incarnation and the Passion. In both mysteries her heart embraced the "Poor Christ" (2LAg 18). In striking imagery she speaks of a "God-centered poverty, whom the Lord Jesus Christ Who ruled and now rules heaven and earth, Who spoke and things were made, condescended to embrace before all else" (1LAg 17). She marvels at "so great and good a Lord" who "on coming into the Virgin's womb, chose to appear despised, needy and poor in this world" (1LAg 19). This is the same poverty

that Francis pondered at Night Prayer, considering the beginning of the passion that first Holy Thursday: "All my enemies are plotting evil against me; they took counsel together. They repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love. They slandered me in return for my love, but I continued to pray" (Ps. 41:8; Ps. 71:10; Ps. 109:5; OffPass 1: 2, 3, 4).

In a similar vein, Clare encouraged Agnes in "the holy service which you have undertaken out of a burning desire for the Poor Crucified" (1LAg 13). And Francis prays: "Take up your bodies and carry His holy cross and follow His most holy commands even to the end" (Lk. 14:27; Jn. 19:17; 1Pt. 2:21; OffPass, Vespers 8). The same emphasis on the poverty of Christ runs through Clare's famous mirror contemplation, when she urges Agnes to "look at the border of this mirror. That is the poverty of Him who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes" (4LAg 19). And "then at the surface of the mirror consider the holy humility, the blessed poverty, the untold labors and burdens that He endured for the redemption of the whole human race" (4LAg 22).

What were those labors and burdens? Francis describes them in carefully chosen psalm verses: "Have mercy on me, O God, for people have trampled me underfoot all day long; they have afflicted me and fight against me. All day long my enemies trampled upon me for there were many waging war against me. All my enemies have been thinking evil things against me. Those who were guarding my life have conspired together" (Ps. 56:2, 3; Ps. 41:8, 9; OffPass, Terce 1-3).

Although daily meditation made both Francis and Clare deeply aware of the physical sufferings of Jesus in the passion, they were not as concerned with these external circumstances as with the self-emptying and total dependence that were basic to Christ's coming into this world. So Clare consistently associated poverty with humility and the willingness to be the "lowest of men" (2LAg 20); and Francis prays in the words of Psalm 22:7: "I am a worm and no human, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people. I have been made despicable to my neighbor" (OffPass, Terce 7,8).

This self-emptying poverty of Jesus was nowhere so evident as on the cross. Clare seems never to have tired of gazing on Him "Who for us all took upon himself the passion of the Cross" (1LAg 14). She describes with all of love's ardor how Jesus was "despised, struck, scourged untold times through his entire body and then died amid the suffering of the Cross" (1LAg 20). The same compassion echoes in the verses Francis chose to pray at None, the "ninth" Hour or the Lord's death on the cross: "O all you who pass along the way look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" (Lam. 1:12); "They looked and stared at me; they divided my garments among them and they cast lots for my tunic" (Ps. 22:18, 19); "They led me into the dust of death and added sorrow to my wounds" (Ps. 22:16; Ps. 69:22); (OffPass, None 1, 3, 10).

After Clare's death, her Sisters remembered how she had advised them always to have the Lord's passion in mind (Proc 11:2), and how on her own deathbed, "speaking very softly she had continually kept the Passion of the Lord on her lips" (Proc 10:10).

But Clare's was no morbid absorption in the physical sufferings of Jesus. Rather she encouraged herself and others with thoughts of the reward to come: "If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him. If you weep with Him, you shall rejoice with Him. If you die with Him on the cross of tribulations, you shall possess heavenly mansions in the splendor of the saints" (1LAg 21). And she urges another correspondent: "Look to heaven that invites us, O dearly beloved, and take up the cross and follow Christ who goes before us, for through Him we shall enter into His glory after many different trials." (LEr 9-10).

Similar emphasis on glory pervades every Hour of Francis's Office of the Passion. Even at None, the Hour of Christ's death, Francis concludes the psalm verses with "Holy Father, you held my right hand, led me with your counsel and have taken me up with glory" (Ps. 73:24; OffPass, None 12). The following Hour of Vespers begins on a note of triumph: "All you nations clap your hands, shout to God with a voice of gladness" (Ps. 47:2). It ends with an invitation to "tell among the nations that the Lord has ruled from a tree" (Ps. 69:9-10) (Vespers, 1, 9).

These same aspects of paschal dying and rising are combined in Clare's description of the redemptive activity of Jesus, "Who for the sake of all of us took upon Himself the Passion of the Cross, delivered us from the power of the Prince of Darkness to whom we were enslaved because of the disobedience of our first parent, and so reconciled us to God the Father" (1LAg 14). Francis likewise emphasizes Jesus' freely taking upon himself the sufferings of the passion, putting on his lips at the hour of Prime: "My heart is ready, God, my heart is ready" (Ps. 57:7) (Prime 8). He likewise rejoices in Christ's triumph over his enemy: "How long will my enemy exult over me? Look upon me and hear me, Lord, my God. Give light to my eyes that I may never sleep in death so that my enemy may never say: I have overcome him!" (Ps. 13, 14) (Compline during Advent, 3-4). Francis sees the whole of the paschal mystery as a divine act of reconciliation. In Vespers for the Christmas season he prays: "Exult in God our help (Ps. 74:12) . . . because the Most Holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, sent His Beloved Son from on high and he was born of the Blessed Virgin Holy Mary. He called to me: You are my Father and I will place Him, my firstborn, as the Highest above all the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27) (Vespers of Christmas season, 3-4).

In summary, what Francis and Clare prayed they also lived; they were doers of the word, as well as hearers and believers. So Francis prays: "Take up your bodies and carry His holy cross and follow His most holy commands even to the end" (Lk. 14:27; Jn. 19:17; 1Pt. 2:21) (Vespers, 8). At the end of his

life, these lines that he had prayed almost daily came to fulfillment in his own flesh in the Stigmata. Similarly, Clare during her life "taught the novices to weep over the Crucified Christ, and, at the same time, what she taught with her words, she expressed with her deeds. For frequently when she would encourage them in private in such matters, a flow of tears would come before the passage of her words" (CL 30). Undoubtedly the Sister who recalled this detail had once been among Clare's novices and so could witness to what she had seen and treasured all her life.

Clare's life-devotion climaxed in the prayers of her dying moments. As one witness describes it: "While Saint Clare was passing away, she admonished the witness and the other sisters to remain in prayer and she, the witness, said the prayer of the Five Wounds of the Lord. As if Lady Clare were able to understand, but speaking very softly, she continually kept the Passion of the Lord on her lips and so the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Proc 10:10). How fitting that both Francis and Clare would enflesh their Christocentrism by dying as they had lived, devoted to the Passion of Jesus.

### How Passionate is our Praying?

Even such a brief reflection on one of the ways in which Francis and Clare prayed provides a kind of tutorial for our own prayer, underlining the critical issue that prayer and life are inextricably bound together. What we pray, and even more importantly how we pray, makes a living difference.

What we choose to pray is one way in which the movement of the Spirit in our lives stands revealed. If our devotion of choice, like that of Francis and Clare, focuses on the paschal mystery, we will find ourselves centered in this most important aspect of our faith, with everything else falling into place around it. By looking at the Crucified Jesus, as Clare did, our love will go deeper and come closer to the compassion of Jesus who gave all for all. We will be better able to avoid our culture's overemphasis on feel-good faith and immediate gratification. At the same time we will be strengthened to find hidden meaning in the seemingly senseless sufferings that invade all our lives. We will also be less tempted to discouragement just because the Christ of the cross is also the Christ of glory.

The content of our prayer also indicates something of how we relate to God. Clare, like Francis, chose devotion to the Passion of Jesus because her heart had already been inflamed by contemplation of the Crucified Savior. What are the attractions of our heart and how are these enfleshed in our prayer choices? What we choose to pray comes out of the way we see ourselves before God, and it informs our continued response to that same God. It is no accident that the words of frequently repeated prayers come almost unbidden into our minds as we confront the situations of our everyday lives—and not only

the words but the attitude they name as well. Just as with Clare, a phrase like “following in the footsteps of the poor Jesus” can motivate us to move ahead in our lives of discipleship as well as call us to deeper poverty of spirit. And “Let us praise and bless God forever,” repeated over and over in our times of prayer, can form us into grateful people.

Still more importantly, the “how” of our praying will be formative. Devotions that barely scratch the surface of our consciousness will not make us people of prayer. Only when we can allow them to sink into the deeper recesses of our being will they challenge those areas where our lives give the lie to our pious phrases. Previously, we might not even have noticed the discrepancies, but now our prayer lights up reality with the white hot truth. The resultant internal confrontation brings us to a crossroads—either we can change the way we are living or we can stop praying. The latter can be a real temptation!

Presuming that our prayer strengthens us to say “yes” to conversion, we can also expect that it will channel our new life-directions. Just as Clare’s praying of the Office of the Passion both called and enabled her to respond more fully to the paschal elements of her daily living, so too our devotions will inform grace in our lives. Eucharistic prayer gives us a hunger to share the nourishment that we have received. Devotion to Our Lady invites us to be mothers bringing forth new life in the Church. And prayer that is explicitly Trinitarian calls us to more authentic life in community.

Reversing these same examples reveals another truth. Struggling with the demands of life in community can strengthen our devotion to the Trinity, and mothering new life in the Church we may well discover that prayer to Our Lady has moved to a deeper level. And who of us has not experienced that our hunger and thirst for “more” brings us back to the Eucharist? So prayer and life become ever more unified till what we pray is the way we live and the way we live becomes another expression of our prayer. This was the experience of Clare and Francis. May it be ours.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> References to the writings of Clare are taken from Regis Armstrong, OFMCap., *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Regis Armstrong, OFMCap., Wayne Hellmann, OFMConv., William Short, OFM, eds., *The Saint*, Vol. 1, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 1999), 139.

If our devotion of choice, like that of Francis and Clare, focuses on the paschal mystery, we will find ourselves centered in this most important aspect of our faith, with everything else falling into place around it (Beha).

## Habits of the Heart

Tom Barton, OSF

*Your heart will always be where your riches are (Matthew 6:21).*

From what we know of the early life of Clare of Assisi, we understand that she developed habits of prayer and devotion from practices within her own family. Thus even in the days prior to her conversion mediated by the preaching of Francis, Clare was already devout. A strong personal devotion spanned her entire life.

Clare learned from Francis that the central focus of her attention in prayer should be Jesus Christ. This same Christ should also be sought in the other persons who surrounded her. Clare’s goal was to imitate Christ both in contemplation and in service. When the witnesses came to testify for her canonization, they gave evidence as to the quality of her life. The humility of the Incarnation, the charity of the Passion, and the sublimity of the Eucharist absorbed Clare’s attention and became the focus of her prayer and service.

Clare’s actions spoke as loudly as her words. In her Form of Life (Rule), Clare urged the sisters to wear clothing which was rough, poor, and inexpensive because the Infant was wrapped in poor swaddling cloths in a manger. If she saw a sister with a tunic of poorer quality than her own, Clare would insist that they exchange clothing. In her finely crafted fourth letter to Agnes of Prague, she gave the beautiful image of Christ as the mirror of eternity. Recalling the events of his earthly life, Clare focussed on his passion and suffering. To imitate Christ’s compassionate love, Clare washed the feet of the sisters who had been outside the monastery and, on cold nights, she lovingly covered the sisters as they slept.

Because of the wonder and sublimity of the gift of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, Clare had the sacred species reserved in a tiny oratory alongside the dormitory in San Damiano. This was a very rare and unusual practice. Clare joined Francis’s “Eucharistic Crusade” in a very practical way.

The Church had only just defined the notion of "transubstantiation" during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, after which Francis took to writing letters about the Holy Eucharist to almost everyone in the world who could read. During his preaching tours, we have been told, Francis would bring a companion and a broom. Before preaching, he would sweep and otherwise clean the churches; then only he would preach the word of God. Afterward, to avoid embarrassing them, he would take the assembled clergy to another room and instruct them about the Eucharist and the need to keep the churches clean. Later, he would send them a letter as a reminder.

For her part, Clare spent her days in the manufacture of altar cloths to be used in the churches. According to one of the witnesses at the process of canonization, Clare sent out at least fifty such cloths.

Clare's hours and days were spent in loving contemplation. From the reminiscences of the witnesses we understand that Christ's passion was her particular focus. Having received from Francis the Office of the Passion and the Praises to be said at all the Hours, Clare undertook to pray these seven times daily, after the canonical Hours. Additionally, devotion to the Five Wounds of Jesus Christ rounded out her daily personal prayer.

The words "contemplation" and "meditation" do not appear in Clare's Form of Life. Presumably, contemplation was so much a part of the daily life of the Poor Ladies that regulation was not needed. The hours before and after the midnight office were Clare's favorite ones. Lying prostrate on the floor of the Blessed Sacrament chapel, Clare often dampened the floor with her tears, tears shed out of compassion for Christ's sufferings.

At one time a group of Saracen mercenaries entered the cloister garden. The expected reaction of such a group of women would have been to barricade the place as best they could. But Clare directed that the Eucharistic species be brought in its pyx to the refectory. When the presence had been established, Clare and her sisters knelt in prayer. One witness recalled that Clare prayed: "Lord I can no longer protect thee." The biographer tells us that the Saracens fled in confusion. In a time of need, Clare sought her Eucharistic Lord as was the habit of her heart.

From what we can ascertain, the tenor of Clare's prayer and devotion deepened with each season. Her heart was where her riches were. She had truly taken to heart Francis's ecstatic affirmation in his Praises of God: "You are all our riches, You are enough for us."

God has loved you  
with a  
tender love.

Mary Connor, OSC



-Legend

## Clare of Assisi and Beauty

Janet Snyder, OSF

### Introduction

Beauty is associated with Clare in a number of ways. She was a beautiful woman and she was sensitive to natural beauty. She and her sisters made beautiful altar linens. Light shone on her face and from her place of prayer, and there are beautiful visions associated with her. Her life and her whole being have often been described as beautiful. Praising Christ in lyrical passages of her letters to Agnes, she refers, among other attributes, to his beauty. This paper will explore these various aspects of beauty as related to the life of Clare.

### Clare's Own Beauty

The most mundane of these associations and the one that we know least about is Clare's physical beauty. We are told in the Process of Canonization that her family wanted to marry her off "Because she had a beautiful face" (Proc. 18:2).<sup>1</sup> Certainly this was not their only motivation in seeking a husband for her, but we do have evidence of it from a man. We would expect a man to be conscious of female beauty; and this man, Lord Ranieri de Bernardo of Assisi, had tried many times to convince her to marry him.

### Clare's Sensitivity to Beauty

Clare was sensitive to the beauty around her. She would have developed this quality in childhood, in her father's house, surrounded as she was by the best and most beautiful that money could buy. It is fairly common to confuse beauty with wealth and to decide that beautiful surroundings violate the vow of poverty. It is almost as if in espousing poverty, one espouses ugliness. Clare



did not lose her appreciation of beauty through years of enclosure in the poverty of San Damiano. We have the testimony of Sister Angeluccia:

When the most holy mother used to send the serving sisters outside the monastery, she reminded them to praise God when they saw beautiful trees, flowers and bushes; and, likewise, always to praise Him for and in all things when they saw all peoples and creatures (Proc. 14:9).

She knew what the sisters would be seeing and directed them to look at it first of all. There have been forms of asceticism that caution against too free a use of the eyes. There was the "custody of the eyes" taught in pre-Vatican II religious life. For Clare, curtailing looking at natural beauty would have meant curtailing the praise of God. She taught her sisters to look at beauty and to respond with praise of the Creator. We are reminded of Francis and his Canticle of the Creatures. We also see his response to beauty described in the *Legenda Major* in this way:

In beautiful things he [Francis] saw Beauty itself, and through his [God's] vestiges imprinted on creation he followed his Beloved everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace him who is utterly desirable. With a feeling of unprecedented devotion, he savored in each and every creature—as in so many rivulets—that Goodness which is their fountain-source (LM 9:1).<sup>2</sup>

We find this ability to leap to praise and joy charming in Francis. It is a joy to read of Francis and Clare's love of beauty in the face of all their renunciation and poverty. They never become mean-spirited. They don't assume that if one espouses poverty, one renounces beauty. They were products of their time and culture. Medieval persons were often gifted with the ability to make the leap from beauty, natural and artistic, to mystical joy and communion with God. For them, the beautiful was a reflection of and participation in the being and power of God.<sup>3</sup> Clare's appreciation of the natural beauty of the Umbrian valley was aroused in her childhood, and even within the limits of the enclosure she could still appreciate natural beauty.

At San Damiano, from the small balcony overlooking the valley, Clare could see much more than the Portiuncula set deep in the woods below. From that vantage point, all the beauty of Umbria opened before her: the distant hills enveloped in a purple veil of haze, the fields and olive trees, the vines and cypresses, the brightness of the sun at midday, the multicolored splendor of its setting, the stars, the moon, and the wind fragrant with the perfumes of the earth.<sup>4</sup>

## The Creation of Beauty

We have evidence of Clare's participation in the process of creating beauty. One does not create beauty without knowing and loving it. It was inherent in Clare's understanding of poverty that the sisters work, and part of their work was in the cloth industry. Clare saw to the spinning. We know she spun even on her sickbed. The sisters then wove and embroidered the cloth into corporals for the churches of Assisi. They made cases for the corporals, "covered with silk or precious cloth" (Proc. 6:14). The beauty they created was their response of love to the eucharistic Christ.

What moved in the mind and heart of Clare as she spun? How was she transformed as she transformed flax into thread? She poured herself lovingly into this work. Christ was never far from her mind. With great reverence for the Eucharist, she worked to make an object worthy of the one she loved.

## Origins of Visual Imagery in Prayer

Clare uses rich visual imagery in her letters to Agnes. David Chidester, in *Word and Light*, traces the understanding of sight and hearing from Augustine to Bonaventure and gives us the Greek source of this predilection for the visual image. "Continuity, contact, presence, similarity, immediacy" were associated with vision, because seeing resulted from images being continually sent out from the object seen.<sup>5</sup> Plato's theory involved a visual ray, Aristotle's a medium to conduct the vision, and the Stoics' a visual cone. All three present vision as a continuous bond, even a kind of unity between seer and seen.<sup>6</sup>

The Greek theory of hearing was very different. Unlike vision, it was not understood as a process initiated by the organ of perception in order to establish a bond with the object. There were, therefore, none of the qualities of sight—no presence, no connection, no immediacy, and no continuous bond between the ear and the source of the sound.<sup>7</sup> So vision—"queen of the senses"—is the choice when one seeks presence, connection, immediacy, and a bond between seer and object leading to union. These notions about seeing influenced subsequent thought. Certainly they influenced Clare as she encouraged Agnes to look on Christ and allow herself to be transformed.

Margaret Miles takes the Greek theories of sight into the realm of religion. She bemoans the renunciation of images in Protestant worship and their diminished importance in Catholic worship. She says:

The ancient function of images—that of cumulatively drawing the worshipper to imitate and participate in the qualities and way of life formulated by the image—has been neglected. Contemplation—concentrated meditation traditionally focused by an image—is largely



ignored. Neglect of images is neglect of contemplation. . . . Through the use of images, historical Christians were moved first to imitate and then to assimilate the strength, the courage, and the love they contemplated in religious art.<sup>8</sup>

Clare says: "Gaze upon him . . . as you wish to imitate him" (2LAg 20). "And transform your entire being *into the image* of the Godhead Itself through contemplation" (2LAg 13).

### Images and Visual Language in Prayer

Bernard of Clairvaux advised the use of sacred images in private prayer: "The soul at prayer should have before it a sacred image of the God-man."<sup>9</sup> It is unclear whether he is referring to an actual physical picture or a mental one. Other devotional literature continued to encourage men and women to visualize in their private prayer the people and events represented in religious art. During the Middle ages, many people entered into contemplative prayer when they looked at the events of salvation history set before them in rich artistic form in their churches, in stained glass, sculpture, and painting. Thus, we have a link between visible religious imagery, and mental visualization in contemplation.<sup>10</sup>

### Clare's Use of Visual Language

The use of language is always indicative of meaning. Timothy Johnson made a study of Clare's use of language in writing about prayer. Clare frequently uses the word "contemplation" (seven times in her letters). The etymology of the word connotes a visual experience. The word *speculum* (mirror) is another term Clare uses often (nine times) which suggests the link between visual perception and prayer. This image is used to suggest the way in which Agnes should come before Christ in prayer. There are a number of other words that Clare uses to nuance her instruction: *intuere* (gaze), *considera* (consider), *lucis* (light), *attente* (look), *vide* (see), *speculare* (study), *candor* (brilliance), and *refulget* (reflect).

All of these words are used in the context of contemplative prayer. They are used to describe the use of the imagination in which Agnes is encouraged to visualize Christ as Spouse or Mirror.<sup>11</sup>

### Clare's Use of Visual Imagery: The Beauty of Christ

The image of Christ as Spouse had been popularized by Bernard of Clairvaux and his followers. We find that Clare uses this image familiarly and the Song and Songs on which it is based. The aspect of that image which we

are particularly interested in here is that of the beauty of Christ. As we read Clare's letters to Agnes of Prague, we are struck by her descriptions of Christ. She is singing his praises, almost talking Agnes into falling in love with him. It was her way of teaching her sisters to pray.<sup>12</sup> [16]

Whose power is stronger,  
Whose generosity more abundant,  
Whose appearance more beautiful,  
Whose love more tender,  
Whose courtesy more gracious (1LAg 9).

She instructs her sisters to look upon this beauty:

Look upon Him Who became contemptible for you, and follow Him, making yourself contemptible in this world for Him.  
Your Spouse, *though more beautiful than the children of men* (Ps. 44:3) became, for your salvation, the lowest of men, was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout His entire body, and died amid the suffering of the Cross.  
O most noble Queen,  
gaze upon [Him],  
consider [Him],  
contemplate [Him],  
as you desire to imitate [Him] (2LAg 19-20).

Regis Armstrong calls these last five lines Clare's "formula of prayer."<sup>13</sup> I would prefer to call them her "way of prayer." We could say: "Look, imitate, and become." She is so moved by her own lyrical description that the "way" pours out of her. Clare has the medieval person's visual orientation. She says "gaze upon him," not "think of him." This suggests a prolonged, interior focus of the attention on the person of Christ. "The loving gaze on God is not episodic, but permanent. God is fascinating."<sup>14</sup> The gaze is a "contemplative stance," an orientation, and a way of living in the presence of her Beloved. It is a simple way. When you gaze, you don't have to do anything else. There are no complicated steps. You are simply there in the presence of the loved one. Her formula is reminiscent of the Eucharistic devotions before the exposed Blessed Sacrament popular in pre-Vatican religious life or the experience of "Forty Hours Devotion" observed in parish churches. One is reminded of her prolonged years of prayer before the San Damiano crucifix. Indeed, the crucified Christ is never far from her mind.

If you suffer with Him, *you will reign with him*. . . .  
[If you] weep [with Him], you shall rejoice with Him;

[If you] *die with him* on the cross of tribulation,  
 you shall possess heavenly mansions *in the splendor of*  
*the saints*  
 and, *in the book of life* your *name* shall be called  
 glorious among men (2LAg 21- 22).

## The Visual Nature of the Contemplative Experience

It is the poor crucified Christ that Clare gazed upon, the humanity of Jesus that so captivated the minds and hearts of thirteenth-century people. Francis had influenced Clare, Francis who went a step beyond Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard had fostered the idea of focusing on Jesus and the events of his life, but he saw the Incarnation in a somewhat negative light, that is, necessary to save humankind from sin. So, for Bernard, meditation on the Incarnation was incapable of producing divine union.<sup>15</sup> Francis and Clare saw it differently. Francis was convinced that we can know God only through the historical Christ. He would "recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and would bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration" (1Cel 84). And he went further—he would intuitively enter into Christ's life and experience his presence.<sup>16</sup> This has the same feel as Clare's "way."

Mary Francis Hone claims that Francis taught this to the people. At Greccio he prepared a visual prayer for them. . . . While he had live animals brought in to set the atmosphere of the first Christmas, he left the holy family to the peoples' imagination. Francis spoke of the child as if he were present and some saw him pick up a child and hold it in his arms. Far from a *method* of prayer, God was immediately present. The later Franciscan depiction of the passion in the stations of the cross was a similar way of making the life of Jesus visually present to the people. Francis did for the people of Greccio visually what Clare was teaching her sisters to do in their imagination.<sup>17</sup>

In the letter Clare wrote to Agnes of Prague in 1235, she prescribed the use of imagination by expressions such as: "As a poor virgin *embrace* the poor Christ," thereby telling Agnes to make Jesus as real as if she were holding him in her arms. "See and follow the One made worthless for you." Clare continued ". . . *Observe* him carefully; . . . *see him* knocked about; . . . *fix your gaze* upon him; . . . *see him* whipped many times on his whole body; . . . *see him* dying in terrible agony."<sup>18</sup>

The Latin word translated here as "see" is *intuere*. It is the same word Regis Armstrong translates as "gaze." The word implies the use of the imagination and the gaze of the spirit and affections toward the object loved until they are united. Clare was telling Agnes to gaze interiorly upon the Crucified until she forgot herself in the experience of his love.<sup>19</sup>

## Clare's Use of the Mirror Image

The mirror image was a very popular one in medieval literature,. Medieval love poetry speaks of how the lover is mirrored in the eyes of the beloved. In loving the other, the lover comes to a better understanding of the self. This can be helpful in our understanding of Clare's use of the mirror image.<sup>20</sup> By gazing into the mirror of Christ, we come to see ourselves as we are in Christ's eyes, loved and precious beyond our wildest imaginings.

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!  
 Place your soul *in the divine brilliance of glory!*  
 Place your heart *in the figure of the* divine substance.  
 And *transform* your entire being *into the image*  
 of the Godhead Itself through contemplation (3LAg 12-13).

Christ is the mirror of eternity, and Agnes is to place her whole being, mind, and soul before him in a movement of self-offering. In tune with the Franciscan intuition that love transforms,<sup>21</sup> Clare tells Agnes that she will be transformed into an image of the one she gazes upon. We are reminded of the scripture:

All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit" (2Cor. 3:18).

When Agnes contemplates Christ, he becomes a mirror, giving her back the image of the woman she is as his spouse. As she studies her face in the divine mirror, she sees that she reflects his virtues of humility, poverty, and charity. She sees who she is. She sees, also, that she is the spouse of a crucified Bridegroom who is also her heavenly Spouse and King, the mirror without blemish in which shines the splendor of eternal glory. The vision dimly perceived is already the ultimate heavenly blessing.<sup>22</sup>

Gaze upon that mirror each day, O queen and spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it, that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes, covered, as is becoming the daughter and most chaste bride of the Most High King, with the flowers and garments of all the virtues. Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility, and inexpressible charity are reflected in that mirror, as, with the grace of God, you can contemplate them throughout the entire mirror (4LAg 15-18).

Transform yourself, she says, become beautiful for Christ. Transform yourself by your gazing, your contemplation of Christ who is the mirror. It is a delightfully feminine use of the mirror. What woman has not studied her face in a mirror, looking again and again to make sure she likes the way she looks? And what are to be Agnes's adornments? The virtues par excellence—blessed poverty, holy humility, and inexpressible charity, the poverty and humility of Christ in his birth and the wonderful charity of his redeeming death on the cross. Clare is telling Agnes to imitate these virtues. This is transformation; this is union.

In the section where Clare talks about the various aspects of the mirror, there is a crescendo—poverty with humility, humility with poverty, and love. Poverty and humility have freed Clare for love. Her contemplative gaze has found in Christ humility, poverty, and love. It is for the love of and imitation of Christ that Clare wants to be poor and encourages Agnes in poverty. Clare refuses the security of possessions and a stable economy. She wishes to have only the security of her God. Humility is for her the inner attitude that corresponds with external poverty. Clare loves poverty because of Christ.<sup>23</sup> By his poor life and his self-giving, his kenosis, he frees us; by his poverty we become “rich by possessing the kingdom of heaven” (1LAg 20).

## Conclusion

This paper is a personal exploration. I was struck on my first reading of Clare's letters by her talking about the *beauty* of Christ. In our culture we rarely speak of male *beauty*, although it has become common in the youth culture to hear: “He's *gorgeous*!” At the mention of *beauty*, my attention was caught. I pursued Clare's image of the beauty of Christ because it fascinated me. In the process I became interested in Clare's use of other visual imagery. I began to see Francis and Clare less as isolated individuals and more as products of their own time and culture. I discovered that the widespread influence of Bernard of Clairvaux had reached Clare, both in devotion to the humanity of Christ and in the popularizing of spousal imagery from the Song of Songs. I learned, too, that the use of visual images for an experience that involved a direct prolonged presence is rooted in Greek thought and that the use of images and the imagination in art and prayer was common in the Middle Ages.

This study has helped me deepen my understanding of Clare, her poetry, her passion, her all-consuming love of Christ. Reading her writings has been a source of inspiration and a delight. I will continue to celebrate Clare—a visible image of God!

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>All quotations from Clare's writings and early biographical sources are taken from Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap., *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: Paulist Press: 1989)

<sup>2</sup>In Rene-Charles Dhont, OFM, *Clare Among Her Sisters* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1987), 47.

<sup>3</sup>Umberto Eco, *Art And Beauty in the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 12-15.

<sup>4</sup>Dhont, 47.

<sup>5</sup>David Chidester, *Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>6</sup>Chidester, 4-6.

<sup>7</sup>Chidester, 6-7.

<sup>8</sup>Margaret Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 198), 15.

<sup>9</sup>Brian Purfield, *Reflections in the Mirror: the Images of Christ in the Spiritual Life of Saint Clare of Assisi*, unpublished dissertation (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1989), 15.

<sup>10</sup>Miles, 63-75, 150-152.

<sup>11</sup>Timothy Johnson, “Image and Vision: Contemplation as Visual Perception in Clare of Assisi's Epistolary Writings,” *Greyfriars Review*, 8 (1994): 202-206.

<sup>12</sup>Armstrong, 16-17.

<sup>13</sup>Armstrong, 42, note 13.

<sup>14</sup>Mary Francis Hone, OSC, “Religious Experience in Poor Clare Tradition,” *The Cord*, 7 (July-August, 1988): 200.

<sup>15</sup>Purfield, 19.

<sup>16</sup>Hone, 200.

<sup>17</sup>Hone, 200.

<sup>18</sup>Hone, 202.

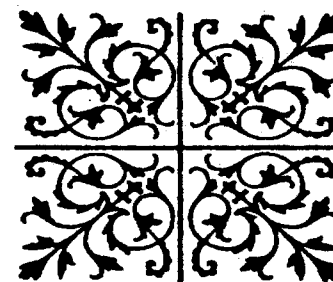
<sup>19</sup>Hone, 202.

<sup>20</sup>Johnson, 209.

<sup>21</sup>Johnson, 210, note 32.

<sup>22</sup>Johnson, 210-211.

<sup>23</sup>Purfield, 108-130.



The Lady Clare, a native of the city of Assisi,  
the most precious and strongest stone of the whole structure,  
stands as the foundation for all the other stones.  
For, after the beginning of the Order of Brothers, . . . she lived for the  
good of many and as an example to countless others. . . .  
A noble structure of precious pearls arose above this woman,  
whose praise comes not from mortals but from God  
(1Cel 18).

## Voice from the Past

### The Modernity of St. Clare

Lothar Hardick, OFM

Translated by  
Mother M. Immaculata, PC

[This article was first published in *The Cord* in August, 1954, pages 252-256.]

Has the virgin saint of seven hundred years ago, she who spent forty-one years of hidden life in the cloister, a message for the active, restless people of the twentieth century? Are not the monasteries of Poor Clares today an outmoded remnant of the past, anachronistic in our present day of speed, industry, and efficiency?

Clare's one desire was for God; her one concern was for God. And God remains the modern need, the One Who alone suffices, as Clare so well knew. Because Clare was convinced that in God all things realize their final end, she is unquestionably "up to date,"—modern with a greater modernity than the achievements of industry, economy, and politics that collide with the Almighty because they attempt to remain outside Christianity. Clare wanted God alone; therefore, she embraced the universe. The activity of moderns whose lives remain only peripheral to the center that is God is less real than the activity of Clare that sprang from the very center of things—God.

From Clare, we can learn to pray. Prayer is the opening of one's own being to God; but it is God Who does the greatest work—even all! Our part, though important, is relatively very small. To open one's soul to God, to watch and listen for His word, is to be as wakeful to the needs of the hour as Clare was, and yet as unperturbed as she. The pinnacle of her inmost longings glowed with the Divine light as, opening her heart fully to the torrents of grace and persevering unshaken and firm in her vigil of prayer, she lovingly grasped in their fullest meaning the content of the Divine whisperings. Are we thus able to listen and to wait? Do we have time for God, or have we become deaf to His voice in the din and clamor of earth?

The prayer of Clare always turned on Christ. Like that of Francis, her prayer embraced most particularly the Sacred Humanity of our Lord that supplied her spirit with an unfailing stimulant for contemplation. "The Son of God has become our Way; and our Holy Father St. Francis, His true lover and follower, has taught us that way by his word and example." With Jesus, she suffered and endured; with Him, she loved and felt compassion; with Him, she longed to be united in her prayer. And Clare tells the people of today that our Divine Lord likewise wishes to be the power and force in our own lives. But what does Christ signify to us? Do we feel with Him, and does His life lay hold of ours? Do we endure all things for His sake? Is He real to us, or shadowy and elusive?

Clare's flight from her home to the Portiuncula, where Francis and his Brothers received her with burning candles and led her to the altar, is symbolic in her life. She gave herself entirely to God. "To God alone, Clare desired to consecrate herself, making of her body a living temple, and zealously endeavoring to make her soul worthy, by the practice of virtue, of being wedded to the great King." God alone was the end of her striving; He was the All she asked. Consecrated virginity was her choice because she wished to make herself a living gift to God, free from all earthly bondage to be His alone.

Alone! Renouncing all things, can the renouncer yet not own his or her own will? But Clare made a gift of her very self and was, in return, enriched by Christ. "You have taken with all your being a Bridegroom most noble, our Lord Jesus Christ. The King will Himself unite you with Him in divine union where He is enthroned in eternal light." "Great things have we promised, greater still are promised to us." "She who has renounced all may prepare for and await divine wedded union with the King." When Clare speaks of Christ as her Bridegroom, she invariably regards Him as the Lord of Glory, though still remaining united with Him in the mystery of His Passion. Her flight to the Portiuncula was the joyous bridal journey of her soul toward our Lord.

We today often prefer to look at sacrifice, renunciation, and penance in their narrowest limits. Clare put them in correct perspective. We look first of all to what we give rather than to what we receive. But could we only recognize God hidden in every circumstance of daily life and realize that we can advance toward Him by these very circumstances, then our pilgrimage on this earth could also be made to the note of joyous expectation.

Finally, we should learn from Clare of the single thing worth our anxious concern. When, in the first monastery of San Damiano, there was no food for the Sisters, Clare sought assistance from God. She commanded one of the Sisters to divide the one small piece of bread in the monastery into fifty tiny morsels, and then she turned to God in prayer. The bread was so multiplied that each of the fifty Sisters was satisfied.

Clare lay seriously ill in her narrow cell when the Saracen army of Frederick II invaded Assisi and threatened the convent of the Poor Ladies. Yet she roused herself and had the Blessed Sacrament brought to her. She prayed, and the voice of our Lord from the Sacred Host which she uplifted in sight of the enemy spoke in clearest tones: "I will always watch over you." The enemy fled precipitately in fear.

Clare shows us how the people of our day lead cramped lives within the narrow confines of their anxiety for their physical needs. She reminds us that the only worthy anxiety is not fearful but constantly trustful in the loving provident Hand of God our Father. From Him alone she expected—everything! Her lighthearted freedom from anxious care for physical needs sprang from her primary concern for the things of the soul—she who had elected poverty for her body in order to emulate the poverty of the poor Christ. "O blessed poverty! For those who love and embrace her, she hides eternal riches!" Is our anxiety more for our body than for our soul? Does it consist more in seeking temporal security than the security of God's Hand? Is our anxiety such that we expect God to serve us, rather than ourselves to serve Him?

Genuine Christian concern looks beyond self to others. Clare enclosed herself within the cloister in order to be an intercessor for the needs and sufferings of the universal Church. "This little flock our Lord and Father has gathered together in His holy Church through the word and example of our holy Father St. Francis." Clare's narrow cloister demanded a wide field for her soul. She would help to bear the burden of the universal Church. "I regard thee as God's auxiliary and a support for the frail members of His ineffable Body." As Francis supported the tottering pillars of the Lateran Church, so Clare and her Sisters would support Holy Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. She knew that, even in her narrow cloister, her task was apostolic. Her little flock was not for herself, but for the Church whose Vicars and Cardinals confided their anxieties to her.

Do we regard ourselves as divinely-called co-workers in the Mystical Body of Christ? Do we live for the Church, suffer for it, and feel concern for it always? Or do we esteem external activity greater than sacrificial prayer? Is our interest in the Church's welfare merely territorial and personal? Or do we understand also that the silent, nameless sufferers of the world, the apparently useless, the aged, and confined can be valuable contemplatives for the support of the Church?

We see that this woman of the thirteenth century was more modern than we realized, just as were the silent, hidden, world-strange monasteries of her daughters. She shows us that no external progress, no mechanical or industrial art, no fashions or multiplicity of accomplishments are the things of greatest value—but only the entire gift of self to God. Clare calls to us today: take God seriously! Let God be your greatest concern, your most burning anxiety.

## **St. Clare of Assisi: Rooted in the Passion of Christ**

Mary Regina Buchanan, PCC

In his letter to the Poor Clare nuns on the occasion of the eighth centenary of the birth of their Mother and Foundress, Pope John Paul II wrote of St. Clare of Assisi as "the passionate lover of the poor, Crucified Christ, with whom she wanted to identify absolutely." As she lay dying in the austere attic dormitory of the monastery of San Damiano in the summer of 1253, one of the friars present for the Last Anointing attempted to console the suffering saint "in the long martyrdom of [her] many illnesses." With that frank and candid simplicity which characterized her approach to life and spirituality, the Clare addressed the concerned brother serenely: "Ever since I came to know the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis, no suffering has troubled me, no penance has been hard, no sickness too arduous" (CL 44).

From a worldly point of view, this is an astonishing, even incredible, statement. Few there are who would conclude that Clare's life had not been troublesome, arduous, or hard. For forty-two years she had experienced the penances and privations of enclosed living to which she herself had added numerous physical mortifications. For twenty-eight of those years, Clare had also suffered continual chronic ill-health. But then, Clare's perspective was not that of the worldly-wise, but rather of the God-educated, to whom "the secrets of the kingdom have been revealed" (Mt. 13:11).

How is it that Clare saw suffering as an opportunity to imitate the suffering Savior, as a grace to be seized, a privilege to be cherished, a mystery to be entered into with reverence, generosity, and zeal? Why was she so light where often we are heavy? A study of her life reveals her abiding talent for being lifted up and out of herself, where we so often are bogged down. What most find burdensome, Clare found freeing. What was her secret? Centuries before, St. Paul had exuberantly declared his one goal: "To know Christ . . . by

being formed into the pattern of his death" (Phil. 3:10). It was a goal that Clare embraced with equal enthusiasm, urged on by the example and teaching of the "Christ of Umbria," Francis himself. "Eternal life is this: to know you, the one, true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn. 17:3). These words of the Divine Master form the basis for all growth and advancement in the realm of the spirit. "Ever since I came to know the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis. . . ."

Clare acknowledges her debt of gratitude to the Little Poor Man who opened to her the gates of deeper knowledge of the Incarnate Word, not so much through his spiritual erudition as through his holiness of life that kindled her love. For Francis, the "ardent lover and imitator" of the Son of God, the Gospel way was very clear—and it lead to Calvary. Such was the substance of his great and humble prayer before the imprinting of the Sacred Stigmata: "That I may feel in my heart as much as possible the love which urged you, Lord, to die for men and to feel in my body as much as possible the pain which you suffered for our salvation" (cf CSD 3).

Clare read God's answer stamped on the hands and feet and side of Francis. But Clare did more than read and marvel. Just as at the beginning of her conversion to Christ she "set off without hesitation on the adventure of a new experience, believing in the Gospel as Francis had showed her, and in nothing else, with the eyes of her body and her heart totally immersed in the poor and crucified Christ,"<sup>1</sup> so did she throughout the long unfolding of her forty-two years of religious life keep her focus upon the mystery of the Cross. Clare learned all from the book of the crucifix, and she urged her spiritual progeny to do likewise. "Meditate constantly on the mysteries of the Cross" . . . "Never let the thought of Him leave your mind" (LEr); "Keep always in mind the Passion of our Lord" (Proc 11:3). These were just a few of her reminders to her followers upon the Gospel way.

Clare's quest for "absolute identification with the poor Crucified" set her firmly on the heights of contemplation. Calvary was the holy mountain that she urged each of her daughters to climb: "Look upon Him who became contemptible for you, and follow Him . . . Your Spouse, who though more beautiful than the children of men, became for your salvation the lowest of men, was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout his entire body, and then died amid the sufferings of the cross. . . . Gaze upon Him, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him" (2LAg).

Down through the centuries, the title that Clare bestowed upon herself—"the little plant of St. Francis"—continues to summarize both her mind-set and her mission in the Order of Penance. This "little plant" was not some spindly greenhouse specimen. No, the Bull of Canonization speaks of Clare as being an "oak of patience." Clare learned of Christ Crucified as Mary did, at

the foot of the Cross. This "little plant" flourished upon the rock of Calvary, watered by that saving tide that flowed from the pierced side of Christ. And thus, for Clare, "the hard bed of the cross became the sweet nuptial bed as the 'life-long recluse of love' found the most passionate accents of the beloved in the Song of Songs: 'Draw me after you, . . . O Heavenly Spouse! I will run and not grow weary until you bring me into the wine-cellar'"<sup>2</sup> "Love Him in complete surrender, who gave himself up entirely for your love," wrote Clare to one of her spiritual daughters, the future St. Agnes of Prague (3LAg).

It was love that rooted Clare in the mysteries of the redemption; it was love that urged her on through the sufferings and vicissitudes of her long religious life; it was love, kindled by hope and deepened by faith, that recognized that "the sufferings of this world are not to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us" (Rom.8:18). Clare of Assisi found that the secret of serene suffering lies in union with Christ "who for our sake, endured the cross, heedless of the shame" (Heb. 12:2). Thus she could "accept everything and offer it to the Father in union with the infinite 'thanks' of the only-begotten Son, . . . the One who sweeps away in his Passover those who love him to the point of sharing his sufferings out of love for Him."<sup>3</sup>

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Pope John Paul II, "Letter on the Occasion of the Eighth Centenary of the Birth of St. Clare of Assisi," 5.

<sup>2</sup>John Paul II, 5.

<sup>3</sup>John Paul II, 5.



May God bless you.  
May God look upon you with mercy  
and give you peace.

-Blessing of St. Clare

Mary Connor, OSC

## Visiting Agnes's Prague A Pilgrim's Report

Joan Mueller, OSF

As part of research for a project that I've been writing on Clare's letters to Agnes of Prague,<sup>1</sup> I received a grant to go to Prague for two weeks in the spring of 1998.<sup>2</sup> I was ecstatic about the opportunity. I had academic goals, but also desired to pray and to become familiar with the city and the places that were so dear to Agnes's heart. I was in no way prepared for the impact the trip would have on me and spent the next year praying with the experience, speaking about it rarely even with the sisters in my own community. On the few occasions when I felt obligated to share, I found myself disappointed with my own words.

I was no stranger to the pilgrimage experience, having been in Rome and Assisi, following the footsteps of Francis and Clare. The Assisi experience had been a highpoint of my life, and I was eager to repeat the same kind of prayer and study in Prague, a city quite different from Assisi. Large and modern, it is more interested in corporate finance than in entertaining pilgrims. Just emerging from years of communistic oppression, Prague is coated with the black dust of cheap coal. It puts on a good face for Western tourists, however. "During the communist time" (as the people say), the Catholic church had been stripped of its wealth and brutally persecuted. The bishop was forced to sweep the streets. Sisters were herded into trucks and imprisoned in churches surrounded with barbed wire.<sup>3</sup>

My contact person was a Czech sister, my own age, who graciously welcomed me. She had been a "secret sister" during the communist time and had experienced most of her formation underground. In the evenings she would often come to my room and talk for hours about the communist time, about the bravery of her sisters, about their hardships since the Velvet Revolution,<sup>4</sup> and about her own love and faith in St. Agnes of Prague. These talks greatly helped me to understand what I was seeing and experiencing, and we found

that we had much in common, even though we came from totally different worlds.

In planning the trip, there had been the difficulty of getting from the airport to the convent. My contact sister felt that I could arrive in the Czech Republic and climb immediately into a cab. When I expressed my reservations about this plan, she said simply: "Do not be afraid, Sister Joan. The Queen will take care of you." These words summarized my experience of visiting Agnes's Prague. Even so, I persisted in resolving the airport dilemma and found an English-speaking, Baptist theology professor who was happy to drive me to and from the airport for the price it would cost to take a cab.

Because of one-way traffic near the convent, the professor dropped me off a number of blocks away from the sisters' house. The neighborhood was poor, but the people seemed friendly. I waved to my Baptist friend as he drove off, and then I walked up the street. When I finally found the door of the sisters' convent, a sister answered, and I became immediately aware of my language deficiency. I repeated the name of the sister who was my contact and my own name. Finally, one of the sisters recognized who I was and called the contact sister.

Because of the recent illness of the kitchen sister, the sisters could not invite me to join them in meals. There was a small kitchenette near the room I stayed in, and I anticipated no problems. I thought I'd be able to pick up a sandwich at lunch and a meal in the evening. I took a walk around the block looking for something to eat, but found nothing. Realizing that, after the long trip, I was more tired than hungry, I went to bed.

I woke up to someone shouting, "Josepee! Josepee!" and sprang up from the kind of a shelf that served as a bed. Looking out the window, I saw a prostitute who was obviously in need of a fix. Oddly enough, this comforted my anxiety, reminding me of my own neighborhood in Omaha. I prayed for her and for her supplier, tried to go back to sleep, and, in the dark quiet with "Josepee" still ringing through the night air, suddenly realized that I was a lone, American woman in Prague. I tried not to panic, prayed to Agnes for help, and fell asleep.

The next morning, I didn't know where to start. I had no guidebook of the city, and my walk around the block the night before had not provided me with one. I was very hungry. Hearing noise from the kitchenette, I summoned my courage and introduced myself to an elderly couple who were staying in the room next to me. Their names were Maria and Josef—she was Czech and he was German. To my relief, he responded to my introduction in English. Maria immediately set another place and invited me for breakfast. I was very grateful.

They were going to the Strahov monastery with a priest that Maria knew and asked me to join them. I had seen pictures of this glorious monastery and



was only too willing. The Strahov monastery is a Norbertine institution founded in 1140. It was destroyed by fire in 1253 and rebuilt in Gothic style. Because we were with a priest, a novice of the Order was summoned. He gave us a tour, speaking both Czech and English. The library was gilded and contained shelf after shelf of precious manuscripts. My guidebook (which I finally found later in the "Old Town") reported that the library contained "130,000 volumes, 5000 manuscripts, 2500 incunabula and a large quantity of old maps."<sup>5</sup> We saw the grave of St. Norbert and paid our respects to the patron of the monastery.

Maria and Josef then treated the priest and me to dinner. While we were at the restaurant, Josef had the Czech priest do all the ordering, explaining to me that Americans and Germans are often charged three times the published amount for food in Prague. The priest agreed with Josef: "It is best not to order in English or in German."

Maria and Josef could not do enough for me. I was deeply grateful to them for rescuing me at a critical moment, but I was afraid they were showing me so many kindnesses because I was a "sister." As I was trying to figure out how graciously to go my own way, the priest announced that he would take us to Agnes's monastery.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, I offered no protest. Because of the high admission price, however, we did not go into the monastery, but only parked next to the gate.

During that first day with Maria and Josef, we had driven by car to various parts of town, taken the tram and subway, and had gone to Agnes's convent. Because of these "angels," I had survived my first day, had a good meal, learned how to negotiate the public transportation, and made some good friends.

On Thursday afternoon, my contact sister went with me on the tram to the convent of the Crosiers of the Red Star.<sup>7</sup> This community, which still exists in Prague, was founded by Agnes of Prague herself to care for the needs of the poor and sick who came to the Hospital of St. Francis. Originally, Agnes had built the Hospital of St. Francis next to her monastery, but later she turned these hospital buildings into a residence for the Friars Minor who cared for the spiritual and temporal needs of her sisters. She then built a larger hospital at the foot of the old Judith Bridge, which was near the present day Charles Bridge. Because of Agnes's wish to preserve the Franciscan charism of "living without possessions," the Crosiers, who were given the care of the hospital and its endowment,<sup>8</sup> were placed under the Rule of Saint Augustine and had a Dominican visitor.<sup>9</sup> One of the Crosier novices took us on a tour and answered my numerous questions.

We then went to the Dominican cloister of St. Clement and to the famous Infant of Prague church in an entirely different part of the city. By late afternoon my friend needed to return to the convent. I still had not eaten but,

searching the streets, I eventually found a small sandwich and an orange.

By Friday, I had to admit to my contact sister my inability to survive food-wise. She agreed with Josef that there was a great probability that I would be cheated if I ordered in English at a restaurant. My grant budget was adequate, but not suited for inflated prices. She offered to take me grocery shopping and introduce me to merchants who would not cheat me. I should not have worried, for on the Czech currency there is a picture of Agnes of Prague.

We went to two grocery stores and to a bakery. There were many foods that I could not identify, but I bought bread, sauerkraut, and yogurt. Vegetables and fruit are expensive in Prague, and I learned the nutritional value of sauerkraut. After I was introduced to the grocery stores, food was no longer the focus of my trip, although I did eat a lot of bread, sauerkraut, and yogurt!

That night, I made supper for Maria and Josef in the kitchenette. We talked and talked, Josef translating for both Maria and me. Josef had fought for the Germans in World War II and had learned his English as a prisoner of war in an American camp. I think he said he had killed an American, but I did not understand because he immediately burst into tears. Although he had been speaking in English, Maria instinctively understood his tears and went to comfort him.

On Saturday, I took the tram to the Hradcany castle where Agnes's royal family had lived. The great St. Vitus Cathedral<sup>10</sup> was closed for the day, so I explored St. George's basilica and the National Art Gallery, which had been St. George's convent. This convent, built around 1142, now houses early Bohemian art, and I realized that the communist practice of substituting art in place of former religious institutes was still alive and well. I looked at the art, but tried to imagine the noble women of St. George's convent.

The Benedictine monastery of St. George, the first monastic order in Bohemia, was an important institution in medieval Prague. According to law, the titular abbess of this monastery had to be present at the coronation of the Czech queen. Abbesses of the St. George monastery always came from the royal family or from the higher aristocracy, and the daughters of the Bohemian royal dynasty were educated by its nuns. The monastery complex included workshops that had once produced outstanding illuminated manuscripts, musical compositions, and other artistic works.

The medieval church was a small basilica with a nave, two aisles, and three choirs. At the end of the eleventh century, the basilica was enlarged and galleries were constructed above the aisles. After a fire in 1142, the church was again renovated, the main choir ending in an apse, and a crypt was constructed under the presbytery. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, a late Romanesque chapel was built off the sanctuary and dedicated to St. Ludmilla.<sup>11</sup>

St. George's basilica is the best preserved Romanesque church in Prague and dates from about 914. In this church, I began to get a feel for the concept



of dynastic sanctity<sup>12</sup> with its overpowering wealth. Even today, one's bloodline is important in Prague. When introducing noblemen and women, a Czech will make the foreigner aware of the bloodline of the one being introduced.

On Sunday, I returned to the Crosiers and spent time with the highly gifted young woman who manages the museum. She sat with me on the steps of the museum and translated the short history of the Crosiers while I wrote frantically. In this small museum dedicated to the treasures of the Order, one can see iconography of Agnes caring for the ill of her hospital.<sup>13</sup> The Czech tradition is that Agnes actively cared for the sick herself until stricter papal laws of enclosure prevented this, this question still needs careful study. In this museum, one can also see the symbol of the Order of the Crosiers with the Red Star on a series of tombstones. A piece of the Judith Bridge is also intact for viewing.

On Tuesday I continued my pilgrimage, visiting the Jewish Quarter near Agnes's convent. Jewish settlements on both sides of the Vltava river existed already in the early eleventh century. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, an extensive Jewish settlement had evolved on the right bank of the river. The "Old-New School" synagogue, built in Cistercian Gothic style, was probably constructed by the very artisans who were, at the same time, building Agnes's monastery. These two magnificent works of Gothic architecture are a ten-minute walk from each other.

The Jewish community fared well under the rule of Agnes's relatives. In 1262, Agnes's nephew, King Premysl Otakar II, clearly defined the legal norms of the Jewish settlement, giving the community intellectual freedom, the right to judge their own criminals, and protection of their synagogues and cemeteries.<sup>14</sup>

I had expected to "run through" the Jewish quarter, but stopped short when confronted with a museum audio that slowly listed the names of Czech Jews killed during the Holocaust. Leaving the quarter, I realized that not only the Catholic churches but also the Jewish synagogues exist in Prague primarily as art and/or historical museums. Since I had spent quite a bit of time talking with young people on trams during my first days in Prague, I pondered their almost total ignorance of a faith perspective. I recognize a similar ignorance in my own American college students. Communism and capitalism are in many respects alike.

On Wednesday I took a boat ride down the Vltava river. It was a lovely day, and the water, fresh air, and sunshine were beautiful. As I was heading home on the tram, a "black" policeman came on board. He looked around, spotted my tennis shoes and laughed with the driver. I knew that I would be questioned, but I felt confident because I had a validated ticket. My contact sister had warned me about these "black" police, known by this name because

they dress in black and are remnants of the communist police force. Their headquarters is next to the Capuchin monastery near the Church of Loretto. The policeman approached only me and demanded to see my ticket. I kept my mouth shut, knowing that speaking English would not help my situation. I gave him my ticket expecting to be vindicated. Instead, he insisted that my ticket was not good. I pointed out that it was good for two weeks and that it had been validated. He said again that my ticket was not good, and I insisted again showing him the evident validation, but then caught myself. I was alone in the Czech Republic with a "black" police officer, and I dared to argue. He demanded twice the amount that I had already paid for a two-week ticket. I gave it to him. The man in black got off at the next stop, again laughing with the driver. I felt incredibly angry and admired even more my Franciscan brothers and sisters who had spent years surviving this kind of oppression.

On Thursday I returned to Agnes's monastery and bought the two tickets necessary to see the whole convent. I worked with the guidebook and tried to piece together the Romanesque complex, walking through the churches and ambling around the cloister walk. Being a pilgrim here felt a little strange at first. There was an art exhibit in the monastery, but I was obviously interested in something other than the art. St. Francis Church now serves as a concert hall, and the Church of the Savior is the grand gallery. I did persuade a young guard to let me peek up the staircase leading to Agnes's hermitage<sup>15</sup> and found that it was cluttered with debris and roped off. Again I realized how effectively the religious significance of the place has been downplayed. Even so, I could not stay away. On Friday I returned and spent most of the day there.

Saturday morning, I toured the Cathedral of St. Vitus. The construction of the cathedral began in 1344 under Charles IV and was not completed until the present century. Again, one feels more like one is entering a museum than a church.

On Pentecost Sunday, the feast of Agnes's entrance, I returned to her monastery again and spent time praying in the cloister garden and in the dormitory near a window overlooking St. Francis Church. Late in the afternoon, I braved the rain and walked to Vysehrad, the first seat of Czech royalty before the Hradcany. The rain tapered off, and I enjoyed the peaceful quiet and beautiful scenery of the place.

On my last day in Prague I studied a manuscript at the National Library and then walked to Wenceslas Square and Old Town Square, visiting churches along the way. I was feeling happy, thinking of the pilgrimage walks that Agnes used to make to the churches around Prague.<sup>16</sup> On one block, there was a small church that I had not seen in the guidebook. Making my way towards it, I saw that it was completely surrounded with high barbed wire fencing. The horror of its violence stopped me cold.

Although I am a theologian by profession, I do not have a profound theological reflection to offer about this journey to Prague. The time of "walking with Agnes" was a powerful experience of juxtaposing past and present. I realized how radically different I am culturally from Agnes and even from contemporary Czechs, understanding that I must listen carefully to avoid imposing my culture on a proud people who have already had their share of oppression.

That being said, the pilgrimage has changed me. Realizing that I needed more time to listen contemplatively to Agnes's story, I slowed down my research project. I now feel much more practical about my spirituality—the stark political realities of Agnes's poverty have moved me in this direction. I was strengthened in my own resolve to hold fast to a practical poverty with all its consequences regarding the sacrifice of property, status, and security in order to keep choosing the "most high poverty" that both Agnes and Clare regarded as their most precious treasure.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>For biographical information on Agnes of Prague see: Alfonso Marini, *Agnese di Boemia* (Roma: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1991); Jaroslav Nemec, *Agnese di Praga* (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 1982); Jaroslav Polc, *Agnes von Böhmen 1211-1282: Königtöchter—Äbtissin—Heilige* (München, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1989); Helena Soukupová, *Anezský klášter v Praze* (Odeon: Prague, 1989). For background information in English see Petr Pitha, "Agnes of Prague—A New Bohemian Saint," *Franziskanische Studien* (1990): 325-40; Poor Clare Colettine Community, *Aneska: Princess of the House of Premysl* (Wales: Ty Mam Duw, 1996); and Helena Soukupová, *The Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia* (Prague: The National Gallery in Prague, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>The book, *Clare's Letters to Agnes*, will focus on sources unpinning the letters of Clare of Assisi to Agnes of Prague and is tentatively scheduled for publication in the spring of 2001.

<sup>3</sup>These stories were told to me by my contact sister.

<sup>4</sup>Pitha's article, "Agnes of Prague," connects Agnes's canonization with the Velvet Revolution. This connection was confirmed by numerous people with whom I had the opportunity to speak in Prague.

<sup>5</sup>Giuliano Valdes, *Prague* (Florence: Casa Editrice Bonechi, 1997), 78. A catalog of the monastic library is found in Ve společném prebalu s ostatními akcemi 19. kongresu Mezinárodní asociace bibliofilů, *Klášter premonstrátu Praha-Strahov* (Prague: Mezinárodní asociace bibliofilů, 1995).

<sup>6</sup>For information in English on the Monastery of St. Agnes see Helena Soukupová, *The Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia* (Prague: The National Gallery, 1993).

<sup>7</sup>Information on this community is found in Milan M. Buben, *Rytířský rád Krizovníku Cervenou Hvezdou* (Praha: Rád Krizovníku červenou Hvezdou v Praze, 1996).

<sup>8</sup>"Omnipotens Deus," *CDB III*, 195-98.

<sup>9</sup>"Vota devotorum Ecclesiae," *BF I*:237-38.

<sup>10</sup>For detailed information on St. Vitus Cathedral see Verena Friedrich, *Prague: St. Vitus' Cathedral* (Prague: Kunstverlag Peda, 1996).

<sup>11</sup>Further information on St. George Church and Monastery can be found in Jaroslava Stanková, Jiri Stursa, Svatopluk Vodera, *Prague: Eleven Centuries of Architecture* (Prague: PAV, 1996); and Verena Friedrich, *Prague: St. George's Basilica* (Prague: Kunstverlag Peda, 1996).

<sup>12</sup>On dynastic sanctity in central Europe in the thirteenth century see Gábor Klaniczay, "The Cinderella Effect: Late Medieval Female Sainthood in Central Europe and in Italy," *East Central Europe: Women and Power in East Central Europe—Medieval and Modern* 20-23, part 1 (1993-1996), 51-68.

<sup>13</sup>See Soukupová, *The Convent*, 41.

<sup>14</sup>Literature on the Jewish roots of Prague is abundant. For a short summary see Peter Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold: Scenes from the Life of a European City* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 40-48.

<sup>15</sup>For a picture of these stairs see Soukupová, *The Convent*, 21.

<sup>16</sup>See Jan Kapistran Vyskocil, *The Legend of Blessed Agnes of Bohemia and The Four Letters of St. Clare*, trans. Vitus Buresh, O.S.B. (V. Buresh, 1963), 144.

You shall share always and forever the glory of the kingdom of heaven in place of earthly and passing things, and everlasting treasures instead of those that perish, and you shall live forever (2Lag 23).

## About our Contributors

**Thomas Barton, OSF**, a Franciscan Brother of Brooklyn, is a graduate of The Franciscan Institute. He serves on the staff of The Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs and has been engaged in HIV ministry in New York City. He has most recently been teaching Franciscan Studies in India.

**Marie Beha, OSC**, a member of the Poor Clare community in Greenville, South Carolina, contributes regularly to *The Cord*, as well as to *Sisters Today*, *Review for Religious*, and *Human Development*s. She has also served on the editorial board of *The Cord*.

**Mary Regina Buchanan, PCC**, is a member of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Mercy in Belleville, Illinois, which she helped found in 1986. She has written articles on Clarian and Franciscan themes for local Secular Franciscan publications and has had articles published in *Communion and Communications* and in *The Cord*.

**Anthony Carrozzo, OFM**, of Holy Name Province, New York, teaches courses in the School of Franciscan Studies, St. Bonaventure. He has recently edited *In Solitude and Dialogue: Contemporary Franciscans Theologize* (The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

**Mary Connor, OSC**, is a member of the Monastery of St. Clare in Greenville, South Carolina. She is a graduate of the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois, and has been a Poor Clare since 1975. She enjoys sketching and watercolor and generously shares her artistic talent with *The Cord*.

**Joan Mueller, OSF**, was a cofounder of the Franciscan Sisters of Joy in 1996. She teaches systematic theology at Creighton University in Omaha and has authored a number of books and articles, most recently *Francis, the Saint of Assisi* (Thomas More, 2000). (See book review in this issue of *The Cord*, p. 200).

**Janet Snyder, OSF**, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sylvania, Ohio. She spent twenty years in pastoral ministry and now serves in a small parish near Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is also pursuing studies in art and spiritual direction.

## Book Review

Joan Mueller, OSF. *Francis: The Saint of Assisi*. Thomas More Publications, January, 2000. Pp. 296.

Every Franciscan has his or her favorite life of St. Francis. For me, there is G. K. Chesterton's *St. Francis of Assisi*, in which the Saint sees the world rightly by standing on his head. There is also the passionate portrayal of Francis by Nikos Kazantzakis in which the fictionalized Francis appears quite mad because he grasps life from a God perspective. Whenever I read a new life of Francis, these two works are ruminating in my soul. So I judge every new attempt to capture the life of St. Francis by these very high standards, asking why an author dare think that he or she could or should add to the already numerous works on Francis of Assisi. My question is simply this: why another life of this little man from Assisi? Or, to put it another way, what does this new work have to offer that no other has?

The easiest answer to this question is that any life of Francis tells us more about the author than it does about Francis himself. We come to know both Chesterton and Kazantzakis through their artful reflections of Francis of Assisi. So too we come to know Joan Mueller through her latest work, which is a fictionalized tale of the Saint on whom she patterns her life. What is revealed about Mueller in this novel is that she is enamored of the poverty of St. Francis and that she is also concerned about God's *anawim*. This is evident from two perspectives.

Recently, in a book entitled *In Solitude and Dialogue*, Joan Mueller contributed an essay in which she outlined a variety of models for the Franciscan life of poverty today. In this novel she offers yet another model, for the Poverello is portrayed here as living *sine proprio*, that is without anything of his own—a concept, I believe, that is much deeper and more meaningful today than our ongoing romance with *Lady Poverty*. To live without anything of one's own means that everything that is good is properly perceived as a gift from God, to be returned to God, even though tarnished and well used. In Mueller's insightful depiction, Francis is a man who truly grasped this truth that would later be articulated theologically by Bonaventure in his *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*. Throughout this new novel, Francis is truly the Poverello, the little poor man who is nothing in himself yet everything in God's goodness. As

a result, Francis is seen by Mueller to be a man of peace and at peace with God, himself, his brothers and sisters, and all of creation. Francis experiences this even in the midst of separation from his family, from which emerge the close bonds of brotherhood and the intense physical suffering that culminate in the Stigmata. Thus Francis's stance toward life is one of profound humility, that virtue which St. Bonaventure most admired in the life of the man he considered the *forma minorum*.

This humility is evident in Mueller's new work. It is not enough for her to acquaint us with the major players in Francis's marvelous conversion such as popes and bishops, noble followers and generous benefactors. She also peppers her retelling of the Francis story with the little people of Assisi, those who seemingly have little or nothing to do with the account but who indeed are significant because they formed the world in which Francis lived. Ultimately these peasants and beggars, musicians and gossipers were the people with whom Francis chose to live in his downward movement from lounging among the *maiores* of Assisi to identifying with its *minores*.

Mueller presents these profound values of Francis of Assisi in simple yet eloquent prose. This work will serve as a fine introduction to the life and designs of St. Francis, especially for young students unacquainted with our patron. In the hands of a seasoned teacher, this work can also serve as an introduction to the theological foundation of Franciscan life—a peaceful life lived *sine proprio* for the sake of God's little ones.

Anthony M. Carrozzo, O.F.M.

---

Robert J. Karris, OFM. *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1999) 316 pp.

In this book Robert Karris, a noted scripture scholar, addresses the Admonitions of St. Francis using the techniques he has formerly brought to bear on biblical texts. The result is exciting and instructive. Karris examines each of the twenty-eight Admonitions, analyzing their structure, scriptural citations and resonances, parallels in ancient and medieval sources, and relevance for today. He shows himself a true *scriba doctus* who brings forth old things and new from the richly furnished storehouse of his scholarship. His easy, conversational style ensures, however, that this scholarly work never becomes heavy or forbidding. Karris also looks at the entire series of admonitions as a whole, and sees in it two main sections, 1-16 and 17-28, which together form a "necklace" of pearls, the wisdom of "Abba Francis." The practical applications, often suggested by the author's seminar students, address contemporary issues in a fresh and original way. Karris has admirably achieved his stated ambition, that of replacing the image of "Francis of the birdbaths" with that of "Francis, our spiritual father and guide."

(From *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, May/Aug. 1999, General Curia, OFM, Rome.)

# IN SOLITUDE AND DIALOGUE:

## CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCANS THEOLOGIZE

Edited with an Introduction by Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

Contributors:

Gerald M. Dolan	<i>Words of Hope in Troubled Times</i>
Gabriele Ühlein	<i>Creation: A Franciscan Conversion Conversation</i>
Jane Kopas	<i>Mortal Diamond: The Body in Theological Anthropology</i>
Regis A. Duffy	<i>Contexts for a Franciscan Theology of the Eucharist</i>
John J. Burkhard	<i>Being a Person in the Church</i>
Xavier J. Seubert	<i>The Cross and Death of Jesus: A Franciscan Interpretation</i>
Joan Mueller	<i>Models of Evangelical Poverty: Eschatological Implications</i>

Price \$18.00. 208 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-167-0

# THE ADMONITIONS OF ST. FRANCIS:

## SOURCES AND MEANINGS

by Robert J. Karris, OFM

The author examines similarities between these writings of Francis and other spiritual writings of the Christian tradition. He looks at how Francis uses the Scriptures and how he adapts his spiritual legacy in creative ways. A new translation of each Admonition and a commentary on each verse, concluding with practical reflections.

Price \$28.00. 312+xxv pages paper.

ISBN 1-57659-166-2

# FRANCISCANS DOING THEOLOGY: AN INDEPENDENT STUDY

## PROGRAM TO ACCOMPANY THE HISTORY OF FRANCISCAN THEOLOGY

Resource prepared by Mary C. Gurley, OSF

This set of materials captures the content and the dynamics of the National Franciscan Forum held in Colorado Springs in June, 1997. It provides an in-depth focus on the major conference presentations and guides the users through the process used at the Forum. Presentations by: *Michael Blastie, Zachary Hayes, William Short, Margaret Guider, Kenan Osborne, Margaret Carney, Edward Coughlin, Anthony Carrozzo, OFM.* An excellent resource for ongoing formation.

Price \$70.00. 232 pages, loose-leaf format; five videos.

ISBN: 1-57659-165-4



# SPIRIT AND LIFE

Volumes 9 & 10

Two new issues

*Islam and Franciscanism: A Dialogue.* Ed. Daniel Dwyer, OFM, and Hugh Hines, OFM. Spirit and Life, Vol. 9, 2000. 120 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-169-7. \$10.00.

This volume deals with the tradition of dialogue between Islam and Franciscanism that has perdured since Francis met the Sultan.

Daniel Dwyer, Introduction

Imam Mohammad Bashir Arafat, "Islam and Christianity: Two Faiths and One God"

Fareed Munir, "Islam and Franciscanism: Prophet Mohammad of Arabia and St. Francis of Assisi in the Spirituality of Mission"

François Paquette, "Breaking Down the Walls of our Differences: Islamic-Christian Encounter through Prayer"

Thomas Mooren, "The Exodus Motif in Christianity and Islam"

Anselm Moons, "The Arrogance of Ownership"

*True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans.* Ed. Elise Saggau, OSF. Spirit and Life, Vol. 10, 2000. 175 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-171-9. \$14.00.

This volume presents issues arising from the tension between where the early friars should live and how they could be faithful to a prayerful life in fraternity. It looks at how the Order did, and still does, attempt to resolve, or at least live creatively, with this tension.

Michael F. Cusato, OFM, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan Locus in the World"

Michael F. Cusato, OFM, "Wall-to-Wall Ministry: Franciscan Ministry in the Cities of Thirteenth-Century Italy"

Keith Warner, OFM, "Pilgrims and Strangers: The Evangelical Spirituality of Itinerancy of the Early Franciscan Friars"





## franciscan study centre canterbury

An Assistant Director of Franciscan Studies is needed to work in an expanding Franciscan Studies department.

The Assistant would work in close connection with the Director in planning and developing Franciscan courses and the Franciscan Department.

The position also includes lecturing on Franciscan topics and some administrative work.

The international student body includes friars, sisters, secular Franciscans, and lay people.

Applications are invited now.



Applications/enquiries to be sent to:

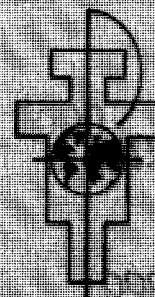
Director of Franciscan Studies  
Franciscan International Study Centre  
Giles lane

Canterbury, Kent  
UK CT2 7NA

Tel: +44 1227 769 349

Fax: +44 1227 786 648

Email: margaretmcgrathfmsj@yahoo.com



## FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

### THIRD ORDER REGULAR

OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

ANNOUNCES A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM

### THE CANTICLE OF CONVERSION: SINGING THE COSMIC SYMPHONY

*"Christ came to be the fullness of the universe when each person comes to be in the fullness of Christ. This is the vision of the Franciscan Vision."*

Rev. Father, OFM

#### Includes:

- Contemporary celebration of our changing universe through the Canticle of Creation.
- Reflection on our personal change-of-heart experiences.
- Presentation of the Franciscan tradition of conversion.
- Application of our existing movements in the present world.
- Quiet time to touch the mystery of God in our life stories.
- Appearance and dialog with a figure from our heritage.
- Integration of our individual and cosmic stories to bring the future to birth.
- Invitation to enter into the growing and transforming of the cosmos.

#### Program dates and places:

September 29-October 1, 2000—Franciscan Center, Aston, PA  
October 20-22, 2000—Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI  
November 17-19, 2000—Tan Center, Winona, MN  
February 9-11, 2001—Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, CO  
March 16-18, 2001—St. Joseph Center, Tiffin, OH  
April 27-29, 2001—Franciscan Center, Andover, MA  
May 4-6, 2001—Millvale Motherhouse, Pittsburgh, PA  
September 21-23, 2001—Holy Spirit Center, San Antonio, TX  
October 5-7, 2001—Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL  
November 2-4, 2001—Center of Renewal, Stella Niagara, NY  
November 30-December 2, 2001—Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC

Cost: \$225—Room, meals, program, materials (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Concessions: \$160—Program, material, meals (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

#### Contact:

The Franciscan Federation

Attn: Mission Ecology

PO Box 29080, Washington, DC 20017

Ph: 202-329-2314; fax: 202-529-7016

# *The Prayer of Francis and Clare*

*Sunday, August 27, 2000  
through Friday, September 1, 2000*

*At  
St. Francis Retreat Center  
Burlington, Wisconsin*

*This retreat is dedicated to examining  
the prayer experience of Francis and Clare and  
incorporating that experience into one's own life.  
Retreatants will be led through five approaches  
to Franciscan prayer facilitated by  
Andre Cirino, OFM,  
a contemporary Franciscan itinerant preacher.*

*A staff member of the Franciscan Pilgrimage  
Programs since 1984, Andre Cirino has conducted  
pilgrimages both to Assisi and to the California Missions.  
He and Josef Raischl, SFO, have jointly published  
an anthology on Franciscan Solitude, published in 1995  
by the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY.*

*For reservations or more information please contact:*

*St. Francis Retreat Center  
503 S. Browns Lake Drive  
Burlington, WI 53105  
262-763-3600 Fax: 262-763-4229  
e-mail: stfrancis@genevaonline.com*

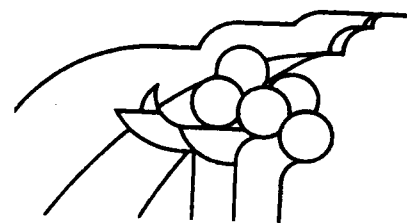
## **2000      FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM      2000**

**in  
Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats**

**All sessions in 2000 will be conducted  
for Franciscans in the Far East and Africa  
to celebrate the Millennium.**

A three-month ministerial and experiential program  
born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism  
enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach  
to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors,  
parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, mission-  
aries, community leadership, personal renewal.



*For more information contact:*

**Tom Speier, ofm; Marilyn Joyce, osf  
St. Francis Extension  
2014 Springdale Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45231  
Phone: (513) 825-0674 Fax: (513) 541-9347**

# Franciscan

## GERMAIN GRISEZ

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume III: Difficult Moral Questions*

In this **newest** volume, Grisez answers 200 practical, moral questions raised by the readers of the first two volumes.

ISBN 0981-5 927 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume II: Living A Christian Life*

Prof. Grisez deals with the specific questions that concern all or most Catholics.

ISBN 0961-0 950 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume I: Christian Moral Principles*

Treats the foundations of Christian morality.

ISBN 0861-4 971 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

**Buy all three volumes for \$90.00!**

### *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life*

Margaret Carney, ofc

A scholarly study of Clare's Rule.

ISBN 0962-9 261 p. (paper) \$12.95

### *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*

Ingrid Peterson, ofc

Drawing from historical, sociological, spiritual, theological, and ecclesiological backgrounds and specialists, Ingrid Peterson created the definitive biographical study of Clare of Assisi.

ISBN 0964-H 436 p. (cloth) \$23.50

### *A Dwelling Place for the Most High: Meditations with Francis of Assisi*

Fr. Thaddée Matura, ofm

Paul Lachance, ofm, trans.

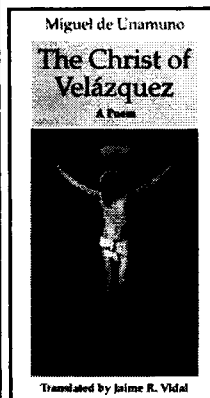
This work is a brief synthesis of a distinguished Franciscan scholar's thoughts on the life and example of the founder.

ISBN 0985-8 101 p. (paper) \$11.95

## NEW!

### *The Christ of Velázquez*

Miguel de Unamuno,  
Jaime Vidal, Ph.D.,  
trans.



Translated by Jaime R. Vidal

A classic of 20th century spirituality and a classic of Spanish literature, *The Christ of Velázquez* is a poetic meditation on Velázquez's painting of Christ Crucified by an outstanding figure of 20th century existentialist philosophy.

ISBN 0992-0 112 p. (hardcover) \$19.95

### *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion: A Commentary on St. Bonaventure's 'Breviloquium'*

Sister Paula Jean Miller, fse

A new and original study of St. Bonaventure's theology of marriage as it is expressed in his *Breviloquium*.

ISBN 0967-X 268 p. (paper) \$24.95

## NEW!

### *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*

Sr. Ilia Delio, ofc

This work examines the essential role of the crucified Christ in Bonaventure's mystical theology. Bonaventure advocated a type of mysticism that necessitated radical conformity to the suffering Christ.

ISBN 0988-2 268 p. (paper) \$15.95

# Press

Call or write for a  
free catalog.

## Francis in America



A Catalogue of Early Italian Paintings of St. Francis of Assisi in the United States and Canada

William R. Cook

ISBN 0984-X  
\$39.95

193 p. (hardcover)

50 full page illustrations/22 in color 8 1/2 x 11

### *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*

(2nd series, 2nd edition) John M. Huels, ofm, jcd

ISBN 0968-8 432 p. (paper) \$25.00

## Now in 2-volume paperback!

### *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources: Writings and Early Biographies*

Marion A. Habig, ofm, ed.

The classic English resource for primary texts on the life of St. Francis.

ISBN 0862-2 1665 p. (paper) \$35.00

### *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Russian Trinitarian Thought from Vladimir Solov'ev to Sergius Bulgakov*

Michael Aksionov Meerson

This monograph studies the emergence of the love paradigm in contemporary trinitarian doctrines, giving special emphasis to tracing this paradigm's development in modern Russian philosophy and theology. This paradigm explains the trine relationship of the Divine hypostases by the ontological love within God.

ISBN 0987-4 255 p. (paper) \$15.95

## SFO Resource Library

*SFO Resource Library, coordinated by Benet Fonck, is a complete reference library for members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Vol. V & VI are yet to be printed.*

**Vol. I: Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Assistants' Commentary Commission**

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0975-0 139 p. (paper) \$15.95

**Vol. II: Called to Rebuild the Church: A Spiritual Commentary on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order**

Lester Bach, ofm Cap.

ISBN 0976-9 206 p. (paper) \$16.95

**Vol. III: Called to Live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel**

Philip Marquard, ofm

ISBN 0977-7 1203 p. (paper) \$13.95

**Vol. IV: Called to Proclaim Christ**

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0982-3 60 p. (paper) \$12.95

For more information on these and  
FHP backlist titles write:

## Franciscan Press

Quincy University  
1800 College Avenue  
Quincy, IL 62301-2699

Telephone: 217-228-5570

Fax: 217-228-5572

Web site: [www.quincy.edu/fpress](http://www.quincy.edu/fpress)



# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation  
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix  
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor  
Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, and reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: franstor@genevaonline.com

\$16.50 per copy plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

## INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

A distance learning program  
responding to the desire of Secular Franciscans  
to learn more about their unique identity as Franciscans  
in the contemporary world.

*offered through:*



OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

*currently offering:*

FRAN 201 Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World  
FRAN 202 The Franciscans: A Family History  
FRAN 204 Franciscan Spirituality

*Currently in preparation:*

Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings  
Servant Leadership for Secular Franciscans  
The Franciscan Sources

*proposed courses include:*

Christian and Franciscan Tradition  
Writings of Francis of Assisi  
Franciscan Ministry: Challenge and Response  
Integrative Project

*For more information contact:*

Saint Francis College Office of Continuing Education  
Loretto, PA 15940-0600 ~ phone: (814) 472-3219 ~ e-mail: ICFL@SFCPA.EDU



## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events, 2000

### Sunday, July 30 - Saturday, August 5

**Franciscan Contemplative Prayer.** Retreat with Valerie Kilian, OSF, and Ramona Miller, OSF. \$350. At Tau Center. Contact: (see above).

### Monday, August 14 - Thursday, August 17

**Franciscan Federation Millenium Conference: Overflowing Goodness, The Gift of the Trinity.** With Maria Calisi, PhD, Margaret Carney, OSF, Joseph Chinnici, OFM. At Hyatt Regency Albuquerque, NM. Contact: (see ad p. 106).

### Monday, August 14 - Sunday, August 20

**Franciscan Directed Retreat.** With Clare D'Auria, OSF and Joseph Markalonis, TOR. \$300. At Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Pittsburgh. Contact: (see above).

### Sunday, August 27 - Friday, September 1

**The Prayer of Francis and Clare.** With André Cirino, OFM. At St. Francis Retreat Center, Burlington. Contact: St. Francis Retreat Center, 503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105; ph. 262-763-3600; fax: 262-763-4229; e-mail: stfrancis@genevaonline.com

### Friday, September 29 - Sunday, October 1

**The Canticle of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At the Franciscan Center, Aston, PA (see ad, p. 206).

### Friday, October 13 - Sunday, October 15

**The Prayer of Francis and Clare.** With André Cirino, OFM. At the Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston. Contact: 609 S. Convent Rd., Aston, PA, 19014; ph. 610-558-6152; e-mail: fsc@osfphila.org.

### Thursday, October 19 - Sunday, October 22

**The Franciscan Connection.** With Ingrid Peterson, OSF, and Diane Jamison, OSF. Sponsored by Franciscan Federation, Regions 4 and 5. At St. Joseph Center, Milwaukee. Contact: Rosemary Reier, OSF at 414-384-1515, ext. 5255.

### Friday, October 20 - Sunday, October 22

**The Canticle of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee (see ad p. 206).

ENDOWED WITH WISDOM AND EXCELLING IN HUMILITY,  
**CLARE** BRIGHT IN NAME, MORE BRILLIANT IN LIFE,  
MOST BRILLIANT IN CHARACTER (CEL 18).

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenBern	Blessing for Brother Bernard	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	Test	Testament
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	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 Commencium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

*The School of Franciscan Studies*

Courses for Fall, 2000  
August 28-December 13

Introduction to Franciscan Studies (LoGalbo)  
Franciscan Hagiographical Tradition (Blastic)  
Franciscan Pursuit of Wisdom (TBA)  
Order of Penance (Carney)  
Contemplation and Compassion in the Franciscan  
Tradition (Blastic)  
To Live the Gospel (Karris)  
Dynamics of Contemporary Franciscan Life (Carney)  
Franciscan Evangelical Life (Carney)  
Foundational Documents (Carney)  
Franciscan Spirituality (Blastic)

(These offerings are subject to change.)



The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Phone: 716-375-2105  
Fax: 716-375-2156

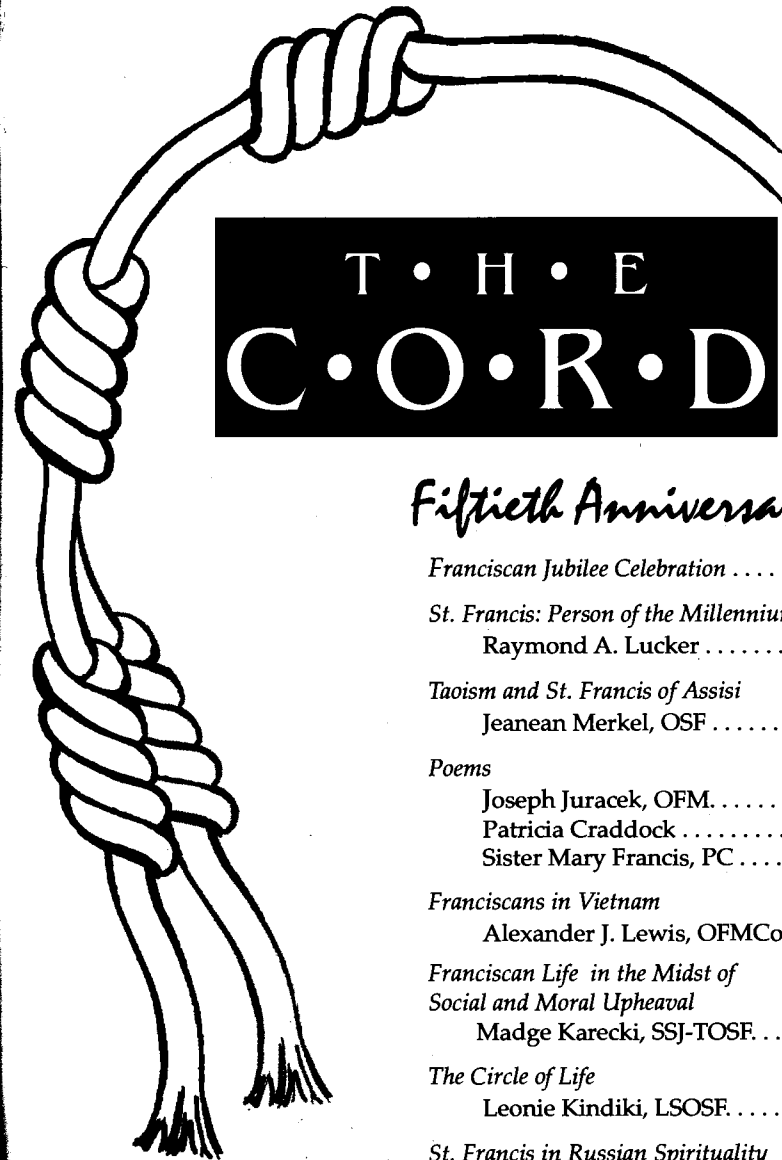
Courses may be taken for credit or audited. Specially-designed sabbatical activities are available during the fall term for students who wish to complement their academic study with more personal application.

The Cord  
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid  
at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:

PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR DESTROY THIS PERIODICAL  
Return Postage Guaranteed.



T • H • E  
C • O • R • D

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

<i>Franciscan Jubilee Celebration</i> .....	214
<i>St. Francis: Person of the Millennium</i>	
Raymond A. Lucker .....	215
<i>Taoism and St. Francis of Assisi</i>	
Jeanean Merkel, OSF .....	218
<i>Poems</i>	
Joseph Juracek, OFM. ....	228
Patricia Craddock .....	242
Sister Mary Francis, PC .....	247
<i>Franciscans in Vietnam</i>	
Alexander J. Lewis, OFMConv. ....	229
<i>Franciscan Life in the Midst of Social and Moral Upheaval</i>	
Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF. ....	236
<i>The Circle of Life</i>	
Leonie Kindiki, LSOSF. ....	240
<i>St. Francis in Russian Spirituality</i>	
Lyle Peyovich, OFMCap Gregory F. Smutko, OFMCap. ....	243
<i>Franciscans in Mindanao</i>	
Erwin Schoenstein, OFM .....	248
<i>About Our Contributors</i> .....	250
<i>On the Franciscan Circuit</i> .....	260



**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF

Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF

Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM

Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs

Production Assistant: Geoffrey Lee

Editorial Board: Mary C. Gurley, OSF, Patricia Hutchison, OSF,  
Robert Karris, OFM, Beth Lynn, OSC, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR,  
Joseph Wood, OFM Conv., Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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). (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2). (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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.5 (2000)

*Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

## Editorial

Almost the first Christian . . . to attempt to act [respectfully toward non-Christians] was Francis of Assisi. . . . [The] trip made by Francis to Egypt was more than an expression of personal interest or missionary zeal. It meant that a new spirit had come into the Christian world.<sup>1</sup>

In his earlier Rule (1221), Francis provided, for the first time in a religious rule, for his brothers to go "among the Saracens and other nonbelievers" (RegNB 16:3). For Francis, a "nonbeliever" was one who had not yet become acquainted with and embraced Jesus Christ as God's own self-revelation. Francis's approach to those who did not share his faith, however, was humble and reverent. He knew that they were also sincere believers in their own right and that their beliefs deserved his respect. He directs his brothers to live simply and openly as Christian among these "others" and "to be subject" to them. There is no hint of any sense of superiority, but rather a realization of one's own "littleness" among those of different religious backgrounds. By living simply, humbly, and peacefully as brothers to one another and to all with whom they came into contact, the friars would proclaim in persuasive ways that here was a new spirit to be reckoned with.

Today, Franciscan men and women live and serve on every continent among persons from a great variety of cultural and religious contexts. The missionary call of Jesus Christ rings in their ears: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15). It is echoed by the directive of Francis: "Live spiritually among [these others]; . . . be subject to [them]; . . . acknowledge that you are Christians. . . . Announce the Word of God, when [you] see it pleases the Lord, in order that [they] may believe in almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all" (RegNB 16:7).

In this issue, we look at a number of ways that Franciscans live and serve among peoples of a wide variety of cultures and even different faiths. The manner of serving is respectful, humble, and dialogical. The brothers and the sisters learn from others even as others learn from them and continue to carry on the "new spirit" that came into the world in the person of Francis of Assisi.

*Elise Saggau, OSF*

<sup>1</sup>Stephen C. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1971), 116.

## Franciscan Jubilee Celebration

### Rome, April 9, 2000

Excerpts from reflections given at the Franciscan Jubilee celebration held in Rome on April 9, 2000, and attended by 6,000 Franciscans.  
Included in a letter from Eleanor Granger, OSF,  
Franciscan Federation, April 2000.

An intense spiritual atmosphere marked the Jubilee of the great Franciscan family, which was held on Sunday, April 9, 2000, in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome. It included a concelebrated Mass presided over by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray. The celebration had begun on Saturday morning in Assisi with a pilgrimage on foot from St. Mary of the Angels to the Basilica of St. Francis.

The Pope wrote a message for the occasion, in which he refers to "the innumerable multitude that up until today has followed in Christ's footsteps by imitating Francis and Clare of Assisi. . . . It is the limpid testimony of the fruitfulness of their charism. They have offered the world the challenging proposal of their original evangelical experience. . . . It is more necessary than ever to remember and give credible testimony that God alone is the real wealth that fills our life with meaning. In him there is hope and profound joy, which the attractions and promises of the world cannot give."

Capuchin Raniero Cantalamessa, Papal Household preacher, said: "What defines the strength and contribution that the Franciscan Order can make to the Church and the world is the spiritual sap that circulates within it; spiritual sap means that Christ is at the center, as are prayer and supernatural and spiritual values. I think that altogether this Jubilee has helped to make this need the focus of our attention."

Cardinal Etchegaray defined the Franciscan spirit as the word "fraternity," which, he said, "is truly at this time at the heart of all our effort; also, Francis's poverty was imprinted on this spirit of fraternity. Francis did not want to own anything, because he knew that property divides, it pits some against others, creates conflict. We know of very thought-provoking episodes in this respect. Indeed, this man incarnated the spirit of the Bible, of the Gospel, in a way that only the Holy Spirit can inspire and we are well aware how the whole world today longs for this fraternity."

## St. Francis Person of the Millennium

Bishop Raymond A. Lucker

[This is a reprint of an article originally published in *The Prairie Catholic*, official newspaper for the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, in March, 2000, p. 2.  
Reprinted with permission.]

*Time* magazine recently conducted a national survey asking for nominations for the Person of the Century. It was looking for a person who for good or ill has had the greatest impact on the world during the last one hundred years. The names of Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, John Paul II, Mother Teresa, and even Stalin and Hitler were submitted. The magazine finally settled upon Albert Einstein.

That set me to thinking that this is not only the end of a century but the closing of a millennium. Indeed as we celebrate the Jubilee Year we look back on two thousand years since the birth of Christ. We give thanks for God's presence among us in Christ Jesus. We recall how Christians have responded to the Lord's invitation to be his disciples in bringing God's love, justice, and peace into every aspect of our lives and our society. We are also invited by our Holy Father to ask forgiveness for the sins and failures we have committed as individuals and as an institution made up of ordinary human beings.

As I recalled all of that, I wondered who might have had the most effect on the world for good during the last thousand years. I immediately thought about St. Francis of Assisi who has been called "the most Christ-like person since Christ."

Francis, son of a rich merchant, had a promising career ahead of him in the military and in business. He heard the voice of Jesus from the cross of San Damiano saying, "Francis, go repair my house which is falling in ruins." He gave his money to the poor and literally began rebuilding a little chapel in Assisi. It was only after a period of time that he heard a second call through the gospel of St. Matthew to go from town to town proclaiming the good news of the reign of God. He heard Jesus saying to him "heal the sick," "comfort the

poor," "be my hands and feet," "rebuild my Church which is a living body of Christ."

Immediately people flocked to him and followed him in his call to follow the nonviolent Christ, to work for peace and justice, to live in poverty, and to value all of creation. In a short time hundreds of thousands were following him, working for the renewal and reform of the Church, especially within the hearts and souls of the faithful. In the last thousand years, millions of people have been affected by his teaching and example—great leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day. It is strange that we so easily forget the very center of the message of Jesus. We begin to work on just the externals of Christian living as Francis himself did at first when he thought that Jesus was calling him to repair church buildings.

As we begin a new millennium there is nothing more important than really hearing the message given to St. Francis: "Repair my house which is falling in ruins." That means that the Church has to be renewed from within. We are all members of the body of Christ and we will be ineffective if our relationship to Jesus is weak. Our prayer is always: "Lord, I believe. But help my lack of confidence. Send me your Spirit so that with the power of the Spirit I may witness to you in all I am and all I do. Help me to make you present in every structure and every institution of society."

For me one of the most significant statements of the last thousand years is: "The Church is always in need of reformation and renewal." This was the message of St. Francis and it was a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

We are called to follow Jesus in all aspects of human life from conception to natural death. We are to be committed to a nonviolent way of life following the example of Jesus who said "love one another as I have loved you," "forgive one another," "if someone strikes you on the face, turn the other cheek," "go the extra mile," "if someone takes your coat, give them your shirt as well." We see so much violence in our society against unborn children, against people of different races or ethnic backgrounds, against women, against people with different sexual orientation. We use violence to solve conflicts between nations and to settle disputes with our neighbors. Violence has so entered into domestic life and into every aspect of our society that we almost take it as normal.

St. Francis tried literally to follow the gospel, to go from village to village and town to town preaching the kingdom of God, proclaiming "peace be to this house," giving everything he had to the poor, bathing and caring for lepers, and living on the good will of others by begging. His life was one of living the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount.

Our diocesan celebration of the Jubilee this first year of the new millennium makes use of RENEW 2000 as our vehicle of rebuilding the Church. Each one of us is called to conversion and a renewal of our faith. We are all

invited to participate in small faith-sharing groups where we read the scriptures, pray together, and share how the loving God has touched our hearts.

That is what Jesus meant by building the kingdom. He started out alone, then chose disciples and sent them two by two to proclaim "the kingdom of God is at hand," "reform your lives," "listen to the Good News." Along with that he healed the sick, cured the paralyzed, gave comfort to the widow, cleansed the leper. St. Francis did these things, too.

The movement of Christianity has had its ups and downs throughout the last two thousand years. It was in great need of repair during the early thirteenth century when Jesus spoke to Francis from the cross. The Franciscan movement and that of St. Dominic and other Church reformers, including theologians and mystics, led millions of people to what has been called the "Age of Faith." We need only to look around and discern the "sign of the times" and see that again we are called to rebuild the Church, a reform that begins in the heart of each of the believers.

Yes, Francis of Assisi has my vote as the person of the millennium!

---

### Guidelines for Poetry Submitted to *The Cord*

*The Cord* is a Franciscan spiritual review published for English-speaking Franciscans and those associated with or interested in the movement. Its purpose is to spread knowledge and appreciation of the Franciscan spiritual tradition as well as to present testimony on the way in which Franciscan life is being lived and experienced in our own times. Poetry published in *The Cord* should reflect this purpose. It should have the following characteristics:

- |                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) originality | 3) a Franciscan theme         |
| 2) creativity  | 4) a sense of unity           |
|                | 5) content, form, and purpose |

A poem may be rhyming or free verse. It should not be longer than 25 lines and must not have been previously published. It must not be submitted to another publication at the same time as it is under consideration by *The Cord*. Each poem must be typed, double-spaced, on a separate sheet of paper with your name and address typed on the right hand side near the top.

We will try to send a response within six weeks. Poems will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please keep a copy of your poem in case of loss or damage. Poetry critiques will not be given. A published poet will receive two free copies of the issue in which his or her poem appears.

All poetry should be submitted to:

Poetry Editor, *The Cord*  
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

## Taoism and St. Francis of Assisi

Jeannean Merkel, OSF

While separated by continents, cultures, religious traditions, and more than a millennia and a half, two significant religious figures can nonetheless be compared by their core values which continue to inspire seekers today. The religious figures are the Taoist, Lao Tzu, (fifth century, BCE) and the Catholic saint, Francis of Assisi (twelfth century, CE). The core concepts that cross East-West boundaries, transcend time, and bring together the thinking of a Chinese philosopher and an Italian Christian mendicant are self-effacement, a description of an unconventional way of life in opposition to prevailing societal values, the lifting up of one "Way" over all others, weakness overcoming strength, the value of simplicity, and presenting nature as part of understanding God's/the Way's fulfillment.

These comparisons are not without corresponding contrasts, which will also be addressed in this paper: Francis's definition of the Way of Christ as opposed to Lao Tzu's refusal to put any limitations, even a name, on the Way; individual vs. communal approaches to achieving the Way; and a difference in the understanding of *how* the Way should be achieved—non-action vs. service.

Notwithstanding the significance of these contrasts, this paper will attempt to examine two visionaries who define a Way strikingly different from their worlds at war. They are consonant in their call to a necessary conversion or change of heart in order to embrace the Way, and they offer compelling personal examples of recognizing the divine in the natural world.

### Self-Effacement

A primary message in Lao Tzu's *Tao Tè Ching*<sup>1</sup> is that one does not seek "fame and fortune." In being a seeker of the Way, one will be fulfilled beyond all expectations. In discussing the Way, he notes that "It is because it never

attempts itself to be great that it succeeds in becoming great" (XXXIV, 76b).

Lao Tzu's sage "avoids excess, extravagance, and arrogance" (XXIX, 68) and in that way reflects the Way itself. The paradoxical nature of the Way, according to Lao Tzu, is that what most people think of as small can really be great in a larger scheme if it does not *seek* to be great. "For ever free of desire, it can be called small; yet, as it lays no claim to being master when the myriad creatures turn to it, it can be called great" (XXXIV, 76a). So, for Lao Tzu, if one is small in the essential elements of the Way—desires, greed, pride, and so forth—one might achieve greatness.

Just as Lao Tzu thought that "to be overbearing when one has wealth and position is to bring calamity upon oneself" (IX, 23), the lexicon used in the writings of St. Francis of Assisi<sup>2</sup> is full of warnings against self-aggrandizement. In fact, he refers to his followers as "lesser brothers" and "useless servants" (RegNB 23:7).

Francis reminds his brothers that "through our own fault we are rotten, miserable, and opposed to good" (RegNB 22:6). Rather than serving as a means of punishment, these admonitions reflect Francis's conviction that "All the brothers should strive to follow the humility and the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB 9:1).

Francis's insistence on humility and minority come out of his reading of the Gospels and the example of Christ. In his community life, Francis designated that "no one should be called Prior, but all generally should be called Friars Minor" (RegNB 6:3), for it was Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples, not the disciples who performed that service for the master.

Francis referred to himself, as well, in terms that reminded him of his inadequacy. He was "a useless man and unworthy creature of the Lord God" (EpOrd 47). In a letter to mayors, magistrates, and rulers throughout the world, he calls himself "your little and despicable servant in the Lord God" (EpRect 1). He warns the leaders that unless they acknowledge God or a higher power, they may suffer in another world. "And the wiser and more powerful they may have been in this world, so much greater will be the punishments they will endure in hell" (EpRect 5).

### An Unconventional Way of Life

"The whole world recognizes the beautiful as the beautiful, yet this is only the ugly," says Lao Tzu. "The whole world recognizes the good as the good, yet this is only the bad" (II, 4). The Way that Lao Tzu presents in the *Tao Tè Ching* is not something obvious nor readily achievable. It is countercultural, and the follower must work at finding the path and continuing on it.

Like his description of a sage, "he who was well versed in the way" (XV), Lao Tzu presents the *tao* as "worn and yet newly made" (XV). This is not so

nonsensical as it sounds at first reading. The well-versed sage will constantly find a new insight into how to live the Way. And, because the Way is illimitable and not definable in human categories, it is ever new. That the Way, or the *tao*, is illimitable is addressed throughout the *Tao Tè Ching*. Its "way is broad, reaching left as well as right" (XXXIV, 76). In the *Tao Tè Ching*, Lao Tzu describes the Way in the negative, since that will not put limitations on what it *can* be:

Its upper part is not dazzling;  
Its lower part is not obscure.  
Dimly visible, it cannot be named  
And returns to that which is without substance (XIV, 33).

While in some instances St. Francis is much more definite about what Christ requires of his followers, he, too, claims that it is impossible to describe Christ. This "Savior of all who believe in Him," is:

Without beginning and without end  
unchangeable, invisible,  
indescribable, ineffable,  
incomprehensible, unfathomable . . . (RegNB 23:11).

The first line of the *Tao Tè Ching* illustrates the importance of submission to the natural life cycle. "The way that can be spoken of is not the constant way" (I, 1). Only submission to change, constant transformation, yet without force, guarantees life. "The reason why heaven and earth can be enduring is that they do not give themselves life. Hence they are able to be long-lived" (VII, 18), encompassing all of life in a great cycle of being "too profound to be known" (XV, 35). "Bowed down then preserved" (XXII, 50, 50d) is the Way. The flow of the language describes how waves wash upon the shore:

Being great, it [the Tao] is further described as receding,  
Receding, it is described as far away,  
Being far away, it is described as turning back (XXV, 56a).

So we have in both the language and form of the *Tao Tè Ching* complementary ways of transmitting the great lesson: The Way can only be achieved by conforming oneself to the natural cycle of life, submitting one's personal will to natural forces so that greatness will be achieved:

Man models himself on earth,  
Earth on heaven,  
Heaven on the way,  
And the way on that which is naturally so (XXV, 58).

Natural relationships also figure in the analogies Francis makes in writing to the faithful, those who seek to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, Francis speaks in imagery that his audience would understand:

We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father Who is in heaven. We are mothers, when we carry him in our heart and body . . . and when we give birth to him through His holy manner of working (1EpFid: 1:8-10).

## One "Way" Over All Others

Lao Tzu, in the *Tao Tè Ching*, insists that the idea of the *tao* as "nothing" is the only adequate description of that which is illimitable. Indeed, the *tao* presented here is cosmological, encompassing all physical and spiritual life. Even Heaven models itself on the way (XXV, 58). Only "dimly visible, it cannot be named" (XIV, 33).

Unlike the Confucian understanding of the *tao* as a path that could be defined by specific rites and relationships, Lao Tzu's *tao* cannot be limited by words nor understood in human terms. It has some of the natural, maternal, nurturing qualities of *Hsing*, which Yang Chu and Mencius raised to the philosophical level. But as Lao Tzu describes *tao*, it is the natural way of things, rather than a specific way of thinking about nature.

Still, in the *Tao Tè Ching*, Lao Tzu shows his followers how natural it is to follow the way. He invites the reader to become that newborn baby, the uncarved block, to empty him or herself, to fall apart, "like thawing ice" (XV, 35) in order to be, like the Way, "worn and yet newly made" (XV, 36). So, one might interpret this as being the only way to achieve fulfillment.

Similarly, St. Francis of Assisi repeats a mantra throughout his writings—we, as followers of Christ's way, are to "love the Lord God with all our heart, all our soul, with all our mind and all our strength (cf. Mk. 12:30)" (RegNB 23:8). Just as for Lao Tzu the One is the creator of all, St. Francis believes that the Lord God "has given and gives to each one of us our whole body, our whole soul, and our whole life" (RegNB 23:8). And so, it is inconceivable to Francis that one would not give back "every effort, every affection, every emotion, every desire, and every wish" (RegNB 23:8).

The follower of the way, according to Francis, will be "inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and inflamed by the Holy Spirit" (EpOrd 51) in order to follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ. Francis himself sought only to follow the example of Jesus. After his conversion to following Jesus, Francis prayed at the foot of a crucifix in the Church of San Damiano:

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).

## Weakness Overcoming Strength

"The submissive and weak will overcome the hard and strong," according to Lao Tzu (XXXVI, 79a). This theme, repeated throughout the *Tao Te Ching*, offers another paradox for the follower of the Way. The Way of the sage is "bountiful and does not contend," Lao Tzu writes (LXXXI, 196). This key Taoist paradox is illustrated in many situations. The Way is not aggressive, contentious, nor forceful, yet it is powerful. Like water, the way is submissive and weak. "Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it" (LXXVIII, 186).

In Lao Tzu's philosophy, strength and hardness are not beneficial qualities. "A man is supple and weak when living, but hard and stiff when dead" (LXXVI, 182). It is clearly better to be flexible, even weak, so that one is less likely to break. Boldness and aggression can lead to death, but "He who is fearless in being timid will stay alive" (LXXIII, 177).

In his advice to rulers, Lao Tzu lectures them not to "press down" on the people so that they "will not weary of the burden" (LXXII, 175). The softer and more flexible the ruler, the more willing the people to be subjects. And in dealing with other nations, "There is no disaster greater than taking on an enemy too easily" (LXIX, 169). Instead, it is the "soft" side, the one that is "sorrow-stricken," that wins. And in Chapter LXVII, Lao Tzu lists his three treasures as compassion, frugality, and not daring to take the lead.

St. Francis reminds his brothers that, in surrendering themselves to following Christ's way, "they must make themselves vulnerable to their enemies, both visible and invisible." (RegNB 16:10). As with most of his writing, this notion comes from his study of the Gospels. Basing this belief on the Gospel of Luke, Francis reiterates that "Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk. 9:24).

In his Rule, St. Francis writes that the brothers are not to "slander or engage in disputes" (RegNB 11:1) nor are they to quarrel among themselves or with others. They are to welcome all visitors, "friend or foe, thief or robber" (RegNB 7:14) with kindness and greet one another "wholeheartedly and lovingly."

In a blessing that is repeated throughout Franciscan Orders to this day, Francis's focus on peacemaking is evident:

May the Lord bless you and keep you;  
 May He show His face to you and be merciful to you.  
 May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace  
 (BenLeo, 1-2).

## The Value of Simplicity

Lao Tzu's picture of the Taoist hermit who turns away from the world in order to strip down to the essentials is mirrored in the conversion of Francis Bernardone from a wealthy young soldier to the poor mendicant we know as St. Francis of Assisi. Francis's conversion began with a forced withdrawal, an illness that isolated him from his high-spirited companions. This was his removal to the mountaintop. Influenced by his religious mother, he began to see the uselessness of war and the selfishness of wealth.

In Chapter XIX of the *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu says: "Exhibit the unadorned and embrace the uncarved block" (43a). Further, he says, "Have little thought of self and as few desires as possible" (43a). Francis of Assisi certainly embraced poverty of material goods as well as desires. When he left his home, he stripped himself of all clothing (a bold statement for the son of a Florentine cloth merchant) to stand before the bishop, giving up everything he had. According to one biographer, he "hastened with great joy to do what was demanded of him" (1Cel 6:14).<sup>3</sup>

"When the brothers go about through the world, they should carry *nothing* for the journey," Francis requires (RegNB 14:1). They are not to carry nor receive money for any reason. Instead, they should rely on the generosity of the people they visit. Rather than seeking to acquire goods, the brothers "should give to all who ask, and if anyone takes what is theirs, they should not demand that it be returned" (RegNB 14:6).

Simplicity, in the Franciscan vision, is really more the basis of a way of life than simply a value to be measured. It is expressed in the first chapter of the first "Rule of Life" that Francis wrote for his followers. "The rule and life of these brothers is this: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB 1:1).

Francis accepts that learning can be beneficial so long as it does not overtake the prayers and devotions of the followers. In a letter to St. Anthony of Padua, who joined the Franciscan Order in about 1220 as a teacher, Francis tells him: "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" (EpAnt 2).



## In Praise of Nature

Both Lao Tzu and St. Francis write eloquently about how the natural world can be seen as part of the "religious experience." In poetic language, they raise up elements of nature that can be seen as ways of praising what is beyond human understanding. In Lao Tzu's language, that is the "One"; for St. Francis, it is God.

Lao Tzu uses natural imagery to help explain the qualities of the Way:

Heaven in virtue of the One is limpid;  
Earth in virtue of the One is settled;  
Gods in virtue of the One have their potencies;  
The valley in virtue of the One is full;  
The myriad creatures in virtue of the One are alive;  
Lords and princes in virtue of the One become leaders  
in the empire (XXXIX, 85).

For St. Francis of Assisi, the creatures of the earth can be models for human beings in service, understanding, and proper relationship to God. While "He created you and formed you to the image of His beloved Son [in other words as an incarnation of God's divine nature], . . . all the creatures under heaven, each according to its nature, serve, know and obey their Creator better than you" (Adm 5:1-2).

Francis uses natural imagery and, in fact, seems to become one with—related to—the wonders of creation in order to acknowledge the interconnection of creature and creator and to express a relationship between the two that rivals that of immediate family:

Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,  
Who is the day and through whom you give us light.  
And he . . . bears a likeness of You, Most High One.  
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon  
and the stars,  
in heaven You formed them clear and precious  
and beautiful (CantSol 3-5).

After praising Brother Wind, Sister Water, and Brother Fire, St. Francis ends his list of the creatures and elements with praise to:

Sister Mother Earth,  
who sustains and governs us,  
and who produces varied fruits  
and colored flowers and herbs (CantSol 9).

## Wu-Wei vs. a Franciscan Ethic of Service

In *doing* one runs the risk of causing harm, possibly going against the Way: "That which goes against the way will come to an early end" (XXX, 70). And, "whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it" (XXIX, 66). In another image: "Turning back is how the way moves" (XL, 88). So, for Lao Tzu, the Way is not a linear path with mileage posts and street signs to direct one on the journey.

The cyclical nature of the Way, as Lao Tzu describes it, means that there is not a discernible onset, a definable middle, nor necessarily a clear end. "That is why I know the benefit of resorting to no action," says Lao Tzu (XLII, 99). The rules of physics don't apply to the ineffable. Its genius is that, through seeming inaction, the Way is achieved.

St. Francis, in contrast, might perceive this as idleness, a vice and "the enemy of the soul" (RegNB 7:11). "All the brothers should always be intent on good works [for] . . . the servants of God must always give themselves totally to prayer or to some good work" (RegNB 7:10).

## The Way vs. the Way of Christ

The end reasons for following the Way, which Lao Tzu expresses in the *Tao Tê Ching*, are endurance, acceptance, and conformity to nature. "If even heaven and earth cannot go on for ever, much less can man," he notes. "That is why one follows the way" (XXIII, 51a). The secret is to find fulfillment in the present in order to endure. "Know contentment and you will suffer no disgrace; know when to stop and you will meet with no danger. You can then endure" (XLIV, 100). And again, the man who knows contentment and who perseveres in purpose, will endure (XXXIII, 75).

Finding the Way is a different process from that of learning, according to Lao Tzu. While the person pursuing learning knows more every day, "in the pursuit of the way one does less every day" (XLVIII, 108). He seems to be saying that in not seeking the Way, one will discover it. "One does less and less; until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all there is nothing that is undone" (XLVIII, 108).

Still, in Lao Tzu's thought, "beautiful deeds can raise a man above others" (LXII, 144). And, there is a form of the golden rule in the *Tao Tê Ching*: "Those who are good I treat as good. Those who are not good I also treat as good" (XLIX, 111). In so doing, Lao Tzu's sage gains in goodness himself. In the same way, the sage gains in good faith by having faith in those who possess good faith as well as those who do not.

For Francis of Assisi, the way is following the example of Jesus Christ, and the end result is to find a place at Jesus' right hand in heaven. All one's actions

in this life matter because of the reward to come in the next life, not because of any reward in this life. "The Lord Jesus says to His disciples, *I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me,*" Francis writes (Adm 1:1).

In order for his Rule of Life to be accepted by the pope, Francis professed his obedience and reverence to the Catholic Church, to the pope, and to the pope's successors. This Rule adheres, then, to the Magisterium and beliefs of the Church. Representative of such beliefs is Francis's promotion of the idea that those are condemned who do not believe in the Trinity of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Those "who do not believe according to the Spirit and the Godhead . . . are condemned" (Adm 1:9). In Francis's writings, it seems essential that all recognize priests as the transmitters of the Eucharist, which Catholics believe is transformed in the Mass into the body and blood of Christ, and accept the primacy of the Spirit through which understanding of God is accessible.

### Individual vs. Communal Commitment

In the language of the *Tao Tê Ching* there is an inherent bias toward the individual. "All return to their separate roots," writes Lao Tzu. "Returning to one's roots is known as stillness. This is what is meant by returning to one's destiny" (XVI, 37). All knowledge of the Way, Lao Tzu believes, arises from individual interpretation. Acting on this interpretation "will lead to impartiality, impartiality to kingliness, kingliness to heaven, heaven to the way" (XVI, 38).

There is knowledge and experience that is not for the common person, according to Lao Tzu. "The teaching that uses no words, the benefit of resorting to no action, these are beyond the understanding of all but a very few in the world" (XLII, 99). The reward for decoding the path from earth-bound knowledge to heaven to the Way, is that "at the end of one's days one will meet with no danger" (XVI, 38).

In contrast, Francis of Assisi encourages his followers to put themselves into unknown situations, even if dangerous, in order to achieve their reward in the kingdom of the afterlife. In Francis's thought, expressed in his writings, there is a focus on the service the brothers are to provide to their neighbors and even to their enemies. The purpose of the life is to be for one another and to spread the good news. It is not for individual understanding and greater knowledge of God. The faithful, the followers of the way, are to be "in the service of [the Lord's] love and of nothing else" (ExpPat 5). That service is to be expressed through "love [of] our neighbors as ourselves, by drawing them all with our whole strength to Your love" (ExpPat 5).

In his Rule, Francis includes numerous passages detailing how the brothers are to interact with each other, that they are to be equals and to serve one another. They are to take care of those who are sick and to make decisions about their life together at an annual meeting called a chapter. The brothers are to pray together daily and to assist each other in living out the Rule to which they have committed themselves.

In his discussion of the sage, Lao Tzu does include some sense of acting on behalf of the common good. The sage, "always excels in saving people, and so abandons no one," Lao Tzu says (XXVII, 61). There is an interaction between people and even good and bad provide models for each other. "Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from; and the bad man is the material the good works on" (XXVII, 62).

Lao Tzu also uses the image of tree and root to show the relationship of people to each other. The "superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base," he writes (XXXIX, 86). He frowns upon the lords and princes who refer to themselves as solitary. "There are no words which men detest more than 'solitary,' 'desolate,' and 'hapless,'" he says (XLII, 95).

### Conclusion

In Lao Tzu's thought, one cannot be proud and still endure, and, as this paper has suggested, endurance is the purpose for following the Way. "He who brags will have no merit; He who boasts will not endure" (XXIV, 55). The things of this world are not necessary to the follower of the Way. "He who has the way does not abide in them," according to Lao Tzu (XXIV, 55a).

Lao Tzu's Tao is cosmological. St. Francis, too, had a cosmological view of God. His idea of nature is expressed in the Cantic of Creation. Both Lao Tzu and Francis saw themselves as part of a dynamic, ever-changing world.

St. Francis was responding to a culture at war and a Church in "ruins" because of extravagance. His message of simplicity and peace was countercultural. This is in the pattern of Taoism, which was responding to the strictures of a society too tightly bound in ritual and of rulers who argued among themselves. In both Lao Tzu's writing and in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, there is an urgency to get back to the essence, to be genuine. And while they promulgated different "creeds," they are consonant in their fresh interpretation of traditional texts and in their unconventional approach to achieving a life in union with the One Way. After studying the writings of both Lao Tzu and St. Francis of Assisi, the reader can only conclude that what we so often experience as "murky" and "ineffable" is much clearer for their efforts at illumination.

<sup>1</sup>All references to the writings of Lao Tzu are taken from *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, translated by D.C. Lau (Penguin Books, 1963).

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted all references to the writings of Francis are taken from *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., and Ignatius C. Brady, OFM (Paulist Press, 1982).

<sup>3</sup>References to early biographical sources are from *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*, ed. Marion A. Habig (Franciscan Herald Press, 1985).



Robert Pawell, OFM

### a prayer to st. francis

Naked you stood up  
to your father  
following a voice  
in your head  
setting off on a journey  
to rebuild churches.

Naked you stood in  
the pure snow  
following a conviction  
in your heart  
setting all pleasure free  
except Yours.

Naked I stand  
before you  
following your voice  
in my head  
setting off in my world  
your spirit.

### TWO POEMS

by Joseph Juracek, OFM

### oh hugger of lepers

howling  
wolves, howling  
deus meus  
eavesdropped the moon  
et omnia

a hugged leper bandages a leprous world

his wounded hands impart the stigmata upon all creation

illuminating the illuminator

chirping  
birds, like an earnest concerto  
pax  
to all that breathe  
et bonum

## Franciscans in Vietnam: Faithful Sons and Daughters

Alexander J. Lewis, OFM Conv.\*

This article is dedicated to Anthony Pham, OFM Conv. who lived the Gospel every day and who entered eternal life on August 16, 1999.

It is Christmas in Vietnam 1998. I am traveling through the countryside in the south as I begin writing this narration. I catch a glimpse of the landscape: fertile rice paddies, green fields of land and water, and common country folk nurturing the earth. An elderly friar in the van notices my contemplation of the countryside and leans over to share with me the Vietnamese word for country, *dat nuoc*, which literally means land water.

There are legends which talk about the birth of this country. One story conveys the marriage which took place between the Fairy *Au Co* and the Dragon King *Lac Long* which created a union between the land and the sea. This relationship between the land and the water is evident everywhere in Vietnam. The people depend on the land and the water to give them their daily sustenance. Mostly the water is a friend. Sometime, however, it is a foe. Only three weeks ago there were heavy storms which caused great destruction in several parts of the country. Travelers to Vietnam do not drink the polluted water or use the ice for fear of getting sick. *Dat nuoc* reminds us of the *yin* and the *yang*. It is often the chaotic and challenging experiences of life which bring with them the potential for growth and harmony. Or at least, that is the hope.

The legendary and romantic visions of picturesque landscapes in Vietnam disguise for only a brief moment the suffering of a people who have endured the hardships of warfare and the present reality of poverty experienced by ninety percent of the population. It is the common folk of Vietnam who have understood well the sensitive balance of *dat nuoc* and the *yin* and *yang* of life.

\*The author and editor apologize that the Vietnamese diacritical marks are missing.

The Vietnam War is referred to here as "the event." Today it is clear that the country still does not have a solid infrastructure. There is widespread economic corruption within the country which does not allow financial prosperity to reach the poor.

Reminders of "Agent Orange" still exist with two and a half million acres of forest still suffering from defoliation and a high rate of birth defects in the Vietnamese population. Add to this the vast deforestation which takes place each year for the sake of the immediate needs people have for firewood and land for agriculture. One fourth of the timber cut down each year is never reforested. Deforestation and pollution in Vietnam present an ecological disaster. It receives little attention, however, since the daily priority is subsistence living.

It is difficult to be concerned about the environment when much of the population worries about where the next meal is coming from. The past always teaches us that it is the common folk who suffer most in the wars perpetrated by conflicting ideologies which often have nothing to do with peace and justice but only indicate an obsession with power.

Today Vietnam is a country of about seventy-six million people. Since the government's initiation of *doi moi* (open door) policy, Vietnam walks a tight-rope between the government's relaxation of control and its constant need for control at one and the same time. On the one hand, the government is opening the country's doors to increased free enterprise, less centralization, and more investment from other countries. On the other hand, the government keeps a suspicious eye on all activities. Even mail is subject to confiscation if the authorities do not think an item should enter the country. It is a confusing paradox. The Church is among those highly scrutinized by the government. Ten percent of the population is Roman Catholic, which makes the Church by far the largest religious body outside the traditional beliefs of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. It is truly marvelous to experience the Catholic community of this country operating under the constraints of the government. Wherever there are Catholics in Vietnam, there is a great deal of joy and devotion.

I had never dreamed of going to Vietnam. In June 1997, our Province Chapter appointed me prefect of formation for our Province. I quickly became aware of the steady flow of Vietnamese students entering our formation program. All of them had been born in Vietnam. Some of them were among the "boat people" who had fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Of the two and a half million Vietnamese people who now live outside Vietnam, half live in the United States. It is no secret that California has an abundant population of Vietnamese people. Many of them are Roman Catholics and are a vibrant part of ecclesial life.

Some of the Vietnamese friars and postulants of our Province hope to return to their homeland one day to work among their people. While this is not possible at the present time, given the delicate balance of the relationship between the Church and the State in Vietnam, they look to this as a future possibility.

And so it happened that three of our Vietnamese students and I visited Vietnam during the Christmas break in 1998. All three men have siblings and extended family living in Vietnam. They had not seen these family members for ten years. Our arrival at the airport in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) was an encounter filled with deep emotion. You can imagine what it is like not to see a brother or sister for many years and then, all of a sudden, to be back in one's homeland.

As I encountered the countryside on Christmas day, I felt compelled to share with others how the Church and the Franciscan community are very much alive in Vietnam in a constant balancing act with government officials. It is a balancing act they have learned to do well. In particular, I want to share the vibrancy of our Franciscan brothers and sisters in Vietnam, who live daily a tense existence in a socialist country. That they have not only survived but grown in numbers through the turmoil is a living witness of what incredible human beings these Franciscan men and women are. Above all, the Vietnamese Franciscans are a prayerful community who work closely with the poorest of the poor. They are a close-knit family. They are people who exhibit strong evangelical convictions. They live the Gospel.

As I write these words, I am constantly aware of the sensitive climate in which our Franciscan brothers and sisters live in Vietnam. They have learned how to walk in the midst of the tension and still be effective in their ministerial settings. And so I write with prudence since I do not want to publish anything which might hurt the delicate balance the Franciscans encounter there. I want to respect the boundaries they have established in their current relationship with the government. Having been blessed with a sacred experience in Vietnam, I want to share it with other Franciscan brothers and sisters in a way that allows us to pray and to support the Church and the Franciscans there. I encourage all of us to understand the sociological reality Franciscans live with in that troubled country and to experience great joy in knowing that we have members of our Franciscan family living in that part of the world who daily dedicate their lives for the sake of the Gospel.

Including the pre-novitiate students, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) have one hundred and fifty-six sisters in twelve locations in Vietnam. Their ministries include a lot of social work. This is a particular way of gaining acceptance from the government, which shows more interest in religious communities who can offer social services. The FMMs work among two ethnic

minorities, lepers, street children, and young people who are blind. They operate at least twelve government-recognized schools for young people who have been displaced in society and would otherwise not receive special attention educationally. The FMMs call these programs "Love Schools." Their goal is to help educate illiterate young people before it is too late for them to find their way in society. In addition, the FMMs operate free medical dispensaries which are recognized by the government. The sisters see these dispensaries as a way of helping the poorest of the poor enter into the medical system which otherwise would not be available to them.

The Friars Minor number one hundred and forty-four, including the novices. They have seventeen postulants. Altogether, there are eighteen friaries. I had the opportunity to visit several of their houses. Everywhere I was treated with the greatest hospitality, and I found in the friars very patient teachers as I spent a great deal of the time studying the language. Their joy and humor were wonderful to behold. In truth, I found Franciscan men and women in Vietnam to exhibit a joyfulness and laughter that was very contagious. The friars, like the FMMs, are involved in a lot of social work. They are also responsible for continuing to build many churches. This seems very Franciscan to me—building places of worship and building up the community of believers. I attended a Mass in which a new Franciscan church was blessed by the local bishop. Over fifteen hundred people attended the celebration. In addition, the friars are involved in HIV/AIDS ministry, as well as farming, teaching theology and philosophy in the major seminary, working with lepers, street children, the Secular Franciscan Order, and Franciscan Youth. Formation ministry is a priority in Vietnam because there are so many students at this time. They are studying a variety of subjects (including architecture, sociology, electrical engineering, medicine, psychology, language, computer skills, philosophy, theology, and music) as they prepare for a future in which they can more comprehensively serve the needs of the Church and the poor. Like the FMMs, the friars have learned how to provide social services which the government finds acceptable.

On Christmas eve I visited a Poor Clare monastery just outside Saigon. These are the only Poor Clares in the country. The community numbers around thirty nuns of a variety of ages. As I struggled during Mass to work my way through a section of the Eucharistic prayer in Vietnamese, I could see the amusement on the faces of the nuns at my awkward pronunciation. It is my experience that Poor Clares everywhere in the world exhibit the joy of true contemplatives. They also enjoy being connected to other parts of the Franciscan family. After Mass, we all shared in a meal which included lots of singing. One of the sisters sang "Jingle Bells" in English, while I was coaxed into singing the same song in Vietnamese. A few days later, I received an envelope

from the abbess which included photographs of the monastery and pictures of St. Clare and the Blessed Mother to give to the Poor Clares in Aptos, California.

The Secular Franciscan Order in this small country of Vietnam has over three thousand members representing seventy-five fraternities. In Vietnam, the SFO is not officially recognized by the government. I had the pleasure of meeting the national minister of the SFO on Christmas day, who came to spend some time with the Franciscan Youth. It is clear that the members of the SFO in Vietnam understand their existence in three dimensions: 1) to live the Franciscan way of life, 2) to become an energetic voice for the Church, and 3) to become a strong voice in a socialist country. In the parishes, the Secular Franciscans are leaders among the people of God. Pastors love them because they are humble servants, and bishops love them because they all love St. Francis. The members of the SFO are also catechists and choir directors. They have a house of prayer, support farming projects, and are forerunners of evangelization among the people.

The Franciscan Youth organization, supported by the SFO, numbers almost a thousand young people in twenty-five fraternities. I spent most of Christmas day with a group of Franciscan Youth who took the occasion of Christ's birthday to go fishing. I had never heard of a group of teenagers getting together on Christmas morning to go fishing in the countryside. The site was a pond operated by the SFO—a place to breed fish to help feed people. It was wonderful to see the sheer joy on these young faces as each of them caught their share of fish with simple bamboo poles and string. Later they cooked some of the fish for lunch and shared an afternoon of traditional food, laughter, and song. The Franciscan Youth gave the remainder of the fish to four groups of people they visited that afternoon: a home for blind children, a home for the aged, disabled people, and a house dedicated to helping extremely poor women take care of their babies.

As I try to place myself in the mind and heart of our Holy Father Francis and Holy Mother Clare, it is most likely they never thought their Rules of Life would reach this distant country made up of land and water. Francis and Clare did not even know Vietnam existed. They had no idea that one day there would be such a strong group of Franciscan brothers and sisters to carry on their message of Gospel charity in Vietnam. What we do know is that Francis and Clare understood the challenges of life and the realities of the imperfect world in which they lived. They did a lot of letting go, soul searching, and trusting that God would see their Rules of Life grow. They chose poverty and a life of prayer over material wealth and secular living. They became poor, not because being poor was something fancy to behold, but in order to be evangelical witnesses of Christ's love for the Church and the world.

I imagine Francis and Clare are both filled with joy in knowing that their historical roots have reached the *dat nuoc* of Vietnam. Francis envisioned a way of life in which following the Gospel of Christ would include everyone. His was a vision which included every man, woman, and youth. His was a vision which invited the participation of the married and the single and those desiring the consecrated life: friars, nuns, and brothers and sisters of penance. There was room for everyone in the Franciscan family.

I have no doubt that Francis and Clare are happy in knowing that the vision God created through them made its way to the *dat nuoc* of Vietnam. Their spirit is alive there. The general population, especially Catholics, know who the Franciscans are. They are the people who live close to the poor and are willing to be poor themselves. They are the ones who live simple lives and exhibit joy in the midst of suffering. They are the ones who pray with the people, sing with them, and pray with them through the liturgical life of the Church.

Lest anyone think that I have romantic notions about the Franciscans in Vietnam, I wish to say that life in Vietnam is not easy. Franciscans there did not achieve their effectiveness overnight. It is clear that the Franciscans of Vietnam experience the same challenges of community living, ministerial duties, and differing viewpoints as Franciscans do in other parts of the world. We are all part of the human condition and cannot escape the challenges Francis gave each of us to live poverty, to be men and women of prayer, and to live true fraternal lives. It would be unwise for myself or any of us to think that Franciscans in Vietnam have built the perfect fraternity. Furthermore, it is clear that Franciscans in Vietnam have succeeded in living under economic and political constraints which do not exist in many other parts of the world.

Given the social challenges with which Vietnamese Franciscans live on a daily basis, it is clear that the vision of Francis and Clare is abundantly alive in Vietnam. Life there is not a romance novel but a real challenging saga filled with both historical and ongoing pain. As my month in Vietnam came to a close, I was aware that the calendar had turned its page to the new year. It was the beginning of 1999, and the beginning of the third millenium of Christianity was only a year away. In a few days, Vietnam would celebrate Tet, the three day festival ushering in the lunar New Year. It is a time in which families come together, incense is burned to pray for good luck in the new year, altars are erected, offerings of food are made to the gods and the deceased, cemeteries are visited, and flowers are everywhere. Even the poorest of the country use their salaries to celebrate Tet.

I have thought to myself how important it is for the people of Vietnam to celebrate Tet. For a moment, it takes their minds off their problems and allows them the chance to hope for a better future. It is a future which Vietnam de-

serves after the many years of war and economic disaster. The Franciscan men, women, and youth of Vietnam challenged me greatly and enriched my spirituality. I know that I will return. I have new Franciscan brothers and sisters there. I have new friends. I want to see the fertile countryside again and to be reminded of the relationship between *dat nuoc*, the land and the water, the *yin* and the *yang*. I want to pray daily for the people of Vietnam and to continue exploring ways in which the life and the ministry of our Franciscan brothers and sisters can be supported here.

We who are Franciscans at the beginning of the twentieth-first century have a challenging call to be who we profess to be—lesser brothers and sisters in a very imperfect world. I am reminded in this present moment of the first phrase I learned in my studies of the Vietnamese language. It is a quotation from Hebrews: “Gie-su Kito van la mot, hom qua, hom nay, va mai mai [Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8)].” It is Christ’s message we preach and live. It is His Kingdom we proclaim. It is the Kingdom of love, justice, and peace for all peoples of the earth. In Vietnam, I am happy to say, the message of Christ’s Kingdom has found faithful followers in the life and spirituality of our Franciscan brothers and sisters.

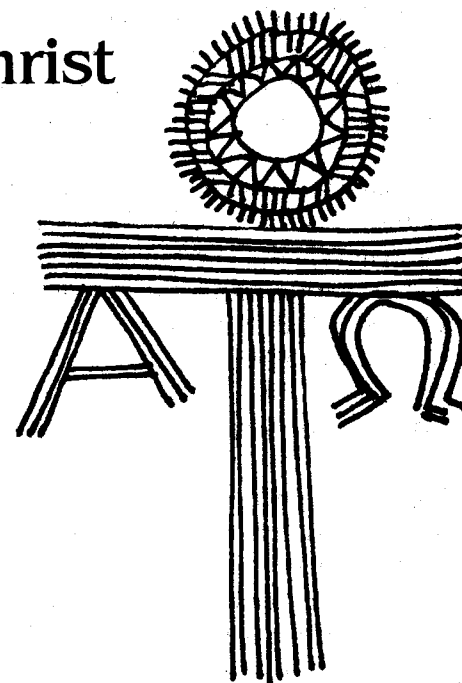
Jesus Christ

the same

yesterday

today

forever



(Heb. 13:8)

Robert Pawell, OFM

## Franciscan Life in the Midst of Social and Moral Upheaval

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF

In April 1994 the world celebrated South Africa's "miracle." The transition to a majority-ruled democracy that was accomplished without a civil war or racial bloodbath. Three hundred years of colonial domination and forty-six years of legalized apartheid were thrown off at the country's polling stations as millions of South Africans voted for the first time in their lives. The victory of the ANC (African National Congress) led to the triumphant inauguration of Nelson Mandela, the country's first Black<sup>1</sup> president. A political prisoner for twenty-seven years, his personal struggle against apartheid embodied the struggle of the nation. Mandela was president and the nation gave a collective sigh of relief.

The inauguration was followed by a honeymoon period. International journalists almost ceased covering South Africa; there was no violence to report! In the first six months the Government of National Unity<sup>2</sup> (GNU), went about the business of organizing itself and was left in relative peace. Apartheid had been eradicated, at least legally. Is there need of a Franciscan witness in what is called "the new South Africa"?

### South Africa under Apartheid

The apartheid system of racial separation was rigid and well defined. Every person knew his or her place. Signs marking public places indicated who was allowed in and who was not. "Right of admission signs" can still be seen above the doors of restaurants and some public buildings. Things were clear-cut in those days. Behavior was also clearly defined. White people were "bosses" and "madams" and Black people were garden "boys" and maids. Along with these titles the behavior followed. Relationships developed in the apartheid

context. Friends "across the color bar" were frowned upon; after all, Blacks had to know "their place." Hendrik Verwoed, a former prime minister, had defined the role of Black people in South Africa as being "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Subservience was the expected mode of behavior for Black people. Hence, education for them was limited to the practical skills necessary to serve their masters and madams. It only followed then that their salaries, housing, and means of travel all fell well below what was available for the White population. Thus the tragedy of apartheid played itself out. The crimes of the apartheid system not only left an imprint on the lives of Black people, but on the lives of their perpetrators as well.

Racial separation bred fear and suspicion among all the peoples of South Africa. Whites, priding themselves on their superiority, felt threatened by the Black people because of their sheer numbers. Whites built walls around their homes and installed elaborate security systems to protect themselves! The situation was ironic: Whites were in control, but feared they could not control the Blacks so they sought to keep them out of their world. The net result is that both Blacks and Whites bear the mark of apartheid within them. New South Africa has not changed that fact. Whites continue to be afraid and Blacks have adopted what Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu has called, "a culture of entitlement."

Under apartheid Black people were not, for the most part, paid a living wage. To compensate for this, White employers supplemented their earnings with packets of maize meal, sugar, and flour. If the employers were generous, some meat might also be included. Now many Blacks believe they are "entitled" to things without paying for them. Politicized by the ANC in the apartheid struggle, people were encouraged not to pay for rent, water, or electricity because housing and utilities were supplied by the government. Now many people feel entitled to services without paying. This problem is being addressed by the GNU in a national building program called *Masakhane* which means "let us work together." Though this is indeed important, there are tremendous social and moral questions facing the nation. Apartheid and its accompanying world view have been dismantled, but for many people, no social and moral norms have replaced it. The result is that the country is in the throes of social and moral upheaval.

Though it is true that tribal life in African society had a strict moral and social code of conduct, years of migratory labor practices have had serious consequences on family life. Materialism and the apartheid system have eroded the moral fiber of African family life. Social analysts now conclude that South Africa is in a state of moral and social upheaval. The norms of tribal life and the norms which held the society together under apartheid no longer prevail. A sense of lawlessness pervades much of society. Some people justify their

behavior and the ensuing chaos by appealing to the hurts inflicted upon them because of apartheid, while others say that they act in one way or another because of fear. How does one live as a Franciscan person under such circumstances? Does the Franciscan charism have relevance in this situation?

## Living as a Franciscan in a Changing South African Society

How one lives is always a matter of choice. For me the choice is to draw inspiration from St. Francis's vision of gospel living. I have been in South Africa for over ten years. I remain here because I believe that the charism, if lived well, has much to say to the people of South Africa.

I live and work as part of a team with two Franciscan Friars. We have a special purpose. Our task is to establish a Franciscan Institute in Southern Africa. We consider this very important work since there is a need to sink the roots of the Franciscan charism more deeply into the soil of the African continent. Our very work keeps us mindful of the need not only to teach the charism but to live it.

Some basic elements of the Franciscan tradition help me respond to the people and events in South Africa. First there is the basic conviction that Christ is present in this situation. It is this incarnational stance that allows me to approach people and situations in faith and with understanding. Basically most South Africans are trying to cope with the social and moral change with good will and honesty even if it is with a measure of confusion and disillusionment. Faith in Christ brings serenity and gives direction. Christ's gospel message provides me and many others with a way to respond to the changing times.

Secondly, a commitment to a way of life marked by simplicity helps one to give priority to the essentials of life. Materialism has taken hold of South African society. As more and more Black people realize what was available to White South Africans, they want to share the wealth. All segments of society need to be challenged to distinguish needs from wants and to allow the gospel, not the past regime, to be the measure of economic justice.

Thirdly, there is an African proverb that says: "A person is a person with others" (*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*). Community is the great African value. As a Franciscan I, too, hold community as an essential value. This is a significant meeting point with African culture. The Franciscan vision of community challenges the African view because it widens out the community to embrace people of every ethnic, racial, and social background, not just the tribe. Franciscan community goes further still because it brings in the faith dimension. Community is not just human relationships, but human relationships in Christ. The bonds created among people because of baptism moves us to seek the common good.

Finally, there is the Franciscan mandate to announce peace to all. The mission to be a reconciler is an essential one. Peace cannot become a reality unless people are willing to be reconciled. Reconciliation does not deny the past, but provides one with a vision that goes beyond the past. Reconciliation gives new energy for creating a more just society, one where peace is the order of the day. Some of the current violence in South Africa is rooted in rage, long suppressed and without a forum for expression. Some of the violence is the outcome of undisciplined living in a society where social and moral norms have crumbled. Peace and reconciliation cannot become realities unless basic social questions are addressed. Justice will come only when there is reconciliation.

South Africa is certainly not in the same situation as Bosnia, Burundi, or Rwanda. We are not in a state of civil war. We are, though, in a state of profound social and moral confusion rooted in the apartheid experience and propelled by governmental corruption, inadequate examples of moral rectitude, and an amoral stance toward social questions. Is it possible to live Franciscan life in this context? Yes. Does Franciscan life have anything to offer such a society? Yes. The challenge is continually before us.

---

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The term "Black" is not a derogatory term in South Africa. All the peoples born here are Africans, hence the word "Black" only denotes specific ethnic origins.

<sup>2</sup>The Government of National Unity is made up of various political parties all of which had to get 5% support from their constituencies. The three largest are the African National Congress (ANC), the National Party (NP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

As for the brothers who go,  
they can live spiritually among the Saracens  
and other nonbelievers in two ways.  
One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes  
but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake  
and to acknowledge that they are Christians.  
The other way is to announce the Word of God,  
when they see it pleases the Lord,  
in order that [unbelievers] may believe in Almighty God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of all. . . .

RegNB 16: 5-7.



## **The Circle of Life: A Symbol of Union and Strength**

Leonie Kindiki, LSoSF

Webster's Dictionary defines a circle as a closed plane curve. The definition is simple and straightforward. We associate a circle with completeness, fullness, wholeness, and unity. We can, of course, find many other images to reflect these values. I personally think that there is plenty of food for thought in a circle.

### **Symbolism of the Circle in African Traditional Societies**

The symbol of a circle permeates almost every aspect of African life—God, nature, relationships, daily activities, death, and life after death. The circle is a symbol of vital union and life. Vital union is expressed in a bond of human relationships—in the family, village, clan, etc. We in Africa strongly believe that where there are relationships there is life, and life is sacred.

The African conceives of God as the Supreme Being. None can add or take away anything from God. Among the numerous names attributed to God are: *Ggwe byonna*, meaning "God you are all," and *Nyamuzinda*, meaning "God is the completion of everything." It is in this Being that everything finds its completion.

God is the giver of life. This is depicted in the "movement" of the sun and the stars, the phases of the moon, the cycle of seasons, and even moreso in nature's cyclic rhythm—sowing and harvesting, birth, life, and death. The circle figures quite prominently in traditional rituals, too. Everything has its beginning and end in God. God alone is the ultimate source of life.

Human relationships are extremely important in African cultures. Note that I am not saying "culture"—for there are as many cultures in Africa as there are races and tribes! In every culture, however, the center of existence

is the family, clan, and the community at large. These three aspects are brought together in one huge celebration of life—and the circle is paramount in these celebrations.

Every important event in the life of the village is commemorated by ceremonies which include music, dancing, eating, and drinking. There is great cohesion and mutuality in sharing our meals; as the proverb says, relationship is in the eating together. In our cultural beliefs, food and drink are closely bound with life processes. The family sits around the food in a circle. Every passerby or caller, friend or foe, is graciously invited to partake of the meal. At a meal (which is believed to be shared with the living dead, the ancestors), discord, bitterness, and ill-feelings are forgotten. All are one, for sharing food carries the symbolism further. It expresses the fact that life is shared in peace and harmony with others.

In many areas of Uganda, men and women come together to share a pot of beer after the day's chores. A pot of beer is placed in the compound in the cool of the evening. People then sit around it and amicably share its contents. No one needs an invitation—all are welcome because joining the "circle" is seen as a participation in the life of the community.

There is a continuous flow of life which binds the living and the ancestors together. It is believed that the life of our dead is re-lived or reborn in the young. Children, for example, are named after their long dead relatives. There is thus a living communion which forms a strong solidarity between the living and the living dead. Life thus becomes a symbol of union binding us into ever closer ties with God, nature, and the community, thus completing the circle.

### **Christian and Franciscan Implications**

The Christian implications for this symbol can be derived from the Eucharist. We gather together daily as a community to share and to participate in the life of Christ through the Eucharistic celebration. Through Holy Communion we enter into an intimate relationship of love with God and with others.

The sacrament transports us into the realm of the deep mystery of the Trinity, for the Trinity is the symbol of union and love. Through the Eucharist, our relationships with others are strengthened, thus bringing us into the close bonds of a Eucharistic community.

Francis, without being a theologian, came to realize that the Eucharist is a relational sacrament as well as the summit of our apostolic ministry. We are empowered with the life of the Spirit, so we must go out and empower others too. The Eucharist thus compels us to get out of our complacency and self-centeredness, to go out to the other in humble service and

love. This is a sharing, not only of material benefits, but of our time, talents, and skills, as well as of our spiritual gifts without discrimination. Through mutual sharing the community grows and expands to embrace others outside the fold.

In the Eucharist, our woundedness is healed. In solidarity with Christ and the saints, we plead for God's healing mercy. Not only are we healed as individuals, but as a community. Francis found on-going conversion in the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood. He exhorted his followers to have a deep reverence for the Eucharist because through "the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that which is in the heaven and on earth is brought to peace and is reconciled to the all powerful God" (EpOrd 12-13). Our lives can find fulfillment and completion only in union with God. For us Franciscans this is the goal of our spiritual journey into God. Our lives begin and end in God.

Thus, as Christian and as Franciscan, we come together around the Eucharistic Christ to gain strength for the give and take of social relationships which help us appreciate life. Through the Eucharist we celebrate the love and joy of the communion of saints as an anticipation of our future life with God in heaven.

Like the Holy Spirit of the Lord  
ever-present everywhere the shining presence  
of the followers of St. Francis, shining spirit  
outlives centuries, outlasts time.

It speaks above the din of endless battle,  
consoles our dread of dying, of the dead,  
anoints the hand of peace with a kiss,  
and comforts worldly sorrows with a song.

Where would that tender Saint kneel to pray?—  
to whom preach . . . how clothe the naked,  
feed the starving, bless the martyred . . . touch  
such needful souls—were he still here?

He is. He preaches still, to all creation,  
kneels in mud stirred with blood and tears,  
bids the sun bedazzle clouds of war, and  
embraces suffering, others', as his own.

So do Franciscans, loving earth and heaven, choose,  
like Maximilian, to pay the price of sacrifice.

## THE "FRANCIS" IN FRANCISCAN

by  
Patricia Craddock

*The Cord*, 50.5 (2000)

Voices from the Past

### St. Francis in Russian Spirituality

Lyle Peyovich, OFM Cap. and  
Gregory Francis Smutko, OFM Cap.

This article was originally published in  
*The Cord*, 4 (October, 1954), pp. 310-314.

St. Francis is one of the few western medieval saints who has been highly venerated in Russia. Since there is a striking similarity between Franciscan and Russian spirituality, Christian Russia embraced Francis as her own, recognizing in him her own spirit and life. And even though he is a Roman Catholic, his feast is celebrated throughout Russia on October 4. The Fordham Russian Center assures us that the immortal *Fioretti* has so captivated the Russian heart that it is the most popular Catholic book in the Russian language.<sup>1</sup> All of Russia knew whom Lenin referred to when on his death bed he cried:

I have made a great mistake. Our main purpose was to give freedom to a multitude of oppressed people. But our method of action has created worse evils and horrible massacres. You know that my deadly nightmare is to feel that I am lost in this ocean of blood, coming from innumerable victims. It is too late to turn back now, but in order to save our country, Russia, we should have had ten men like Francis of Assisi. With ten such men we would have saved Russia.

The core of the Franciscan spirit is Christ, the God-Man. For Francis, the life of the Friars Minor is to observe the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Bonaventure, who is considered the foremost exponent of Franciscan spirituality, adopted St. Francis's view of Christ as the center of all things, not only of philosophy and the sciences, but of theology as well. No one can read Dostoevsky or Solovie, the two great thinkers who have succeeded most admirably in expressing the aspirations of the Russian people, without being struck

by the thoroughly Christocentric and Franciscan spirit that moves them. Berdiaev points out with gratification that ultimately Russian mysticism does not differ from the mysticism of St. Bonaventure.

In her golden book, *The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought*, Nadejda Gorodetzky shows that one of the most constant features in Russian folk-lore, literature, and theology is the figure of the humiliated Christ. Dostoevsky, who has revealed and immortalized the soul of Christian Russia in his world-famous novels, summarized this attitude in the words: "I have never been able to conceive mankind without Christ." And again: "If it were not for the precious image of Christ before us, we should be undone and altogether lost." In fact, his whole purpose in writing was to bring Christ back into the center of Russian social, political, and economic life. In both Franciscan and Russian spirituality, therefore, Christ is the key to everything.

Whoever is preoccupied with seeing Christ in the center of all things will illuminate the world with his joy. But with what do we associate St. Francis if not with exuberant joy? We find him saying: "What are the friars but joyous minstrels of the Lord, who move and excite the hearts of men to spiritual joy?" This joy is reechoed by Dostoevsky: "Love all God's creatures and pray God to make you cheerful. Be cheerful as children and as the birds." What is remarkable about Franciscan and Russian joy is that it thrives on suffering. St. Francis composed his Sun Song while prostrate with illness and almost blind. The Russian people, as Dostoevsky points out again and again, also realize the atoning power of their suffering and with tears of joy bless God and cause others to bless Him.

"With all thy heart love the Love which loves thee, love the Love which desires thee, and has created thee to draw thee wholly to Himself" (SP). What more shall we say of our holy Father's love of God? We cannot even picture St. Francis without some manifestation of this love. Now we see him caring for the lepers, his brother Christians; at another time, giving his habit to some ragged beggar; again, with a lark on his shoulder, a lamb at his feet, and the Sun Song on his lips: "Praise be to Thee, my Lord, through all Thy creatures. . . . Praise be to Thee, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth. . . . Praise and bless the Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility."

Dostoevsky, in a like vein, gives words to the Russian soul which might well have been sung by Francis himself: "Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love, and in the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation,—the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything." It is this sublime dogma of love which has made Dostoevsky peerless among Christian novelists and has made the world pay tribute to the all-embracing love of the Christian Russian soul.

What saint has had a more tender devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God than St. Francis? Celano assures us that he rejoiced like a child over every mark of love and esteem shown her. St. Francis consecrated himself and his entire Order to Mary and always cherished St. Mary of the Angels as the cradle of his Order. The beautiful Marian prayers of the liturgy and the Little Office could not satisfy his devotion to Mary, which overflowed in hymns and prayers composed in her honor. The most charming of these is his "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin." His children in all three Orders have always cherished this devotion to Mary as their personal heritage. St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Duns Scotus, St. Bernadin of Siena, and St. Lawrence of Brindisi—all champions of Mary's prerogatives—burned themselves out to enlighten the Church with their profession of Mary's glory. St. Lawrence of Brindisi speaks for the whole Order when he concludes that Mary is, after Christ, God's greatest blessing to the Universal Church, the blessing of blessings than which none greater could be thought of, since she can do all things for us with God, the Almighty. Franciscan spirituality cannot be imagined without this tender devotion to Mary.

Now devotion to the Mother of God is also an essential part of Russian spirituality. The Holy Father in his Marian Year Encyclical calls upon our Russian brethren to unite their prayers with ours, "knowing full well how greatly they venerate the Mother of Jesus Christ and celebrate her Immaculate Conception." The Byzantine liturgy is at once the source and expression of Russian devotion to the Mother of God. It is resplendent with numerous and exquisite prayers to Mary, such as this solemn commemoration:

It is indeed proper to bless thee, Mother of God, the eternally blessed and completely sinless one and the Mother of God. Higher in honor than the Seraphim, who without harm to thy virginity didst give birth to the word of God: thee we extol, true Mother of God.<sup>2</sup>

The Russian liturgy insistently repeats this versicle in the first antiphon: "through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us."<sup>3</sup>

An excellent example of Russian devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, is the veneration of icons. Nearly every Russian Christian reserves a place of honor in his home for an icon of Mary. He keeps a lamp burning before it and kneeling there recites his prayers. Thus, Seraphim of Sarov, one of the latest Russian saints, expired while kneeling before his beloved icon, "The Holy Virgin of Tenderness."<sup>4</sup>

What is the Mother of God? Dostoevsky, groping for words to express the Russian love for Mary, replies that she is "the great Mother, the hope of the human race." He created a positive type of Russian sanctity in the person of Father Zossima, who gained literary immortality because of radiant joy and

seraphic love. Dostoevsky's model for Zossima was St. Tychon of Zadonsk, the most beloved saint of modern Russia, whose spirituality was centered around the Cross, the sufferings of Christ, and Divine Love crucified. St. Tychon, like St. Francis, taught this to the people and assured them that this image of the humiliated, crucified Christ would preserve them from sin and lead them to beatitude. Father Zossima so resembles the Poverello that he is called the Russian St. Francis. Ivan, one of the "Brothers Karamazov," even calls him "Seraphic Father." This, we believe, is the fundamental reason why Zossima is the ideal Russian saint and why St. Francis enjoys such popularity in Russia—because they are *seraphic* fathers, one in fiction, one in reality.

Bishop Sheen lists love of humankind as "the first characteristic note of the Russian people" (*Life is Worth Living*); and Helen Iswolsky, in her penetrating *Soul of Russia*, shows that every ideology in Russian spiritual and cultural history was formed by love.

No one should be surprised that we have relied to a large extent on literature to reveal the spirit of Russia, for the spirituality and culture of every civilization finds its best expression in its literature. This is especially true of Russia, for Solovie insists that the basic idea of Russian literature is a religious and moral one founded on the conviction of the sanctity of human personality and human life.

We have frequently quoted Dostoevsky because his message is the message of Christ, his model is the life of Christ, and his philosophy is the philosophy of Christ. With these three he has been able to portray the Christian spirit of Russia better than any other author. The message, model, and philosophy of Dostoevsky are the same as those of St. Francis; hence, his great appeal to us Franciscans.

These are but a few of the similarities between the Franciscan and Russian spiritualities which bring us to a greater understanding and love of our suffering Russian brothers and sisters. These spiritualities move us to greater obedience to the pleas of our Mother, pleas that we pray and sacrifice ourselves that Russia soon may be one with us in love, in freedom and in faith.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The eighth Russian edition has sold out. The Fordham Russian Center would like to publish a new edition if it could find some assistance.

<sup>2</sup>The Byzantine Liturgy, Fordham Russian Center, 1953, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>More examples of Russian devotion to Mary can be found in "Mary in the Eastern Liturgies" by Very Rev. Cuthbert Gumbinger, OFM Cap., and in the Encyclopedic *Mariology* (edited by Father Juniper Carol, OFM, published by Bruce Co.)

*The Cord*, 50.5 (2000)

Voice from the Past

Because October languishes with love,  
Flinging quick beauty down like words,  
Sighing out leaves through the night  
For her beautiful Lover,

Because October walks unshod,  
Is wounded entirely with purple loneliness,  
Has no defenses for her incredible dreams,  
This was your hour.

This was your hour, with the blood that once  
Scorched this whole arteried map with riotous flame,  
Seeping like sighs from five most perfect wounds.  
This was your hour, and your eyes that owned  
The universe once, like dollars, now exchange  
The Umbrian hills, the spread of stars on sky,  
For penury of blindness.

Will they stand  
Around you, Francis, weeping?—Let song split  
The stones, and tear the hearts out of the trees,  
For Christ has kissed you dead!

No other hour  
Is yours, none knows your soul except October  
When the whole earth is dreaming of her Lover  
And the air waits all day and night, like a woman.

O great, dark mystery, cleave me flesh from bone!  
How Christ shall kiss me dead  
When I am blind.

Sister Mary Francis, PC

[This poem was first published in *The Cord* in October, 1951 (Vol 1) page 221.]

Transitus

## Franciscans in Mindanao

Erwin Schoenstein, OFM

Spanish Conquistadores bringing Christianity to the Philippines in the sixteenth century found Muslim communities in many areas especially in Mindanao. Since that time difficult relations between Christians and Moslems have peaked and waned up to the present.

### Baloi, Lanao del Norte

Franciscans of the San Pedro Bautista Province in the Philippines, inspired by St. Francis's visit with the Sultan of Egypt in 1219, volunteered to live among Muslims in Mindanao to show that Muslims and Christians could live together as brothers and sisters.

Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud of the Prelature of Marawi welcomed friars Jerome Oringo, Lino Corpin, and Erwin Schoenstein in 1983. They made their start in Baloi, a town over nine-five percent Muslim. There the friars developed some lasting friendships, but also faced threats, fires, and even a grenade. They stayed on, however, and their house has even become a formation center where friars who have finished their college and two years of theological training spend one year preparing for final vows. There are eleven integrees in formation in Baloi at present.

### Campo Uno, Basilan

Other friars of the Province went to Basilan in the southernmost area at the invitation of Bishop Jose Maria Querexeta, CME. He offered them a place in Campo Uno, which had a population of about twenty thousand, ninety percent of whom were Muslims of the Yakan tribe. Friars Gabriel Bertos and Augustine Frasczak arrived there in August 1986 with Lino Corpin following in November. Gabriel picked up the dialect quickly and became a peacemaker in the area. Augustine became famous as a doctor of herbal medicine and acupuncture. He dedicated long hours in serving the Yakan neighbors until Octo-

ber 1992 when he was kidnapped and held for sixty-nine days. Lino, an agriculturist, fit in easily with the local farmers. In 1995, with the backing of the bishop, the friars established a new parish in the Look area. At present there are five friars in the Campo Uno-Look area.

### Josefina, Zamboanga del Sur

Josefina has a different beginning. Friar Bertram Tiemeyer arrived there in June 1991 to be chaplain for the Poor Clares who were already there. He took care of them, formed members of the Secular Franciscan Order in the area, and helped in the parish. But within a year, Bertram turned his attention also to the thousands of indigenous people who lived in the area. These people—Subanens—were not Muslims. They were still practicing their own religion. Bertram studied their dialect and gathered valuable accounts of their folklore, tribal experiences, history, beliefs, rituals, and prayers. He is now translating hundreds of pages into Cebuano and eventually into English. In 1995 a Franciscan community was set up with the arrival of friars Emmanuel Cordinello, Noel Filemon Gayrama, and Lino Corpin. This community is dedicated to a dialogue of life and faith with Subanens.

### Kidapawan, North Cotabato

Friars entered this area on the invitation of Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, the Bishop of Kidapawan. The friars who arrived there in 1994 were Ray Anthony Ferrer and Erwin Schoenstein. Others followed. On Easter Sunday 1995 the friars took over the Parish of New Cebu, a rural parish of twenty-six thousand Catholics located sixteen kilometers from Kidapawan. In the same year they started a college level formation center for applicants for the Order from the island of Mindanao. Friar Froilan Cruz has been in charge of this Damietta Aspirancy Center for five years and now has ten aspirants.

### Davao City

The one friar who works in the eastern part of Mindanao is Ferdie Mercado, who had worked in Baloi and had taken Islamic and Arabic Studies in Rome. He now lives with Bishop Fernando Capalla and helps him set up seminars, meetings, etc. for Dialogue with Muslims. He is especially involved in the ongoing Bishop-Ulama Dialogue meetings which are trying to promote peace and mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims in Mindanao.

A special feature of the friars in Mindanao is that yearly all of them—over twenty-five at present—meet to share their experiences with Muslims and other indigenous groups. All have committed themselves to make a dialogue of life and faith the first priority in their pastoral efforts.

## Contributors

Patricia Craddock, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, attended Oglethorpe University and has taught English to college-level foreign students, but her passion is for Italian poetry and art and for St. Francis of Assisi as endlessly inspiring poetic subjects. Her poems have been published in this country and in England and Italy.

Sister Mary Francis, PC, is a member of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roswell, New Mexico. Her work has often appeared in *The Cord* since its beginnings.

Joseph Juracek, OFM, a friar of Holy Name Province, New York, is a priest and psychotherapist ministering at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. A poet and photographer, he exhibited in four New York City galleries last year. His book of meditations on the stations of the cross will be released by Franciscan Press this fall.

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF, is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, South Bend, Indiana. A graduate of the Franciscan Institute, she is now Program Director at the Franciscan Institute of Southern Africa, established in 1994 under the auspices of the Franciscan Province of Our Lady Queen of Peace.

Leonie Kindiki, LSoSF, is a member of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of St. Francis in East Africa. She has been a secondary school teacher in Uganda. In 1995 she received her Master's degree at the Franciscan Institute and then pursued doctoral studies in Franciscanism at the Pontificio Ateneo "Antoniano" in Rome.

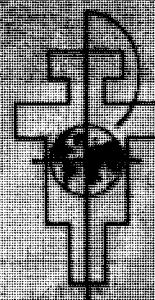
Alexander J. Lewis, OFM Conv., is a friar of the St. Joseph of Cupertino Province, California. Born in Hong Kong, he has participated in a variety of multi-cultural ministries. A licensed marriage and family therapist, he also produces photographic art. He is presently on sabbatical for further studies in Vietnamese and Spanish.

Raymond A. Lucker is Bishop of the New Ulm Diocese in southwestern Minnesota. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1952 and as a bishop in 1971. He was a pioneer in the American catechetical renewal. He is author of a number of books and edited *The Peoples' Catechism* (Crossroad, 1995).

Jeanean Merkel, OSF, is a member of the School Sisters of St. Francis, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She serves as Director of Communication Services for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. She did her Master's work in Religious Studies at Georgetown University.

Robert Pawell, OFM, is a friar of Sacred Heart Province, St. Louis, Missouri. He has been involved with retreat ministry since 1971. A self-trained artist, he now serves out of Chicago, employing poetry and the arts in the Ministry of the Word.

Erwin Schoenstein, OFM, was born in San Francisco, California, and is a friar of the San Pedro Bautista Province in the Philippines, where he has worked for forty-two years. He has been a missionary in Mindanao since 1983.



## FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

THIRD ORDER REGULAR  
OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

ANNOUNCES A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM

## THE CANTICLE OF CONVERSION: SINGING THE COSMIC SYMPHONY

"Christ comes to be the fulness of the universe when each person comes to be in the fulness of Christ. This is the essence of the Franciscan Mission."  
—Paul Davis, OSF

### Includes:

- Contemporary celebration of our changing universe through the Canticale of Creation.
- Reflection on our personal change-of-heart experiences.
- Presentation on the Franciscan tradition of conversion.
- Application of our evolving conversion in the present world.
- Quiet time to touch the mystery of God in our life stories.
- Appearance and dialog with a figure from our heritage.
- Integration of our individual and cosmic stories to bring the future to birth.
- Invitation to enter into the groaning and transforming of the cosmos.

### Program dates and places:

September 29-October 1, 2000—Franciscan Center, Aston, PA  
October 20-22, 2000—Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI  
November 17-19, 2000—Tau Center, Winona, MN  
February 9-11, 2001—Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, CO  
March 16-18, 2001—St. Joseph Center, Tiffin, OH  
April 27-29, 2001—Franciscan Center, Andover, MA  
May 4-6, 2001—Millvale Motherhouse, Pittsburgh, PA  
September 21-23, 2001—Holy Spirit Center, San Antonio, TX  
October 5-7, 2001—Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL  
November 2-4, 2001—Center of Renewal, Stella Niagara, NY  
November 30-December 2, 2001—Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC

Cost: \$225—Room, meals, program, materials (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Convenor rate: \$160—Program, material, meals (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Director:  
The Franciscan Federation,  
Attn: Mission Program  
P.O. Box 2000, Washington, DC 20017  
Ph: 202-229-2214; fax: 202-229-7014

**IN SOLITUDE AND DIALOGUE:**

**CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCANS THEOLOGIZE**

Edited with an Introduction by Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

Contributors:

Gerald M. Dolan	<i>Words of Hope in Troubled Times</i>
Gabriele Uehlein	<i>Creation: A Franciscan Conversion Conversation</i>
Jane Kopas	<i>Mortal Diamond: The Body in Theological Anthropology</i>
Regis A. Duffy	<i>Contexts for a Franciscan Theology of the Eucharist</i>
John J. Burkhard	<i>Being a Person in the Church</i>
Xavier J. Seubert	<i>The Cross and Death of Jesus: A Franciscan Interpretation</i>
Joan Mueller	<i>Models of Evangelical Poverty: Eschatological Implications</i>

Price \$18.00. 208 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-167-0

**THE ADMONITIONS OF ST. FRANCIS:**

**SOURCES AND MEANINGS**

by Robert J. Karris, OFM

The author examines similarities between these writings of Francis and other spiritual writings of the Christian tradition. He looks at how Francis uses the Scriptures and how he adapts his spiritual legacy in creative ways. A new translation of each Admonition and a commentary on each verse, concluding with practical reflections.

Price \$28.00. 312+xv pages paper.

ISBN 1-57659-166-2

**MISSION IN THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION**

Essays gathered by Anselm Moons, OFM, and Flavian Walsh, OFM  
Spirit and Life, Volume 6, 1994.

This collection of essays reflects on the contemporary value of the concrete missionary method of Francis and his followers as experienced during the past eight hundred years. The reflections express how the twentieth-century experience has moved to a dynamic missionary approach at home and abroad as the *missio Christi* continues into the new millennium.

Price \$15.00. 245 pages.

ISBN: 1-57659-038-0



**SPirit AND LiFE**

Volumes 9 & 10

Two new issues

*Islam and Franciscanism: A Dialogue.* Ed. Daniel Dwyer, OFM, and Hugh Hines, OFM. Spirit and Life, Vol. 9, 2000. 120 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-169-7. \$10.00.

This volume deals with the tradition of dialogue between Islam and Franciscanism that has perdured since Francis met the Sultan.

Daniel Dwyer, Introduction  
Imam Mohammad Bashar Arafat, "Islam and Christianity: Two Faiths and One God"  
Fareed Munir, "Islam and Franciscanism: Prophet Mohammad of Arabia and St. Francis of Assisi in the Spirituality of Mission"  
François Paquette, "Breaking Down the Walls of our Differences: Islamic-Christian Encounter through Prayer"  
Thomas Mooren, "The Exodus Motif in Christianity and Islam"  
Anselm Moons, "The Arrogance of Ownership"

*True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans.* Ed. Elise Saggau, OSF. Spirit and Life, Vol. 10, 2000. 175 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-171-9. \$14.00.

This volume presents issues arising from the tension between where the early friars should live and how they could be faithful to a prayerful life in fraternity.

It looks at how the Order did, and still does, attempt to resolve, or at least live creatively, with this tension.

Michael F. Cusato, OFM, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan Locus in the World"  
Michael F. Cusato, OFM, "Wall-to-Wall Ministry: Franciscan Ministry in the Cities of Thirteenth-Century Italy"  
Keith Warner, OFM, "Pilgrims and Strangers: The Evangelical Spirituality of Itinerancy of the Early Franciscan Friars"





# Franciscans International Mid-Atlantic Chapter

Fourth Annual Gathering



Saturday, October 28, 2000  
Alvernia College  
Reading, Pennsylvania  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

## Forming a Culture of Peace in the New Millennium

Keynote Speaker:

Michele Balek, OSF

North America Region Coordinator  
of Franciscans International

### Local Chapter Information

#### Sunday Eucharist

Bring a Brown Bag Lunch  
(Beverages will be provided)

#### Co-Sponsors:

Bernardine Franciscan Sisters \* Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
Alvernia College \* Neumann College  
St. Joseph Medical Center

For more details or to register contact:

FI Mid-Atlantic Chapter  
460 St. Bernardine Street  
Reading, PA 19607  
PH: (610)796-8971  
Fax: (610)777-3973  
E-mail: [bprovoff@alton.net](mailto:bprovoff@alton.net)

2000

## FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

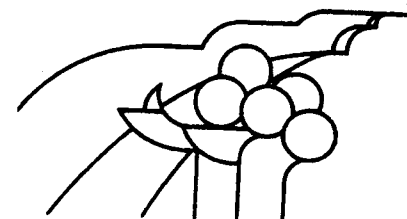
2000

in  
Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats

All sessions in 2000 will be conducted  
for Franciscans in the Far East and Africa  
to celebrate the Millennium.

A three-month ministerial and experiential program  
born out of the conviction that our Franciscan *charism*  
enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach  
to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors,  
parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, mission-  
aries, community leadership, personal renewal.



For more information contact:

Tom Speier, ofm; Marilyn Joyce, osf  
St. Francis Extension  
2014 Springdale Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45231  
Phone: (513) 825-0674 Fax: (513) 541-9347



# Franciscan

## GERMAIN GRIEZ

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume III: Difficult Moral Questions*

In this **newest** volume, Grisez answers 200 practical, moral questions raised by the readers of the first two volumes.

ISBN 0981-5 927 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume II: Living A Christian Life*

Prof. Grisez deals with the specific questions that concern all or most Catholics.

ISBN 0961-0 950 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume I: Christian Moral Principles*

Treats the foundations of Christian morality.

ISBN 0861-4 971 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

**Buy all three volumes for \$90.00!**

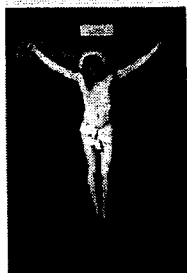
## NEW!

### *The Christ of Velázquez*

Miguel de Unamuno

#### *The Christ of Velázquez*

A Poem



Translated by Jaime R. Vidal

Miguel de Unamuno,  
Jaime Vidal, Ph.D.,  
trans.

A classic of 20th century spirituality and a classic of Spanish literature, *The Christ of Velázquez* is a poetic meditation on Velázquez's painting of Christ Crucified by an outstanding figure of 20th century existentialist philosophy.

phv.

ISBN 0992-0 112 p. (hardcover) \$19.95

### *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion: A Commentary on St. Bonaventure's 'Breviloquium'*

Sister Paula Jean Miller, fse

A new and original study of St. Bonaventure's theology of marriage as it is expressed in his *Breviloquium*.

ISBN 0967-X 268 p. (paper) \$24.95

## NEW!

### *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*

Sr. Ilia Delio, ofc

This work examines the essential role of the crucified Christ in Bonaventure's mystical theology. Bonaventure advocated a type of mysticism that necessitated radical conformity to the suffering Christ.

ISBN 0988-2 268 p. (paper) \$15.95

# Press

## Francis in America



A Catalogue of Early Italian Paintings of St. Francis of Assisi in the United States and Canada

William R. Cook

ISBN 0984-X

\$39.95

193 p. (hardcover)

50 full page illustrations/22 in color 8 1/2 x 11

### *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*

(2nd series, 2nd edition) John M. Huels, ofm, jcd

ISBN 0968-8 432 p. (paper) \$25.00

## Now in 2-volume paperback!

### *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources: Writings and Early Biographies*

Marion A. Habig, ofm, ed.

The classic English resource for primary texts on the life of St. Francis.

ISBN 0862-2 1665 p. (paper) \$35.00

### *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Russian Trinitarian Thought from Vladimir Solov'ev to Sergius Bulgakov*

Michael Aksionov Meerson

This monograph studies the emergence of the love paradigm in contemporary trinitarian doctrines, giving special emphasis to tracing this paradigm's development in modern Russian philosophy and theology. This paradigm explains the triune relationship of the Divine hypostases by the ontological love within God.

ISBN 0987-4 255 p. (paper) \$15.95

Call or write for a  
free catalog.

## SFO Resource Library

*SFO Resource Library*, coordinated by Benet Fonck, is a complete reference library for members of the Secular Franciscan Order. Vol. V & VI are yet to be printed.

### *Vol. I: Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Assistants' Commentary Commission*

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0975-0 139 p. (paper) \$15.95

### *Vol. II: Called to Rebuild the Church: A Spiritual Commentary on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order*

Lester Bach, ofm Cap.

ISBN 0976-9 206 p. (paper) \$16.95

### *Vol. III: Called to Live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel*

Philip Marquard, ofm

ISBN 0977-7 1203 p. (paper) \$13.95

### *Vol. IV: Called to Proclaim Christ*

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0982-3 60 p. (paper) \$12.95

### *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life*

Margaret Carney, ofc

A scholarly study of Clare's Rule.

ISBN 0962-9 261 p. (paper) \$12.95

### *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*

Ingrid Peterson, ofc

Drawing from historical, sociological, spiritual, theological, and ecclesiological backgrounds and specialists, Ingrid Peterson created the definitive biographical study of Clare of Assisi.

ISBN 0964-H 436 p. (cloth) \$23.50

### *A Dwelling Place for the Most High: Meditations with Francis of Assisi*

Fr. Thaddée Matura, ofm

Pau. Lachance, ofm, trans.

This work is a brief synthesis of a distinguished Franciscan scholar's thoughts on the life and example of the founder.

ISBN 0985-8 101 p. (paper) \$11.95

For more information on these and  
FHP backlist titles write:

## Franciscan Press

Quincy University

1800 College Avenue

Quincy, IL 62301-2699

Telephone: 217-228-5670

Fax: 217-228-5672

Web site: [www.quincy.edu/fpress](http://www.quincy.edu/fpress)

# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation  
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix  
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor  
Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, and reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: [franstor@genevaonline.com](mailto:franstor@genevaonline.com)

\$16.50 per copy plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

## INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

A distance learning program  
responding to the desire of Secular Franciscans  
to learn more about their unique identity as Franciscans  
in the contemporary world.

*offered through:*



OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

*currently offering:*

FRAN 201 Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World  
FRAN 202 The Franciscans: A Family History  
FRAN 204 Franciscan Spirituality

*Currently in preparation:*

Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings  
Servant Leadership for Secular Franciscans  
The Franciscan Sources

*proposed courses include:*

Christian and Franciscan Tradition  
Writings of Francis of Assisi  
Franciscan Ministry: Challenge and Response  
Integrative Project

*For more information contact:*

Saint Francis College Office of Continuing Education  
Loretto, PA 15940-0600 ~ phone: (814) 472-3219 ~ e-mail: [ICFL@SFCPA.EDU](mailto:ICFL@SFCPA.EDU)

## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events, 2000

### Friday, September 22-Sunday, September 24

**Franciscan Retreat Weekend.** With James Gavin, OFMCap. \$100. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Friday, September 29-Sunday, October 1

**The Canticle of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At the Franciscan Center, Aston, PA (see ad, p. 251).

### Friday, October 13-Sunday, October 15

**The Prayer of Francis and Clare.** With André Cirino, OFM. At the Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston. Contact: 609 S. Convent Rd., Aston, PA, 19014; ph. 610-558-6152; e-mail: fsc@osfphila.org.

### Thursday, October 19-Sunday, October 22

**The Franciscan Connection.** With Ingrid Peterson, OSF, and Diane Jamison, OSF. Sponsored by Franciscan Federation, Regions 4 and 5. At St. Joseph Center, Milwaukee. Contact: Rosemary Reier, OSF at 414-384-1515, ext. 5255.

### Friday, October 20-Sunday, October 22

**The Canticle of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee (see ad p. 251).

### Saturday, October 28

**Forming a Culture of Peace in the New Millennium.** With Michele Balek, OSF. Franciscans International Mid-Atlantic Chapter. At Alvernia College, Reading, PA (see ad p. 254).

### Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19

**The Canticle of Creatures.** With Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. \$100. At Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Pittsburgh. Contact: Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207; email: fslccom@aol.com

### Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19

**The Canticle of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Tau Center, Winona, MN (see ad p. 251).

### Friday, December 8-Sunday, December 10

**Advent Retreat Weekend.** With James Gavin, OFMCap. \$100. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenBern	Blessing for Brother Bernard	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	Test	Testament
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	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
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	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 Commmercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

# STOKING THE FIRE OF HOPE: FIORETTI FOR OUR TIMES.

by Hermann Schaluck, OFM

The former Minister General of the Friars Minor reflects on his encounters with many people on five continents. In the style of the Franciscan *Fioretti*, he speaks of today's challenges to the Brothers and Sisters of the Order, showing how they try to meet the demands of communicating the good News in different cultural situations.

Through a variety of images and metaphors, the author raises questions about how Franciscans today can follow Jesus Christ effectively in situations very different from those faced by Francis and Clare eight hundred years ago.



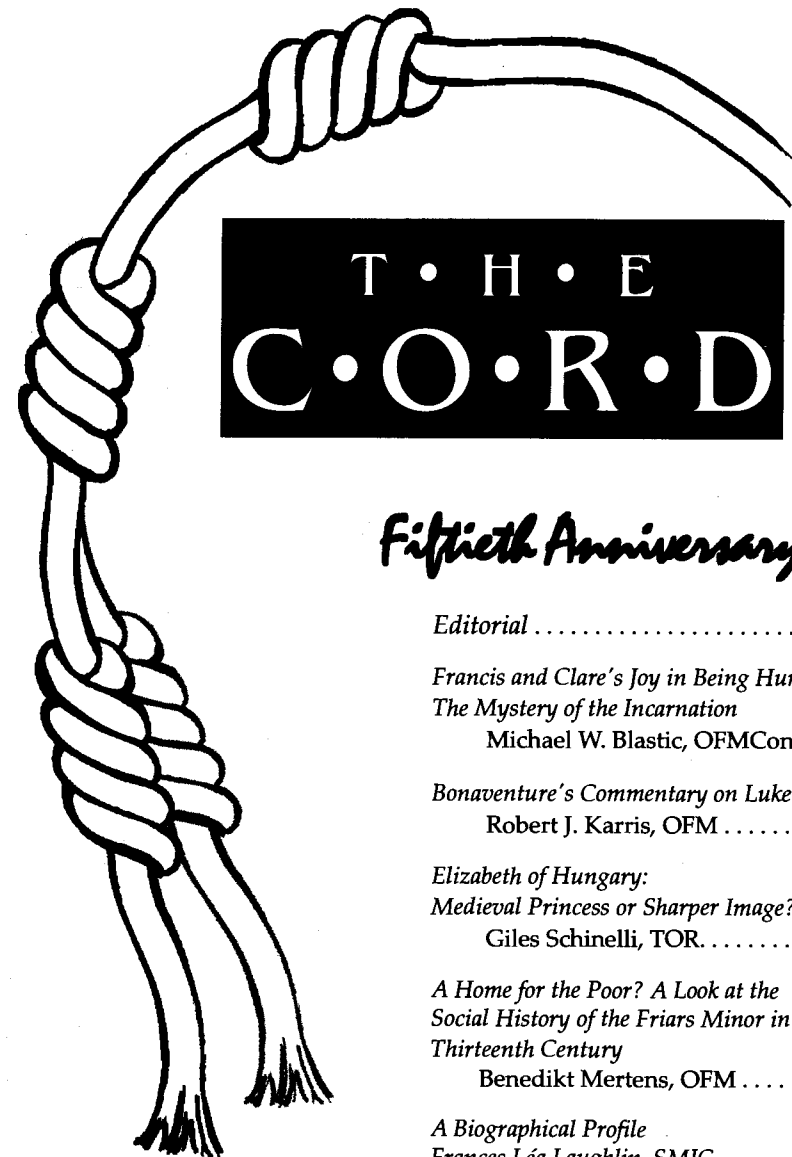
Price \$15.00. 193 pages.  
ISBN: 1-57659-133-6

The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Phone: 716-375-2105  
Fax: 716-375-2156

The Cord  
The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778

Periodical Postage Paid  
at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
and Additional Office

Attention Postal Service:  
PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR DESTROY THIS PERIODICAL  
Return Postage Guaranteed.



## *Fiftieth Anniversary Year!*

Editorial ..... 261

*Francis and Clare's Joy in Being Human:  
The Mystery of the Incarnation*  
Michael W. Blastic, OFMConv ..... 262

*Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke 2:6-7*  
Robert J. Karris, OFM ..... 275

*Elizabeth of Hungary:  
Medieval Princess or Sharper Image?*  
Giles Schinelli, TOR. .... 281

*A Home for the Poor? A Look at the  
Social History of the Friars Minor in the  
Thirteenth Century*  
Benedikt Mertens, OFM ..... 289

*A Biographical Profile*  
*Frances Léa Laughlin, SMIC* ..... 302

*About Our Contributors* ..... 301

*Announcements* ..... 304

*Index* ..... 317

*On the Franciscan Circuit* ..... 320

**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Margaret Carney, OSF  
Editor: Elise Saggau, OSF

Poetry Editor: Frances Ann Thom, OSF  
Promotion: Thomas Blow, OFM  
Distribution Manager: Noel Riggs  
Production Assistant: Bridget Quinn

Editorial Board: Mary C. Gurley, OSF, Patricia Hutchison, OSF,  
Robert Karris, OFM, Beth Lynn, OSC, Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR,  
Joseph Wood, OFM Conv., Ed and Mary Zablocki, SFO.

**No material from this periodical may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from the editor.**

*The Cord* (ISSN 0010-8685 USPS 563-640) is published bi-monthly by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$20.00 a year; \$3.50 a copy. Periodical postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Cord*, P.O. Drawer F, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 USA.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778.

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).      (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 23:2).      (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.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, \$50.00; half page, \$25.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., April 1 for the May/June issue).

Cover design: Basil Valente, OFM and David Haack, OFM.

*The Cord*, 50.6 (2000)

## Editorial

## Fiftieth Anniversary Year!

The Fiftieth Anniversary year of *The Cord* draws to a close. The celebrations have offered opportunities for re-energizing the periodical and recommitting it to a significant service to the Franciscan Family worldwide. The end of the year is a special time for remembering gratefully those who make an enterprise like this possible—especially the writers, researchers, reflectors, artists, and poets who offer us sustenance for our journey by helping us appreciate more deeply our rich tradition. Thanks to all who have contributed to *The Cord* and enhanced its value and attractiveness.

Thanks, too, to all who advertise. They not only provide economic support, but witness to the wide diversity of programs and resources that are available to lovers of the Franciscan way. Thanks to members of the editorial board who take the time to offer evaluative comments and suggestions, who make contributions and promote *The Cord* in many ways. Thanks to the support staff who see to it that this effort actually materializes and arrives at your door every other month. Special thanks to all you readers who take up *The Cord* appreciatively and find in it nourishment for mind and spirit. Finally, sincere thanks to those who make an extra financial contribution so that our sisters and brothers in economically deprived situations may receive a gift subscription. In the last two years we have been able to extend our subscriptions significantly because of these gifts. We invite you to remember these others again this year as you renew your own subscription.

As the wondrous feast of the Incarnation draws near, we stand in awe once more at the amazing gift God has bestowed on us in Jesus Christ—and our hearts are moved by this unimaginable event. With Francis and Clare we contemplate “the poverty of Him Who was placed in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. . . . The King of the angels, the Lord of heaven and earth, laid in a manger! O mavelous humility, O astonishing poverty!” (4LAg 19, 21,20)

*Elise Saggau, OSF*

**We thank You, (O God), for as through Your Son You  
created us so through Your holy love with which  
You loved us You brought about His birth  
as true God and true man by the glorious, ever-virgin,  
most blessed, holy Mary (RegNB 23:3).**

## Francis and Clare's Joy in Being Human: The Mystery of The Incarnation

Michael W. Blastic, OFM Conv

[This is the text of an address given at the annual meeting of the Franciscan Federation of Australia and New Zealand, July 8, 2000, in Melbourne, Australia.]

### I

In his Apostolic Letter in preparation for the Jubilee Year of 2000, *Tertio millennio adveniente* (TMA) (November 1994), John Paul II spoke of the Jubilee as "an experience of joy deeply charged with Christological meaning." He wrote:

The term Jubilee speaks of joy: not just an inner joy but a jubilation which is manifested outwardly, for the coming of God is also an outward, visible, audible and tangible event, as St. John makes clear (1Jn 1:1) (TMA #16).

The distinctly Christological character of the Jubilee needs to be emphasized, for it will celebrate the Incarnation and coming into the world of the Son of God, the mystery of salvation for all mankind (TMA #40).

Reflecting on the tradition of the Jewish scriptures associated with the year of Jubilee, John Paul suggested that an essential aspect of the year 2000's celebration of the Incarnation must be visible, audible, outward, and tangible as was the Incarnation, and hence he places great emphasis on the aspects of the Jubilee which should engage persons, societies, and nations in real time and space. Most important for the Pope is that the celebration be expressed in terms of justice and peace and the reformation of both the social order and the global structures of dependence which enslave peoples and nations. Echoing familiar themes from his pontificate, John Paul places the Jubilee in the context of

what he describes as the "crisis of civilization" or the "culture of death." In the context of the challenge of secularism, he wrote:

[I]t will be fitting to broach the vast subject of the *crisis of civilization*, which has become apparent especially in the West, which is highly developed from the standpoint of technology but is interiorly impoverished by its tendency to forget God or to keep him at a distance. This crisis of civilization must be countered by *the civilization of love*, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty, which find their full attainment in Christ" [TMA #52].

As we have all seen thus far in the papal celebrations associated with the Jubilee, there is no aspect of human life that remains extrinsic to the celebration of the Jubilee of the Incarnation—from the celebration of the Jubilee for artists, journalists, workers, prisoners, the poor, etc., to the celebration of the Jubilee in the Holy Land with the challenges inherent in each event. Indeed, as the Pope has written in the Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000:

In the encounter with Christ, every man [sic] discovers the mystery of his own life. Jesus is the genuine newness which surpasses all human expectations and as such he remains forever, from age to age. The Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation which he has accomplished by his death and resurrection are therefore the true criterion for evaluating all that happens in time and every effort to make life more human" (*Incarnationis mysterium* # 1[IM]).

In fact, all efforts connected to the Jubilee are intended to embody the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth in some concrete form, which in turn opens us to the mystery of God the Trinity:

In celebrating the Incarnation, we fix our gaze on the mystery of the Trinity. Jesus of Nazareth, who reveals the Father, has fulfilled the desire hidden in every human heart to know God. What creation preserved as a seal etched on it by the creative hand of God and what the ancient prophets had announced as a promise is disclosed in the revelation of Christ" (IM #3).

Further, the Jubilee grace is the grace of conversion and reconciliation—a grace that is offered as both gift and task. In fact, John Paul makes the option for the poor and commitment for justice and peace a condition for the experience of jubilee joy, because "[T]he joy of every jubilee is above all a joy based upon the forgiveness of sins, the joy of conversion" (TMA #32); this jubilee joy is the effect of forgiveness, offered by the Father in Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

John Paul repeats frequently these essential aspects of Jubilee 2000: **INCARNATION-RECONCILIATION-JOY**. These are not unfamiliar themes for us Franciscans, for we encounter them frequently in the sources surrounding Francis and Clare and the origins of the Franciscan movement. What comes to mind immediately is how joy so characterizes the life of Francis with his brothers and Clare with her sisters. You don't have to look too far through the sources before coming upon examples. Thomas of Celano presents an idyllic portrait of the early fraternity:

There were chaste embraces, delightful affection, a holy kiss, sweet conversation, modest laughter, joyful looks, a clear eye, a supple spirit, a peaceable tongue, a mild answer, a single purpose. . . . So they were safe wherever they went. Disturbed by no fears, distracted by no cares, they awaited the next day without any worry. . . . Often mocked, objects of insult, stripped naked, beaten, bound, jailed, and not defending themselves with anyone's protection, they endured all of these abuses so bravely that from their mouths came only the sound of praise and thanksgiving. They never or hardly ever stopped praying and praising God (1Cel 39-40).<sup>1</sup>

A stylized encomium no doubt, but accurate nonetheless. Despite their difficulties and imperfections, the early brothers and sisters were joyful men and women. And the paradox of Christian life becomes visible in their experience—persecuted yet joyful as Celano portrays them! Francis speaks of this as True Joy.<sup>2</sup>

Write, Leo, what true joy is.

All the Masters of Paris entered the Order  
All the prelates, archbishops and bishops beyond the mountains, as well as the King of France and the King of England  
My brothers have gone to the non-believers and converted all of them to the faith

I have so much grace from God that I heal the sick and perform many miracles!

**I tell you true joy does not consist in any of these things!**

I return from Perugia in the dead of night—it's winter—cold and muddy

I knock at the gate and say: "It's me, Brother Francis, let me in."

"Go Away! This is not the proper time to be returning to the friary!"

I insist.

He says: "Go away! You are **SIMPLE** and **STUPID**! Don't come back to us again! There are many of us here like you—we don't need you!"

I say: "For the Love of God, take me in tonight!"

He says: "I will not! Go to the Crosiers' place and ask there."

**I tell you this: If I had patience and did not become upset, true joy, as well as true virtue and the salvation of my soul, would consist in this (VPLaet).**

This Saying on "True [and Perfect] Joy," which is included among the authentic writings of St. Francis, suggests an experience which gets at the heart of following in the footprints of Christ. For, while all the things Francis mentions as possible sources of joy—Masters, bishops, kings, princes joining the Order; friars converting non-believers; Francis healing the sick and working miracles—have in fact actually begun to occur in Francis's lifetime. It is not these "successes" which are the source of true joy. Contrary to the standards of the world, and sometimes even to the unspoken standards of the Church, Francis insists that true joy is not to be found in such accomplishments. As the saying suggests, Francis connects true joy with the experience of human rejection, in this case, the rejection of Francis by his own brothers—an experience that was also real, especially in the last years of Francis's own life.

The companions indicate that there was a lack of sensitivity toward Francis on the part of some brothers for whom Francis had become an anachronism, or "useless" in Francis's own words. The Saying on True Joy is an autobiographical account of his experience—he too was rejected by his own brothers! But, Francis is not masochistic. Joy does not lie in being rejected and locked out. True joy results from the concrete human response to the experience of rejection: "If I had **PATIENCE** and did not become **UPSET**." This is true joy, virtue, and salvation. So, Francis here is reflecting on his own experience of living the gospel and revealing what is essential to the joy of Christian life—patience and not becoming upset in bearing the rejection of his brothers!

However, the real significance of this experience does not stop at the level of autobiographical confession. Francis is not drawing attention to himself. His saying on true joy does recapitulate his own experience of following in the footprints of Jesus and the experience of his early brothers as well who were rejected and abused by the people of Assisi as Celano indicated in the text cited above. But much more significantly for Francis, this experience of rejection and suffering was the human condition embraced by Jesus in the Incarnation. Francis's response to rejection thus recapitulates the experience of Jesus—the Incarnate Word made and makes himself vulnerable in our world. Thus, for Francis, the Incarnation is the source of true joy because in the Incarnation Jesus embraced the human condition—our human condition, the condition of our flesh and blood, which is vulnerable, limited, weak, and fragile. And, Jesus bore the human condition in patience and without becoming upset, even in response to those who crucified him!

Francis frequently challenges his brothers to remember that “they have given themselves and abandoned their bodies to the Lord Jesus Christ. For love of Him they must make themselves vulnerable to their enemies, both visible and invisible. . . .” (RegNB 16:10-11); Because, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose footprints we must follow, called his betrayer a friend and willingly offered himself to his executioners” (RegNB 22:2). In the Rule of 1223 Francis wrote:

Let the brothers pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity, to pray always to Him with a pure heart, to have humility and patience in persecution and infirmity, and to love those who persecute, rebuke and find fault with us, because the Lord says: “Love your enemies and pray for those who calumniate you [Mt. 5:44]; Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, the Kingdom of God is theirs [Mt. 5:10]; But whoever perseveres to the end will be saved” [Mt. 10:22].

All of this points to Francis’s experience of Christ; his Christology is the background for understanding this experience. He writes to all the faithful:

The most high father made known from heaven through his holy angel Gabriel this Word of the Father—so worthy, so holy and glorious—in the womb of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from whose *womb He received the flesh of our humanity and frailty*. Though He was rich, He wished together with the most Blessed Virgin, His mother, to choose poverty in this world beyond all else.

And as His Passion was near, He celebrated the Passover with his disciples. . . .

Then He prayed to his Father, saying: Father, if it can be done, let this cup pass from me. . . . Nevertheless, He placed his will in the will of the Father, saying: Father, let Your will be done; not as I will, but as You will. His Father’s will was such that His blessed and glorious Son, Whom He gave to us and Who was born for us, should offer Himself through his Own blood as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the cross: not for Himself through Whom all things were made, but for our sins, leaving us an example that we might follow in His footprints” (2EpFid 4-13).<sup>3</sup>

Francis’s approach to the Incarnation and Passion of Jesus underlines Jesus’ acceptance of the human condition of frailty even to death for us—these are the footprints Francis follows—it is this experience of Jesus which reveals the meaning of true joy. Ultimately, for Francis as for Christ, salvation is achieved by embracing the human condition of frailty and vulnerability. This too is what Francis discovered in the embrace of the leper, which he remembers as

the source of his conversion when he recounts his own story at the end of his life in the Testament—what was bitter became sweet. And after writing the lines above in his Letter to the Faithful, Francis continues:

And He wishes all of us to be saved through Him and receive Him with our pure heart and our chaste body. But even though his yoke is easy and his burden light, there are few who wish to receive Him and be saved through Him. Those who do not wish to taste how sweet the Lord is and who love the darkness more than the light, not wishing to fulfill God’s commands, are cursed; it is said of them by the prophet: Cursed are those who stray from your commands (2EpFid 14-17).

Francis is in awe at what God does for us in Jesus, the gift of salvation. But even more amazing for Francis is the way in which God accomplishes this—through the gift of Jesus whom literally Francis sees as moving toward us in the embrace of humanity: “From heaven the worthy, holy, glorious Word, IN the womb of Mary becomes incarnate in the FLESH of OUR HUMANITY AND FRAILTY.” Not just any human nature, but a frail, weak, vulnerable, limited human nature. And, joy of joys, God chooses to move down toward us in compassion, to be with us, and in being with us, he saves us—as a story of the companions makes especially clear:

Blessed Francis held the Nativity of the Lord in greater reverence than any other of the Lord’s solemnities. For although the Lord may have accomplished our salvation in his other solemnities, nevertheless, once HE WAS BORN TO US, as blessed Francis would say, IT WAS CERTAIN THAT WE WOULD BE SAVED (Assisi Compilation 14).

In other words, Francis understands salvation in terms of what it means to be human. The life of Jesus was salvific from the moment of his conception. The cross and Easter celebrate the accomplishment of salvation in that they continue to express the meaning of the Incarnation—God for us, God moving toward us in love and compassion! The Incarnation is Redemption!

This perspective on the economy of salvation is one of the truly distinctive characteristics of Franciscan Christology arising out of the experience of Francis and Clare and, at the same time, the element of the Franciscan experience which poses the greatest challenge to our times. Though we live in a postmodern world, we are still very much children of the Enlightenment. We believe in a gospel of unlimited progress and so are drawn towards the Resurrection as the icon of our own humanness. We desire a humanity invulnerable to pain, an existence without limits, and a life impervious to suffering, all the while denying any hint of the reality of death. Just reflect for a moment on the image of humanity that the advertising media present—beautiful, sleek, satis-



fied, content, full; in short, perfect specimens of human contentment.

Francis and Clare's approach to the Incarnation was the polar opposite. It recognized the incarnate, suffering, and crucified Christ as the icon of a humanity living a fragile, vulnerable, and limited human existence. For Francis and Clare the Incarnation of Jesus was an incarnation in human flesh that was very familiar, close to home. It focused on the way things were in terms of human existence in a concrete, real, and ordinary experience of being human—birth and death, struggle and suffering, joy and defeat. The Christ of Francis and Clare is not so much the sleek, satisfied human being as the beggar by the wayside, the face ignored in the crowd, the sick and the leper on our streets.

In other words, the Incarnation does not so much show us what we are not, but rather, what we are. We were created in the image of Jesus Christ, says Francis. Christ shows us to ourselves. And the entire lives of Francis and Clare attempt nothing more than to be simply human, and in being simply human to be for other people. Francis states that in the Eucharist the Lord is always WITH US AND FOR US, because the Eucharist continues the Incarnation, God making himself present to us in human flesh.

John Paul emphasizes that "The Year 2000 will be intensely Eucharistic: in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Savior, who took flesh in Mary's womb twenty centuries ago, continues to offer himself to humanity as the source of divine life" (TMA #55). For Francis, the Eucharist is the source of Mission. In the Letter to the Entire Order he states that the mission of the brothers is to make known in word and deed that there is no one all-powerful except God. How? By reverencing the Body and Blood of the Lord in which everything is reconciled and brought to peace. God gives Godself in Jesus who is "for us." This is the source of true joy for Francis and Clare. If God is for us, what more could we possibly want? In compassion, Francis and Clare become "Eucharist" for their world.

So, this Jubilee celebration of the year 2000 which celebrates the Incarnation, invites all of us Franciscans to reflect on our lives—is ours truly a Franciscan Christology? Do we see ourselves in the weak, fragile, vulnerable flesh of Jesus Christ? Are our lives for others as was Jesus' life? Do our institutions, our ministries, our local friaries/convents give visible and concrete expression to this Christ who gives himself into our hands?

## II

John Paul II finds the entire meaning and task of the jubilee in the gospel text which describes the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry in the Nazareth synagogue:

Jesus of Nazareth, going back one day to the synagogue of his home town, stood up to read (cf. Lk. 4:16-30). Taking the book of the Prophet Isaiah, he read this passage: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,

because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Is. 61:102). The prophet was speaking of the Messiah. "Today," Jesus added, "This scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21), thus indicating that he himself was the Messiah foretold by the Prophet, and that the long-expected time was beginning in him (TMA #11).

Here, the text of Luke aptly summarizes the task and grace of the Holy Year in both its personal and social dimensions. But also, with this text, Jesus summarizes the meaning of his life as the fulfillment of scripture in a ministry of compassion. Jesus accomplishes his life and ministry, as we read in the gospel narratives, in and through a manner of being present to all people, a presence which heals, forgives, enlightens, and informs the world with the presence of God. Healing and forgiving sinners is God's attentive, salvific response to those with whom he has come to be Emmanuel, God with us. Monika Hellwig aptly describes Christ as "Jesus, the compassion of God." Compassion, she says,

implies a movement toward the other to help, but also a movement into the experience of the other to be present in solidarity and communion of experience. It implies sensitivity, vulnerability, to be affected by the experience of the other, but it also implies remedial action against suffering and oppression, most of all, it implies involvement in the situation.<sup>4</sup>

We know Francis as a person of compassion. Clare too was remembered by her sisters as showing great compassion to the sick and troubled sisters in the monastery of San Damiano. Patricia Hampl describes Francis in this light:

Francis ran first to the lepers. He didn't run howling into the woods to help them. He simply wanted to join them, to BE with them. He wasn't a do-gooder, not a missionary in the convert-the-heathen sort of way. He was a *joyous mystic* who needed to suffer the great pain of his age, because not to suffer, especially to miss out on the suffering of the world, was not to live.<sup>5</sup>

It is especially in Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* that we see the implications of looking at the life of Francis through the lens of compassion. He emphasizes that compassion was one of the natural virtues of Francis operative in him even before his conversion. After his encounter and embrace of the leper, Francis seeks out solitary places for prayer:

One of those days, withdrawn in this way, while he was praying and all of his fervor was totally absorbed in God, Christ Jesus appeared to

him as fastened to a cross. His soul melted at the sight, and the memory of Christ's passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart. From that hour, whenever Christ's crucifixion came to his mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs, as he later revealed to his companions when he was approaching the end of his life. Through this, the man of God understood as addressed to himself the Gospel text: If you wish to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me (Mt. 16:24) (LM 1:5).

Francis's compassionate embrace of the leper prepared him to experience Christ crucified, an experience which in turn imprinted the cross on the inner life/heart of Francis. Bonaventure comments that Francis "served lepers and with great compassion kissed their hands and mouths. To beggars he wished to give not only his possession but his very self" (LM 1:6). Compassion thus became the condition for understanding and living the Gospel. Throughout the text, Bonaventure draws our attention to the central role of compassion in the life of Francis.

For Bonaventure too, it is compassion which occasions the stigmata of Francis. What happened on LaVerna was not a new grace—it had been there for Francis all along. But, at that moment, he was able to open himself completely to this grace of God:

With the seraphic ardor of DESIRES, therefore, he was being borne aloft into God; and by COMPASSIONATE SWEETNESS he was being transformed into Him Who chose to be crucified out of the excess of His love (LM 13:3).

The desire for God and compassion toward neighbor constitute the convergence of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of human experience, both transcendence and immanence, both being for God and being for others. Francis is transformed by this grace. Thus, it is both contemplation and action, love for God and love for neighbor, which identify Francis at this point in his life.<sup>6</sup> Bonaventure continues the story, describing the vision of the crucified seraph, after which he writes:

[Francis] marveled exceedingly at the sight of so unfathomable a vision, knowing that the weakness of Christ's passion was in no way compatible with the immortality of the seraphic spirit. Eventually he understood from this, through the Lord revealing it, that Divine Providence had shown him a vision of this sort so that the friend of Christ might learn in advance that he was to be totally transformed into the likeness of Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of his flesh, but by the enkindling of his soul. As the vision was disappearing, it left in his heart a marvelous fire and imprinted in his flesh a likeness of signs no less marvelous (LM 13:3).

This desire for God and compassion for neighbor transform Francis in both spirit and flesh into the image of Christ crucified! But the point is that the life of Christ which Francis imitates is understood in and through, and is the result of, compassion. Compassion identifies the Christ of Francis and, at the same time, identifies Francis as the image of Christ.

How did Francis learn this? From God who led him to the leper in his conversion—"And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them" (Test 2). Here Francis was taught and he learned the meaning of the Incarnation—God turns to us and comes to us in the flesh of Jesus Christ. It is this movement toward the other, the suffering other, in compassion and mercy, which accomplishes the Gospel, the life of Christ.

Interestingly, this is a lesson which Francis never grasps once and for all. Even after receiving the Stigmata, he still has much to learn about its meaning and about the meaning of his life. Thus he needs to continue learning the meaning of true joy. The companions tell the story of how one night, as Francis was suffering from his illnesses and probably from the rejection of some of his brothers, he began to feel sorry for himself: "Lord," he said to himself, "make haste to help me in my illnesses, so that I may be able to bear them patiently." He still had difficulty embracing the suffering of his human condition.

And suddenly he was told in spirit: "Tell me, brother, what if, in exchange for your illness and troubles, someone were to give you a treasure? And it would be so great and precious that, even if the whole earth were changed to pure gold, all stones to precious stones, and all water to balsam, you would still judge and hold all these things as nothing, as if they were earth, stones and water, in comparison to the great and precious treasure which was given you. Wouldn't you greatly rejoice?" "Lord," Blessed Francis answered, "this treasure would indeed be great, worth seeking, very precious, greatly lovable, and desirable." "Then, brother," he was told, "be glad and rejoice in your illness and troubles, because as of now, you are as secure as if you were already in my kingdom."

The next morning on rising, he said to his companions:

"... I must rejoice greatly in my illnesses and troubles and be consoled in the Lord, giving thanks always to God the Father, to His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit for such a great grace and blessing. In His mercy He has given me, His unworthy little servant still living in the flesh, the promise of His Kingdom!" (Assisi Compilation 83).

Having patience and not becoming upset in his illness and trouble was true joy for Francis. And true joy is ultimately all about living in the Kingdom of God here on earth. Notice the image of Christ that Francis suggests we

place before our eyes as we recite the liturgy of the Hours: "The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and blessing." Francis repeats this text from the Book of Revelation 5:12 in "The Praises to be Said at All the Hours," verse 3. This is Francis's image of the resurrected Christ, the Lamb who was slain and who continues to carry in glory the wounds of the passion. For Francis, the Kingdom is the Kingdom of the Lamb who was slain, who now in the glory of resurrected life carries the marks, the wounds of the cross. Progress toward this Kingdom is measured by the degree of one's transformation into the image of the Lamb who was slain. True joy is a sign of life in the Kingdom, which is not a better or different world than this one in which we live. Living in the Kingdom implies being at home in this world, just the way it is and just the way we are!

Franciscan reflection and celebration of Jubilee 2000 challenges us to rejoice in being human, because that is what God did and continues to do in Jesus, the compassion of God. Our salvation was/is effected by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the compassionate presence of God. To follow his footprints means to live true joy.

### III

From all that I have suggested here, it seems that this Jubilee of the Incarnation, the meaning of True Joy and Franciscan life, all converge in the reality of compassion. Reviewing the stated aims, goals, processes, and prayer of the Jubilee year from this Franciscan perspective, I suggest a few thoughts and questions that might be helpful.

1. John Paul suggested that all human questions find an answer in Jesus Christ. Jesus reveals to us the truth of the human condition. Francis follows the footprints of Jesus and discovers in compassion his own truest identity and task. This challenges us Franciscans not just at the level of pious thought or good intention, but invites us to re-orient our lives so that we recognize in our struggles to be truly human the image of Jesus Christ. In those struggles we come to know and begin to taste the sweetness of the Kingdom of the Lamb who was slain. This is the heart of the gospel. It reveals a God who, in moving toward us in the Incarnation, invites us to turn toward the leper, the other in our life. What is in our hearts? What is it that we really seek and desire? What do we hope for? Where do we put our energy? Who is Jesus Christ for us? Can we or do we portray this image with the life we live with others? How do we bear the human condition? How do we understand the Franciscan mission in terms of what we say, do, think, and act, both personally and institutionally?

2. One of the primary realities which the Jubilee hopes to foster and accomplish in real and tangible ways is the reality of reconciliation on all levels of existence—personal, social, and ecclesial. Reconciliation begins with the hon-

est acceptance of the way things are—admission of guilt is the first step toward healing. In addition to prayer and fasting, how are we Franciscans called to foster reconciliation in the world? I suggest that the early Franciscan sources respond by demonstrating that reconciliation was the primary effect of the very life and presence of the Franciscan brothers and sisters at all levels of society.

Thus, in a short time, the appearance of the entire region was changed and, once rid of its earlier ugliness, it revealed a happier expression everywhere. The former dryness was put to rout and a crop sprang up quickly in the untilled field. Even the uncultivated vine began to produce buds with a sweet-smell for the Lord, and when it had produced flowers of sweetness, it brought forth equally the fruit of honor and respectability. Thanks and the voice of praise resounded everywhere, as many, casting aside earthly concerns, gained knowledge of themselves in the life and teaching of the most blessed father Francis and aspired to love and reverence for their Creator (1Cel 37).

Even the cosmos—care for the earth—was affected by the presence of Francis according to Celano! But it was the *quality of life, the presence*, in compassion, of the brothers and sisters which effected this transformation of the earth, the cosmos, and human lives. Are we compassionate? Do we stand in compassion with the broken, the sinner, the outcast, the abused, the proud? What is the quality of our Franciscan presence as persons, communities, and institutions?

3. Both Francis and Clare were convinced that God continues to make the offer of Self to us in Jesus right now in this world. Francis and Clare lived in the space celebrated in the Cantic of the Creatures—everything is a reflection of God! In order to live that way ourselves, we must be able to see what Francis and Clare saw in the poor, in creation, in their brothers and sisters. Francis often exhorted his brothers: "Let us pay attention to what the Lord says and does." Notice the present tense of the verb—pay attention to what God is saying and doing right now, in this situation, at this moment in history. This way of seeing is contemplation. Franciscan contemplation takes us out of ourselves and directs us toward the other, as God directed Francis to the leper. Are we contemplatives in this sense? Can we contemplate like this "on our feet," that is while we live and minister, and not merely when we are in church or in the quiet of our rooms?

4. John Paul has stated that "Among the sins which require a greater commitment to repentance and conversion should certainly be counted those which have been detrimental to the unity willed by God for his People. In the course of the thousand years now drawing to a close, even more than in the first

millennium, ecclesial communion has been painfully wounded, a fact for which, at times, men of both sides were to blame" (TMA #34). On the First Sunday of Lent, 2000, we witnessed the public, visible, and challenging confession of fault by John Paul for the sins of the Church. How have we Franciscans embraced the challenge of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue? How have we embraced this call for unity among ourselves? The history of the First Order, the Second and Third Orders are replete with sins against unity. Have we honestly faced up to these and admitted our guilt to each other? How does the call for the re-union of churches affect us Franciscans as a body?

Whether or not it is possible, feasible, or even desirable for a re-union of the branches of the First Order is not the question or issue I raise. But rather what is the impact of our divisions on the Body of Christ? How have our sins against each other redounded to the detriment of the Church and the world? Can we ever get beyond questions of who are the real, authentic followers of Francis or Clare so that we can live as brothers and sisters with our differences? I don't think this will ever happen until we can accept and admit our complicity in the sins of our history. Real unity fosters diversity (Scotus and *haecceitas* with common nature!). This is something all of us Franciscans need to reflect on at the beginning of this new millennium!

There are many more implications for our Franciscan tradition's approach to the Incarnation in terms of True Joy and Compassion. We have only begun to touch the surface. But half way through this Jubilee Year, the 2000th anniversary of the Incarnation, let us begin, brothers and sisters, because until now we have done very little (LM 14:1).

May the Lord give you Jubilee Peace and True Joy!

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>References to the writings of Francis and the early sources for his life are from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vols. 1 and 2, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap., J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv., William J. Short. OFM (New York: New City Press, 1999, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>Francis speaks in the text only of "True Joy" but somehow the further qualification of "Perfect Joy" was later added, a concept which placed the meaning of Francis in the realm of the ascetical rather than leave it in the realm of the practical, which it was for Francis himself!

<sup>3</sup>It is interesting to note that Francis connects the image of following footprints to the context of Christ's example in the Passion. See also RegNB 22:1-2.

<sup>4</sup>Monika Hellwig, *Jesus the Compassion of God* (Glazier, 1983), 121.

<sup>5</sup>Patricia Hampl, *Virgin Time* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), 121.

<sup>6</sup>Chapter 12 of the *Legenda Maior* begins with the story of the conflict Francis experienced between contemplation and action, but this is resolved for Francis by the conviction that he is called to follow the example set on the mountain, that is Jesus Christ who synthesizes action and contemplation in his own life.

The holy man of God stands before the manger, filled with heartfelt sighs, contrite in his piety, and overcome with wondrous joy (ICel 30).

## Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke 2:6-7<sup>1</sup>

Introduced and Translated by  
Robert J. Karris, OFM

### Introduction

In introducing this abbreviated excerpt from St. Bonaventure's marvelous commentary on Luke's Gospel, I make three points.

1. Bonaventure's commentary deals primarily with the literal sense of Luke's Gospel and does so by following the traditional interpretation of his predecessors and especially by using parallel scripture passages. Take a quick look at paragraph 9 on Luke 2:6 below where Bonaventure interprets "the days were fulfilled" via Galatians 4:4: "When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman." But Bonaventure's commentary will also give a moral interpretation of a passage or what we might call today "a pastoral application." See, for example, paragraph 13 below where Bonaventure interprets Christ's being placed in the bed of the manger as Christ's condemnation of voluptuous beds.

2. I have discovered that in many ways Bonaventure's exegesis anticipates contemporary exegetical praxis. Today scripture scholars are wont to talk about the "co-text" of a scripture passage or try to interpret a scripture passage by means of its "intertext." In less technical terms, these scholars are searching for the Old Testament antecedents of a New Testament passage. Bonaventure was a pioneer in this search as he interpreted scripture by scripture. I quote from Raymond E. Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah* and ask my readers to compare Brown's interpretation with that of Bonaventure in paragraph 12 below. Brown writes:

A better suggestion relates the symbolism of the Lucan manger to God's complaint in the Septuagint of Isaiah 1:3: 'The ox knows its

owner, and the donkey knows the manger of its lord. But Israel has not known me. My people has not understood me.' Luke would be proclaiming that the Isaian dictum is repealed. . . . In other words, God's people have begun to know the manger of their Lord.<sup>2</sup>

3. Finally, this excerpt, especially the exquisite paragraphs 15-16, offers us a rich sample of Bonaventure's christology of exemplarity which spotlights the poverty and humility of the Son of God. In a marvelous passage on Bonaventure's christology, Ilia Delio writes:

For Bonaventure, poverty and humility are not simply accidental qualities of the earthly life of Jesus; rather, they express the very nature of God hidden in the earthly life of Christ. Poverty is the foundation of the imitation of Christ since the very manner of Christ's entry into this world reveals, in a concrete way, the self-emptying of God and calls us to imitate him.<sup>3</sup>

With all the symbolism revolving around Jesus, bread of life, lying in a manger which provides food for creation, I may be allowed to conclude this introduction with the waiter's injunction: "Enjoy." Or to conclude on a more biblical note, I say: "Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."

### The Text of Bonaventure's Commentary

9. (Verse 6). *And it came to pass while they were there*, etc. Previously the Evangelist described the nativity of Christ with regard to its fitting time and suitable place. Now, in his third point, he describes it with regard to its *birthing*, and does so under three categories: *the occasion for giving birth, the newness of the birth, and the poverty of the one giving birth*. And in these three ways the birth of Christ is shown forth to be wonderful, inimitable, and commendable.

First, then the text points to the occasion for giving birth when it says: *And it came to pass when they were there, that the days for Mary to give birth were fulfilled*, in accordance with what was said above in Luke 1:57 about her relative: "The time was fulfilled for Elizabeth to give birth." Verily, *were fulfilled* because in the fullness of time Christ was conceived and born as Galatians 4:4 has: "And when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman." The psalm has: "Full days will be found in them" (72:10).

10. (Verse 7). The text indicates *the newness of the birth* when it says: *And she brought forth her firstborn son*. And this means that there were no prior children, because, since a Virgin had conceived him, he was her firstborn. As Isaiah 7:14 says: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son." And therefore, this birthing was new, just as his conception was, because, just as he was conceived without shame, so he was born without pain. As Isaiah 66:7-9 says:

"Before she was in labor, she gave birth. Before her time came to be delivered, she gave birth to a boy. Who has ever heard such a thing? Who has seen the like? . . . Shall not I who empower others to give birth to children, myself not bring forth, says the Lord? Shall I who give the power of generation to others be barren, says the Lord God?" Such a birthing was fitting for the Christ, of whom Colossians 1:14-15 says: "In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creatures." Thus, just as he was the firstborn of the Father, so too is he the firstborn of the Mother. And just as he is the only begotten of the Father, so too is he the only begotten of the Mother. John 1:14 has: "We have seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," etc. Thus the text does not say here firstborn with respect to those born after him, as the heretic Helvidius used to say, but with respect to those born before him. For Mary had none before him, in order to show that he was to be totally dedicated to the Lord. For all the firstborn are to be offered to God. Exodus 13:2 has: "Sanctify unto me every firstborn that opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of human and of beasts. For they are mine."<sup>4</sup>

11. In the third place the text points to the poverty of *the one giving birth*, because she lacks *clothing, a bed, and hospitality*. With regard to the paucity of clothing it says: *And she wrapped him in swaddling clothes*, that is, not in one single garment, but in many, so that he could be called a pauper in tatters and would clearly exemplify what the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 6:8: "Having some food and something in which we are clothed, let us be content with these." And this corresponds to that prophecy of Zechariah 3:3 where it is said that "Jesus, the high priest, was clothed in filthy garments."<sup>5</sup> Bernard says: "May you recognize Jesus the high priest, clothed with filthy garments, as he contends with the devil. But when he had been exalted as our head over our enemies, he changed his clothes and put on a splendid garment, *clothed with light as with a garment*. First one puts on the burdensome iron breastplate to do battle, then in victory one dons the linen garment of honor."<sup>6</sup>—And in this *the cultivation of precious garments* is condemned. On account of what is said in Matthew 11:8: "Those who are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings" and in Sirach 11:4: "Do not glory in your apparel at any time."

12. And because of *the lack of a bed* the text continues: *She laid him in a manger*, not in a bedroom, so that what Matthew 8:20 says might be verified: "Foxes have their dens, and the birds of heaven have their nests. But the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." *In a manger* Christ is laid, so that what John 6:41 says might be demonstrated: "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven," and so that what Isaiah 1:3 says might be verified: "The ox knows its owner and the ass the manger of its master." And also so that there might be verifications of what Habakkuk 3:2 in the Greek Septuagint has: "In the middle

of two animals you will become known. When the years have drawn near, you will be recognized," etc.

13. Now according to the *mystical* understanding, the fact that he was born in *Bethlehem* means that he is the living bread, for *Bethlehem* is interpreted as the house of bread.<sup>8</sup> The fact that he is placed in a *manger* means that he is food for the simple and humble by reason of his assumed flesh. Isaiah 40:6 has: "All flesh is hay, and all its glory like the flowering of the hay." That he is *in the midst of two animals* signifies that in this pasture and under this shepherd sheep of both folds must be united as John 10:16 has: "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. Them I must also bring, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one fold and one shepherd."

*Morally and literally*, by his actions Christ condemned voluptuous beds, against which Amos 6:4 railed: "Woe to you, who sleep in ivory beds and are wanton on your couches."

14. Because there was *no dwelling* the text continues: *Because there was no room for them in the inn*. For according to Isidore it is called an *inn* (in Latin: *diversorium*) because diverse peoples might congregate there. And it is an open space. But according to Bede, it is called such because it has diverse openings. For it is an empty space between two districts of a town and has access to and egress from both. It is also covered because of inclement weather, so that the citizens could convene to talk among themselves. It is here that the Virgin Mary bore her son, because they did not have a house in which they could receive hospitality whether because they were poor or because they arrived tardily. And this space was constricted or even filled with others, so that she had only the tiniest of places among the brute animals. Whence Christ could say what the psalm has: "I have become a beast among you, and I am always with you" (72:23). And this is verified in Jeremiah 14:8-9: "Why will you be as a wandering man, as a mighty man that cannot save? But you, O Lord, are among us, and your name is invoked upon us," etc. -And in this *extensive buildings* are condemned, according to what Isaiah 5:8 has: "Woe to you that join house to house and lay field to field." Augustine says: "On earth he had the smallest places, so that you might open wide to him that place in your heart which you keep to yourself. The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head, and you measure yourself by your expansive palaces and gigantic colonnades."

15. Therefore, the poor mother gives birth to the poor Christ in such a way that he might invite us to embrace poverty and to be enriched by his penury, according to what 2 Corinthians 8:9 says: "You know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who although he was rich, became poor for your sakes." And by means of his all-embracing indigence he condemned avaricious opu-

lence. Whence Bernard says: "The Son of God chose a poor mother, who barely had sufficient swaddling clothes for him and had no place but a manger in which to lay him. His decision is not according to the world's standards. Either he is wrong, or the world is in error. . . . But it is impossible for divine wisdom to be in error. Therefore, he, who did not err, chose what was bothersome to the flesh, and in doing so, showed us how to choose what is better, more useful, and more pleasing." Let us, therefore, be on Christ's side, as it is said in 2 Corinthians 6:10: "As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, but possessing all."

16. From this it becomes clearer to us that Jesus was really *the Savior of the world*, who from the first moment of his birth gave an example of virtue and shows *the way of salvation*. For in possessing a vile, humble, and poor bed, he already began to say that the world is to be despised with respect to the three things in it.<sup>10</sup> Already by example he began to demonstrate *the state of perfection* which consists of humility, austerity, and poverty. Also in this the Lord manifests *the disposition of highest condescension*, because not only did he become a little child for us, but also became poor and despised for us, so that he could truly say what the psalm has: "I am poor and in labors from my youth" (87:16).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>This excerpt is from St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on Luke's Gospel*, 1-8, translated and annotated by Robert J. Karris, OFM (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, forthcoming). It is a translation of S. Bonaventurae *Commentarius in Evangelium S. Lucae*, Vol. VII (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1895).

<sup>2</sup>See *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, New Updated Edition; Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1993) 419. I have slightly modified Brown's text.

<sup>3</sup>Ilia Delio, OSF, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, Studies in Franciscanism (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1998) 91.

<sup>4</sup>The Quaracchi editors on p. 46 n.6 give good evidence that Bonaventure is dependent here on Jerome's *De Perpetua Virginitate Beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium*. See *The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary Against Helvidius* #12 in Jerome, *Letters and Select Works*, A Select Library of the Christian Church, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995) 339: "Our position is this: Every only begotten son is a first-born son, but not every first-born is an only begotten. By first-born we understand not only one who is succeeded by others, but one who has had no predecessor. 'Everything,' says the Lord to Aaron, 'that openeth the womb of all flesh.' . . . The word of the Lord defines first-born as everything that openeth the womb. Otherwise, if the title belongs to such only as have younger brothers, the priests cannot claim the firstlings until their successors have been begotten, lest, perchance, in case there were no subsequent delivery it should prove to be the first-born and not merely the only begotten."

<sup>5</sup>Bonaventure and Bernard of Clairvaux, whom Bonaventure quotes, have in mind the larger context of Zechariah 3:1-4. I quote Zechariah 3:1,4: "And the Lord showed me Jesus the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord. And Satan stood on his right hand to be his adversary. . . . Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him: Behold I have taken away your iniquity and have clothed you with a change of garments."

<sup>6</sup>Bonaventure adjusts his quotation from Bernard's Fourth Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord. See SBOp 4.264 for the full text of "in Nativitate Domini Sermo Quartus De abiectiōe et humilitate nativitatis Christi." The phrase, "clothed with light as with a garment," is from Psalm 103:1.

<sup>7</sup>The Quaracchi editors on p. 47 n. 2 indicate that Bonaventure's interpretation of Jesus in the manger as "the bread of life" has illustrious predecessors. In his commentary on Luke 2:7, Venerable Bede writes: "... [he] who is the bread of angels lies in a manger, so that he might nourish us like sacred animals with the food of his flesh. ..." See CCSL 120, p. 49. And in Bede's Homily 1.6 on the Gospels we read: "And it was on account of the preeminent sacrament that, when he was born, he chose a resting-place for himself in a manger, where animals are accustomed to come to take food. For already then he suggested that by the mysteries of his incarnation he would restore all the faithful upon the most sacred table of the altar." Translation from *Bede the Venerable Homilies on the Gospels: Book One, Advent to Lent*, Cistercian Studies Series 110 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 58. ... It should not surprise us that Venerable Bede is dependent on one of his predecessors, Gregory the Great, for his commentary. In his eighth homily on the Gospels, Gregory the Great writes: "And because it is said by the prophet that *all flesh is hay*, he, having become a human being, changed this hay of ours into wheat and said of himself, *Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone*. Hence when born he was laid in a manger, so that he might nourish with the food of his flesh all the faithful like sacred animals, lest they remain empty of the food of eternal understanding." Translation modified from what David Hurst denotes Homily 7 in his *Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies*, Cistercian Studies Series 123 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 51.

<sup>8</sup>Bonaventure's interpretation, whether "mystical" or not, has a long pre-history. In Letter 108.10 To Eustochium, Jerome quotes Paula as saying: "Hail Bethlehem, house of bread, wherein was born that Bread that came down from heaven." See *Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, p. 199. ... In his Sermon 8 on the Gospels, Gregory the Great has: "It was fitting too that he was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is translated, 'house of bread,' and it is he who said: *I am the living bread who came down from heaven*. The place in which the Lord was born was called the 'house of bread,' because it was truly going to come to pass that he would appear there in a material body who would nourish the hearts of his chosen ones by an interior food" (p. 51 of *Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies*). ... In his homily 1.6 Venerable Bede writes: "... for Bethlehem has the meaning 'house of bread,' and he himself said, *I am the living bread which descended from heaven*.' Because he descended from heaven to earth in order to grant us the nourishing fare of heavenly life and to satisfy us with the favor of eternal sweetness, the place where he was born is rightly called 'house of bread'" (*Bede the Venerable, Homilies on the Gospels, Book One*, p. 56).

<sup>9</sup>In this quotation from Bernard's *Third Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord*, Bonaventure abbreviates Bernard's thought. The thought of Bernard and Bonaventure is that Christ, eternal Wisdom, could have chosen any mother and any way to be born. By choosing a poor mother and poor circumstances, he has laid down a way of life which is in contradiction to that of the world. (See SBOp 4.258).

<sup>10</sup>The Quaracchi editors on p. 48 n. 2 rightly point to 1 John 2:16 as the source of the "three things" in the world: "concupiscence of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

**SHE TRUSTED  
THAT GOD  
WOULD PROVIDE  
AS SHE TRIED  
TO LIVE AS ONE  
POOR PERSON  
AMONG OTHER  
POOR PERSONS.**

Giles Schinelli, TOR



*The Cord*, 50.6 (2000)

## Elizabeth of Hungary: Medieval Princess or Sharper Image?

Giles Schinelli, TOR

As the work on the sources continues to progress, we followers of Francis and Clare find our blessings to be many. Richer translations, sources once obscure now readily available, and new insights into personages through their writings excite and overwhelm at the same time. This faithful return to the roots of Franciscan evangelical life kindles in me an enthusiasm to explore. Presently it is Elizabeth of Hungary who captures my imagination. This attraction was fueled last year while I was on a Franciscan Study Pilgrimage. In a number of places, like the Church of San Francesco a Ripa (on the banks of the Tiber) and the Capella Ungharese (in the crypt of St. Peter's), Elizabeth's image seemed to beckon to me. The memory of these encounters encourages me to share the fruits of my exploration. I am further motivated by a puzzling portrait of Elizabeth which hangs in the Franciscan church where I most recently served. In this portrait, she has a very Wagnerian look, complete with blond braids, royal crown, and roses. First some background.

### Background

André Vauchez, in his book *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, has a chapter entitled, "Female Sanctity in the Franciscan Movement." He notes that between the years 1198 and 1431 the number of women proposed for canonization rose dramatically. In this period 21.4 percent of the saints belonging to mendicant orders were female, and of the lay saints more than half (58.5 percent) were women. He compares this to the period between the years 500-1200, when fewer than 10 percent of the saints venerated in the West were women.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on these statistics, Vauchez remarks that this change in direction was no doubt due, in part, to the Franciscan ideal and the activities of the Franciscan friars.<sup>2</sup>



But exactly how did the Franciscan vision and the activities of the friars effect this shift? How can we understand this change in direction which Vauchez calls the "feminization of sanctity"? What was happening in society and in the Church that conspired to bring about such a change in religious sensibilities? The answers to these questions are complex and essentially beyond the scope of this article. But it is important to sketch briefly some of the developments because they give substance to Elizabeth's life. These developments also serve as a kind of prism through which the lives of early Franciscan women, especially those who did not leave writings, have relevance for today.

First, it is helpful to remember that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries built upon a climate of reform and change which had begun much earlier. The structural reform of the Church initiated by Pope Gregory VII (c.1075) and the Cluniac reorganization of monasticism developed new awarenesses over a period of time. One began to ask "whether each and every Christian (not just members of the hierarchy and monks) might be called by the command of the gospels and the example of the apostles to model her/his life on the gospels and apostolic standards."<sup>3</sup> In other words, reform orchestrated from above began ever so slowly to influence changes which developed from below in a variety of places and in many guises. It is analogous to our own experience as Church some thirty years after Vatican II.

Secondly, it is clear that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a certain clerical mentality presented women as "creatures incapable of spiritual reflection and understanding, frivolous, fickle and inconstant."<sup>4</sup> Women were thought to operate under the dual handicap of presumed physical and moral weakness as well as the passive role to which the Church consigned them.<sup>5</sup> The reasons for these views are interesting, and recent research has helped us to understand their causes.<sup>6</sup> This mentality was not unique to the Church. It was mirrored in a medieval society shifting from a feudal base to a growing money economy. Greed and the will to power mingled with an obvious double moral standard for the sexes. Men considered women as chattels or as pawns to be used in arranged marriages which would further political or social ambitions. It was an uncommonly violent society, capitalistically ambivalent and essentially Catholic. Preachers condemned trade and the charging of interest as immoral. Yet, surprisingly, we find an increasing number of women, in spite of the handicaps listed above, developing a religious self-awareness marked by abandonment of worldly goods and devotion to the needs of the poor and the sick.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, few seem to have understood women's new religious self-awareness or what it prophesied, except perhaps the ubiquitous Jacques de Vitry. In the twelfth century, the Church exhibited a guarded (and ambiguous?) openness to these new initiatives, perhaps in an opportunistic attempt to stem the

growing number of women who, the reports suggest, were avidly drawn to certain movements with heretical overtones.<sup>8</sup> The rapid spread of the Franciscan movement was taking place amid all of this cultural shifting. That it took on a kind of prominence is not hard to imagine.<sup>9</sup> From the evidence, one suspects that it served a dual kind of function. On the one hand, the Franciscan movement was a conduit for Christian ideals, highlighting and promoting the gospel values of humility and voluntary poverty. On the other hand, it served as a kind of protector—albeit unwillingly—of a developing and novel kind of religious expression.

This very brief historical sketch suggests that in trying to understand medieval persons it is helpful to examine as much evidence as possible. The development of persons is never a simple matter. Much goes into the mix. Conclusions should not be drawn hastily because cause and effect are not easily ascertained. Grundmann seems to say it best:

The frequently expressed opinion that the women's religious movement of the thirteenth century can be explained entirely in terms of the economic and social distress of women in lower, poorer social levels, or that it originated with women who could not marry due to a shortage of men and hence had to seek some other means of support, not only contradicts all the sources, but utterly misunderstands them and their sense of religiosity.<sup>10</sup>

While it is true that human development is conditioned by external circumstances, the mere examination of external circumstances does not capture the whole truth or mystery of how a person's life takes shape. Longstanding friendships with women and men assure me that a person's development has an inner, sometimes hidden and sometimes mysterious, dimension. In this respect, women and men share a certain common ground. Experience teaches that life is fashioned not given. Personal sensitivities, grace, faith, attraction to certain values are some of the tools used in the process. Is it possible to get to this level of exploration when it comes to Elizabeth? Let's take a sharper look.

## Elizabeth of Thuringia

Elizabeth, princess daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary and Queen Gertrude, was born in 1207 about the time young Francis of Assisi was repairing the Church of San Damiano and trying to understand God's design for his life. Elizabeth's sister Mary would marry Asen II, the King of Bulgaria. Her brother, Béla, would eventually become the King of Hungary. Her maternal aunt was Queen Hedwig of Poland and her first cousin on her father's side was Agnes of Bohemia with whom Clare of Assisi later corresponded and who is



known in these letters as Agnes of Prague. Among her other maternal relatives were the abbess of Kitzingen-on-the-Main (Mathilda) and the Bishop of Bamberg (Eckbert).

In 1211, at the age of four, Elizabeth was betrothed to Ludwig IV of Thuringia, son of Duke Hermann and Duchess Sophie of Bavaria. At that time she was brought to the castle in Thuringia, the Wartburg, near Eisenach. There she was raised with her intended husband, some six years her senior, along with his older sister (Irmingard), three brothers (Hermann, Henry, and Conrad), and a younger sister Agnes who would have been about Elizabeth's age. In 1221, the year the Franciscans successfully came to Germany, Elizabeth and Ludwig were married. She was fourteen and he twenty. They had three children—a boy (Hermann) and two girls (Sophia and Gertrude). Ludwig died in 1227 as he was embarking for the Holy Land. Elizabeth lived another four years after his death. She died on November 16/17, 1231. Pope Gregory IX canonized her in Perugia on May 27, 1235.<sup>11</sup>

Nesta de Robeck, in her biography of Elizabeth, provided a valuable service by making available in English the testimony of certain witnesses who were questioned as part of the process of Elizabeth's canonization. Along with these testimonies, she provided letters from Conrad of Marburg, Elizabeth's spiritual director, as well as other pertinent documents related to the canonization process.<sup>12</sup> Lacking written material by Elizabeth herself, these sources put us into astonishingly close contact with our subject. Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, in the very extensive and interesting introduction to her book, details the history of these earlier sources and the commentaries which have been made on them. She remarks that the letter of Master Conrad to Pope Gregory IX (the former Cardinal Hugolino), as well as the testimony of the witnesses to the miracles and the deposition of Elizabeth's four maidservants, were compiled remarkably early, that is between 1232 and 1235.<sup>13</sup> This fact gives them pride of place and is one of the reasons that the publication and study of them is so important.<sup>14</sup>

The second letter of Conrad of Marburg to the Pope fills in some details about the last two years of Elizabeth's married life and her four years as a widow. This information enables us to complete a thumbnail sketch of her life and affords us some insight into the multidimensional layers of her emerging personality. Conrad mentions her dedication to providing food for the poor and hungry and her care for the sick. The latter concern caused her to build a hospital, he says, near Wartburg castle and later another one in the town of Marburg.

Most definitely a product of his time, Conrad further mentions his refusal to allow Elizabeth to beg from door to door, his reasons only implied. As a spiritual director of some expertise, he proudly outlines the discipline he imposed on her, in the name of humility, by removing her maidservants.<sup>15</sup> Read-

ing Conrad's description of her, one is struck by three things: her practical interest in the poor, the hungry, and the sick; her fierce determination to embrace a life of voluntary poverty; and his somewhat grudging admiration of her response to the call to holiness.

However, the best witness to Elizabeth's complex personality comes from the testimony of her four maidservants. The text in English is entitled the *Deposition Made Before the Commissioners for the Cause of Canonization*.<sup>16</sup> The text follows no chronological order. The testimony of the maidservants is interwoven in a stream of consciousness style which is sometimes difficult to follow. The four women are Guda, Isentrude, Elizabeth, and Irmingarde. Guda was one year older than Elizabeth and lived with her from the time she went to the Wartburg at age four until some years after Ludwig's death. Isentrude, a noblewoman, lived with Elizabeth five years during Ludwig's life and one year thereafter.

Two incidents reported by these maidservants enable us to glimpse the depth and richness of this emerging personality. The first has to do with Elizabeth's introduction into the world of what we would call social analysis. Isentrude tells us that Elizabeth's spiritual director admonished her not to make use of her husband's goods unless she was sure they were honestly acquired.<sup>17</sup> This directive had to do particularly with foodstuffs, and Elizabeth complied as did her companions/servants. Her husband supported this initiative even though he feared the reproaches of those about him. Apparently, Elizabeth had an arrangement with Ludwig in which she had access to the use of certain funds. These funds allowed her the freedom to purchase food which had been legitimately obtained.

In her book on discipleship, Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza focuses on what she calls the features of Elizabeth's outstanding and independent personality. Referring to this particular directive she comments:

Elizabeth's contribution consisted in seeing poverty not as willed by God but as closely linked with the lifestyle of the rich and noble classes. She recognized that many consumer goods were unjustly taken away from the poor peasants who were her subjects. Peasants and petty workers paid for the luxurious living of the princes and lords. . . . Elizabeth's vow was a decisive step in the medieval praxis of almsgiving. She not only shared her husband's goods with the poor; she also publicly protested against the injustices done to them. Her contemporaries recognized the revolutionary potential of her action. Ludwig's family attacked her and the surrounding gentility ridiculed her.<sup>18</sup>

No doubt living this radical and prophetic-justice stance (as we might say today) was not easy. But when Elizabeth was supported and protected by her loving husband, surrounded by companions who followed her lead, and had

money to provide food from untainted sources, the challenge, though inconvenient and difficult, was not impossible.

But the situation dramatically changed after Ludwig's death. The testimony of Guda and Isentrude is not always clear. At times it is even contradictory. The initial impression is that after her husband's death Elizabeth was driven from the castle by her brother-in-law. This impression is justifiable given the reaction of Ludwig's family to her public protest about ill-gotten food. Ancelet-Hustasche's explanation is more cautious, however. When Ludwig died the duchy passed to his son, but all the members of the family inherited the family possessions in common. Since the son of Elizabeth and Ludwig was still a minor, Ludwig's brothers, Henry and Conrad, took charge of the disposition of the estate. The women were mentioned and their dowries included in the family property. The revenues from their dowries were given to them primarily in the form of subsistence. After the death of a husband there were two possibilities for a widow. Either she could continue to receive the usual subsistence or there could be an arrangement by which she received a modest share of the estate and from then on ceased to be a coproprietor of the family possessions.<sup>19</sup>

One of the maidservants testifies that, after Ludwig's death, Elizabeth was "thrown out of the castle and deprived of the property which belonged to her." But later on this witness and others testified with a different twist and portrayed Elizabeth as having some financial resources. What actually happened? It is possible that Elizabeth had no choice but to leave the castle. She realized that the financial arrangements she had enjoyed with her husband could no longer be maintained. If the only support she could claim from the family was the usual subsistence, she had a significant problem—she was no longer able to discriminate in any way between ill-gotten and legitimately acquired foodstuffs. The exigencies of this situation were in conflict with the discipline Master Conrad had enjoined on her and which she had fully embraced. Thus, she was forced to leave by the unresolvable conflict she faced. This was a critical moment in which her identity was being forged, most probably by the Franciscan ideal of voluntary poverty.<sup>20</sup>

The maidservants later testified that both her uncle, Bishop Eckbert, and Master Conrad, knowing that a better arrangement could be made that would insure some modest future financial support, acted on her behalf in this regard. That seems to be the reason why the servants testify in two places that after her husband's burial she returned to Thuringia to obtain some of her dowry and that in Marburg she was distributing money to the poor.<sup>21</sup> Yet, Elizabeth seemed strangely detached from these financial concerns and set her sights on practical ways to live with and for the poor.

Her maidservants also testified to a second incident that provides insight into her emerging personality. Elizabeth is remembered by these witnesses as

a person who tried to live in solidarity with them (i.e. her women servants) and with others who were not of her class. She never let herself be called "mistress." She refused to be addressed by the formal "you" but insisted that they should use the familiar form of speech when speaking with her. Her intuitive approach to expressing the ideal of the imitation of the poor Christ was novel to be sure. She enlisted the support of husband and servants. She did not define herself narrowly in terms of either her privileged class or her status as a mother. She had an intuitive grasp of what we call today systemic injustice, giving to the poor not only food, beer, and clothing but the necessary tools to work. She trusted that God would provide as she tried to live as one poor person among other poor persons. She compromised when necessity demanded it, but never as a radical disciple of the poor Christ.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

This portrait gleaned from very early sources is somewhat different from the story of the roses, which has long been a popular vehicle for learning about Elizabeth's life. The legend portrays her as hiding her charitable works from her royal husband out of fear. When she is found out, she prays for a miracle and it is granted. The miracle, in the form of roses which conceal her almsgiving, protects her from the anger of the duke. The legend certainly portrays the charitable works that were incumbent on a noble medieval lady. But it conceals what her maidservants tell us about Ludwig's support of his wife's charity as well as the deep love he shared with her. It certainly, as one commentator suggests, keeps her remote from the visions and goals of contemporary women and men.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, this legend is not found in the earliest accounts of Elizabeth's life.<sup>24</sup>

Manselli, whose take on these early testimonies is a bit different from mine, sums up both Elizabeth's multidimensional personality and her importance in the Franciscan story:

Whether through the influence of her first confessor, a Franciscan, or through direct acquaintances with the Friars Minor, Elizabeth had reliable information about Francis of Assisi. She offered herself to him in a Franciscan church and later built a hospital in his name. She certainly felt his influence, but it is worth emphasizing strongly that her image of him was not yet that of the biographers. In fact, if we wish to characterize Elizabeth's personality as a whole, we must say that, for her time, she is the saint closest to Francis of Assisi. Paradoxically, she is closer to Francis through her life and activity in the world than even Clare of Assisi, who was obliged to live within the walls of a monastery.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup>André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices* ed. Daniel E. Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 172.

<sup>2</sup>Vauchez, 172-173.

<sup>3</sup>Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans. Steven Rowan with an Introduction by Robert E. Lerner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 7.

<sup>4</sup>Vauchez, 174.

<sup>5</sup>Vauchez, 174.

<sup>6</sup>Vauchez, as well as other sources cited in this article.

<sup>7</sup>Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 233-235.

<sup>8</sup>Vauchez, 174.

<sup>9</sup>Vauchez, 174-175.

<sup>10</sup>Grundmann, 82.

<sup>11</sup>For dates and other significant historical data, I have found the following helpful: Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Gold Tried by Fire: St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, trans. Paul J. Olin, OFM and Venard O'Donnell, OSF (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963). (This work was originally published in 1946 by *Editions Franciscaines, Paris*.) Nesta de Robeck, *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary: A Story of Twenty-four Years* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1954).

<sup>12</sup>de Robeck, 155-203.

<sup>13</sup>Ancelet-Hustache, xvii-xix.

<sup>14</sup>Huyskens' work *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisabeth, Landröfin von Thüringen* is often quoted as a source. It was published in Marburg in 1908 and is the first time that the proceedings of 1235—the testimony of the four maidservants—was published.

<sup>15</sup>de Robeck, 183-187.

<sup>16</sup>de Robeck, 155-181.

<sup>17</sup>de Robeck, 158.

<sup>18</sup>Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesiology of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads Books, 1993), 45.

<sup>19</sup>Ancelet-Hustache, 150-151.

<sup>20</sup>Raoul Manselli, "Royal Holiness in the Daily Life of Elizabeth of Hungary: The Testimony of Her Servants," trans. Edward Hagmann, OFMCap., *Greyfriars Review*, 11.3 (The Franciscan Institute, 1997): 322, note 30.

<sup>21</sup>de Robeck, 168.

<sup>22</sup>Manselli, 311-330.

<sup>23</sup>Schüssler-Fiorenza, 43.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. Brigitte Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 152-171. (See here three versions of Elizabeth's life written about 1258-1270.) Cf. also Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, vol. 2, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 302-318. (This written about 1260.)

<sup>25</sup>Manselli, 329

## A Home for the Poor? A Look at the Social History of the Friars Minor in the Thirteenth Century

Benedikt Mertens, OFM

The Church has widely come to the awareness of the special place the poor are to be given in its midst. When Latin American Christians started some decades ago to promote a Gospel based *preferential option for the poor*, they had in mind a conversion process which went far beyond the practice of mere assistential works of charity, for which, by the way, Christians have always earned the admiration of non-believers. The Church rather declares its solidarity with the poor and their just struggles, allowing them to become subjects and decision-makers in society and Church. In other words, the Church commits itself to become a Church with the poor and eventually of the poor. As the final document of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate in Puebla (1979) reminded us, this process implies ground-breaking reorientations:

It is important that we reevaluate, in community, our communion and participation with the poor, the humble, the lowly. It will be, at the same time, necessary to listen to them, to accept their deepest aspirations, to value, discern, encourage, correct, with the desire that the Lord guide us to make real our unity with them in one body and one spirit. This demands of us . . . the personal and emotional renunciation, according to the Gospel, of our privileges, ways of thinking, ideologies, preferential relationships, and material goods.<sup>1</sup>

Given its poverty- and minority-oriented self-understanding, the Franciscan movement seems to have the charism and potential to play an exemplary role in the Church's option for the poor. The question that I would like to pursue in this article is how and whether the Friars Minor in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were able not only to reach out to the poor and powerless of their time but also to integrate them into the movement initiated by Francis of Assisi. This historical perspective might invite us to screen our

own ways of looking at the poor and of living our vowed poverty in a world of social inequalities and injustices.

## Early Concepts of Egalitarianism and Social Powerlessness

A look at the mixed social composition of the first generation of friars does not lead to the conclusion that Francis had in mind to promote a movement harboring and coordinating the social protest of the marginalized lower classes of central Italy. Instead, as the Lord gave him brothers (Test 14), he invited them to share in a Gospel fraternity open to all social levels, "rich or poor, noble or insignificant, wise or simple, cleric or illiterate" (1Cel 31; also 1Cel 37).<sup>2</sup> This integration of men from such different backgrounds (nobles, clerics, rich burghers, peasants) into a form of life based on egalitarian relationships was in itself provocative and did not pass unnoticed in a society so conscious of its determinant stratifications. Jacques de Vitry, for example, the famous external observer of the early Franciscan movement, ascribes its growth to the astonishing fact that the Minors "refuse no one entry into their Order, except those bound to marriage or to another Order." What a challenge this must have been to the actual members of the early fraternity. The clerics were given no privileges over lay brothers; and those joined together who, in the world, had belonged to different camps in the struggle between nobles and commoners in Assisi and in the war between Assisi and Perugia. The same challenge was provided in Clare's community at San Damiano in which she invited all sisters without respect for the class divisions encountered in the commune to be part of the communal decision-making process. Thus, when calling for a weekly chapter, she did not want to see anyone excluded, "for the Lord frequently reveals what is best to the least [among us]" (RCI 4:18; also 2:1). She also did not seem to attach to the servant sisters of her community any inferior status, as was so often the case in monastic communities of her time. Clare thus omitted in her Form of Life the passage of the Rule of Innocent IV in which the pope had asked the servant sisters to wear a distinctive dress (RIIn 5).

Francis's Gospel fraternity received a distinctive shape from the commitment to evangelical poverty as strict non-appropriation in an all-inclusive sense—no property, no litigation over their dwellings, no claim of positions within the fraternity, no privileges fostering more ready acceptance in Church and society. Such a commitment went against the social contract of the communes according to which each citizen was expected to contribute actively to the communal increase of power, independence, and wealth. The friars opted for making their living by working with others and by begging alms, thus placing themselves outside a money-based economy. This would necessarily bring them into close contact with those excluded from the success story of

the rural or urban elite, be they old nobility or the emerging leaders of the mercantile class. The friars were admonished not fear such a social positioning, but rather rejoice to live their minority "among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside" (RegNB 9:3). This classical line taken from the Rule of 1221 describes well the devastating dimensions of poverty. The poor are reduced to non-persons since their situation is characterized by a lack of all it takes to be successful in life—riches, power, health!

The very life-style of the early Franciscans allowed them to develop with the poor privileged relationships that hardly existed anywhere else in the society and that helped to give back to the marginalized their human dignity. This happened much more by the concrete solidarity of day-to-day contacts and sharing of scarce resources than by initiating large-scale charitable projects. At least, Francis seems never to have used his former "Assisi-contacts" to raise money and means for an institutionalized service for the poor. And even though their work and their mobile life led the early friars to share closely in the life of the lower classes, the latter were not the exclusive addressees of minorite penitential preaching (see RegNB 23:7) nor were they the privileged recruits of the Franciscan movement. We conclude rather that membership in the early fraternity was open to people from all social backgrounds, provided they showed signs of conversion to a life of joyful poverty and minority in following the poor Christ. This eventually meant different things for different people. Those coming from lower social conditions were offered a genuine evangelical and fraternal perspective on a life they already knew and from whose hardships they had suffered, including the feeling of having been excluded from God's love. For others, their conversion to the evangelical life of the early friars' included a painful rupture from promising careers and from the attitudes and privileges that their social status had offered them.

## Development of Social Consciousness

Much of what has been said so far is authenticated by the Rule of 1221, which best shows the freshness and boldness of the friars' self-understanding and life-plan at this early stage. On the other hand, major new developments occurring during the following decades would influence and alter to a great extent the outlook and general orientation of the Order. These facts are more evident in some late thirteenth-century documents. They give us some hints as to how open the Order was at that stage to invite men of modest origins to participate in its particular form of religious life.

It is beyond any doubt that the mendicant orders and the Friars Minor in particular managed to draw the attention of the well-to-do to the fate of the poor and to create a new consciousness of social responsibility. They did so by

their life-style, their preaching, and their actions. Throughout the thirteenth century, we see Italian friars involved with work at leprosaria and as reformers of communal statutes, which bettered the situation of the destitute. In France, Gilbert of Tournai and Eudes Rigaud were assigned by King Louis, himself a Franciscan tertiary, to exercise social advocacy wherever bailiffs on the royal estates committed deeds of injustice against the poor. The friars thus helped to give these poor widows and peasants a voice and to make their complaints heard. The Franciscan tertiaries, for their part, realized their penitential vocation by generous charitable activities, investing their own means and lives to help the poor, the sick, and the uneducated. Recent scholarship has been able to identify a whole variety of "social works" exercised by the Penitents of St. Francis, such as "hospitals for the sick, hospices for the poor and travelers, 'soup kitchens' for the poor, centers of care for the needy, services to the prisoners, recovery of the abandoned, the care of the mentally ill and those wounded in war, schools for girls and foundlings, and even homes for the redemption of prostitutes."<sup>3</sup>

A particular field in which the friars could impart their own social consciousness on others was their far-reaching preaching activity. Franciscan and Dominican preachers alike conveyed an ethos which on the one hand severely troubled the consciences of the well-to-do and on the other hand gave the poor the consolation of being among God's beloved children. In terms of individual salvation, the "rich and the powerful were held to be potential sinners and the poor and humble potentially better Christians likely to obtain salvation."<sup>4</sup> In their sermons, the friars could address the peasants, the lepers, and the destitute and tell them that their state was not caused by sin. Rather, the Son of God had made his home among the poor and announced to them that, according to Luke 6:20, they were honored and called blessed by God. Since the friars were close to the poor and good to them, the latter were willing to endure the preachers' exhortations to avoid the sins which were normally ascribed to their state: lying, fraud, theft, impatience. Thus, although poverty as such was neutral to virtuousness, the pauper who made the best of his or her situation and remained honest had nevertheless good chances to please God.

### Development of Distinctions in Understanding Poverty

Franciscan preachers like Guibert of Tournai, John of Wales, Francis of Mayronnes, and Nicolas of Aquaevilla uttered warnings against the rich and spoke positively of those who were poor by necessity. Nevertheless, they still saw themselves—the *voluntary* poor—as the ones for whom God not only provided salvation but heavenly glory. The famous German popular preacher Berthold of Regensburg presumed that those entering Franciscan religious life were the only ones who merited the title "poor in spirit" (Mt. 5:3) since

they voluntarily gave up possessions and riches which they could otherwise have had and enjoyed without sin. This situation reflects the sharp distinctions to be found in homiletic, exegetical, and spiritual literature of the thirteenth century. The mendicant authors distinguish between the *poor with Peter* (thus "apostolic poverty") and the *poor with Lazarus*, or, put in different terms, the *poor in spirit* and the *involuntary poor*. Wherever the Franciscans responded to attacks against their mendicancy, their treatises introduced evangelical perfection and voluntary poverty as synonyms. At the same time, the material expression of Franciscan poverty and powerlessness became more a matter of theoretical distinction rather than an experience of living side by side with those who were poor by necessity. Given the acclaimed superiority of "poverty by choice," it is difficult to believe that a pauper would have been welcomed among the friars with open arms and without second thoughts.<sup>5</sup>

### Discrimination in Admitting the Poor to Membership

This suspicion is nurtured by passages from the so-called *Determinationes questionum circa Regulam FF. Minorum*. This document assembles responses to questions about Franciscan living which arose during the third quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>6</sup> We do not have to trace all these questions back to the academic "mendicant controversy" at the university of Paris. They reflect deliberations which could have been brought forth by any observer of the friars' life. Two questions particularly concern admission to Franciscan religious life. The interrogators ask, for example, why the friars do not accept all candidates without discrimination. Understandably, the response refers to people with mental disfunctions who could not bear the discipline in the Order and actively support its mission. Yet, the text then also rejects the poor "who would wish to live with us not for the sake of God, but for their sustenance." Although not necessarily speaking about all the poor, this passage still shows a great deal of suspicion about the motivation of the materially poor. Again, Franciscan voluntary poverty and the "real" poor appear as two different worlds.

Following the same mentality, the Franciscan dialogue partner also explains why the friars are not eager to support the lay penitents. Among other arguments, he expresses his fear that a penitent in want would rely on the friars to have his bodily needs met. This material argumentation sounds not only like a refusal to share with the poor, and especially those following the same evangelical inspiration, but implicitly admits that obviously the friars had reached a level of material well-being that could be envied.

But who were the young people the friars liked to recruit? The frank Franciscan spokesman aims at all youth who could possibly promote the Order by their "knowledge and activity" (*scientia et industria*), that is, people with basic academic education and a good sense of business. Especially apt are "those

who are famous in the world," since they are most likely to move others by their example. Finally, some youths have to be taken in out of respect for their intercessors, that is, the sons and relatives of the friars' benefactors.

### Preference for Wealth and Nobility

Why this obvious option for the famous and the powerful? As we know, the Order soon became largely urban-based. It was in the rising towns and cities all over Europe that the friars founded their dwellings and study centers. As their main activity now consisted in preaching and pastoral care of the citizens, the friars' economic basis was provided by alms gathered by begging and also, to a large extent, by generous benefactors of the emerging middle-class. The friars entered into a kind of symbiosis with the more affluent burghers and lower nobility and both sides benefited. John B. Freed, studying the mendicant insertion into German society during the thirteenth century, comes to this conclusion:

The success of the mendicant orders, measured at least in human terms, depended upon the existence of familial, feudal, and personal ties between the friars and potential patrons. . . . The price which the friars paid for such material and moral support was a partial loss of their independence. It was impossible for the friars to ignore completely the temporal interests of their benefactors. As the disparity between the friars' professed spiritual aims and actual practices became increasingly more obvious, criticism of the mendicant orders mounted.<sup>7</sup>

This criticism is also echoed in our text which asks why the friars "honor the rich more than the poor" and why they "sit more often at the tables of the rich than of the poor." The answer does not at all deny the facts as they are brought forth. Yet, the response is convincing only to the degree that one is willing to enter into the logic of this kind of reasoning. A first set of answers is very practical. After the fatigue of their journeyings, so states the writer, the friars are better served at the table of the rich since they have enough to give and there they can feel like sitting at a table of friends who know the friars well. On the other hand, the friars fear they would deprive the poor of what little they earn by their daily work when being invited to their tables.

Another argument is more pastoral and strategic. A meal at the table of the rich is used for pastoral conversations which could otherwise not be had without difficulty, since the rich normally do not come easily to the friars' places for spiritual counseling. Moreover, the lives of the affluent are more complicated and naturally need more attention than those of simple folk. It is then for the good of the poor if the friars deal with the rich, since "who moves the powerful to do good serves many people." In this perspective, "there is more usefulness in the correction of one rich [person] than of some poor."

The responder finally argues with reference to the secular order of this world, wherein God indeed has placed the rich in a position to be honored more than the poor. In seeking acquaintances among the powerful and rich, the friars thus only respect the God-given order! Such an argument affirms a posture that Francis wanted to overcome in his fraternity. According to Celano, Francis insisted that "the order should be for the poor and unlearned, not only for the rich and wise. '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 the simple'" (2Cel 193).

Yet, not only was it favorable for the friars to stay close to their benefactors, but it also made sense that the latter would place their sons in the Franciscan Order, which had quickly become an indispensable and prestigious entity within social urban life. The upward social aspirations of many a family passed through the friars as a possible "avenue for social advance."<sup>8</sup> D. R. Lesnick's case study on Dominicans and Franciscans in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Florence points especially to this phenomenon. He sees the newly immigrated artisans and shopkeepers and other professionals as the main reservoir of Franciscan recruitment. This movement, he believes, was motivated by the "desire of these new urbanites to scale the social and political ladder."<sup>9</sup> They were, most likely, the "industrious people" the writer of the *Determinationes* wished to see among the novices.

Another witness to the changed self-understanding of the Order in the second half of the thirteenth century is the *Chronicle* of Salimbene de Adam, written in his old age between 1283-88. The gabby chronicler of Parma covered, by his own experience as a friar, exactly fifty years of mainly French and Italian Franciscan history. His account is heavily biased by his own aristocratic leanings and his unreserved support for the Order's move towards becoming a clericalized and learned institution at the service of the Church. In his static conception of life, we encounter the world of the powerful and the rich as the protagonists of history, burdened with responsibility to rule and to do justice, and, on the other side, the sinister world of the poor, for whom he shows more disdain than compassion. He is convinced that "it is through the commoners and the farmers that the world is destroyed, and through the knights and noble-men that it is preserved" (640s).<sup>10</sup>

In more than two hundred eulogies throughout his extensive chronicle, Salimbene speaks with admiration and complicity about the powerful, the handsome, and the rich. In his mind, beauty and nobility of blood and manners always go hand in hand. When it comes to his own brethren, he adopts the same categories, adding the friars' outstanding learning and careers. In a debate with secular clergy over the right of the friars to mendicancy, he highlights the superior nobility and career-potential of the Minors in comparison to the seculars. His own religious brothers, he states, "were and are, as noble,

rich, powerful, learned, and wise as these men are themselves [the secular clergy] and so they would be priests, archpriests, canons, archdeacons, bishops, and perhaps patriarchs, cardinals, and popes" (423). As a matter of fact, the chronicler rejoices in the fact that their careers do not only exist in the subjunctive mood but are very real.

Salimbene takes great pride in the nobility and high learning in his Order. This stance is, of course, by no means singular. A chronicler quite naturally tries to substantiate the success and worth of his object of praise by referring to its adherents from among the leading groups of society. Bartholomew of Pisa in his monumental late fourteenth-century work *De conformitate*, for example, saw the Franciscan Order excel in sanctity, science, nobility, and numbers over all other orders. Accordingly, he adds a long list of secular dignitaries joining the Order as well as of friars raised to high ecclesiastical positions. In the same vein, he hails the sanctity and nobility among the Poor Clares and the Franciscan penitents.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the noble bias, especially among the Poor Clare saints, is more than evident, since of the nineteen Clarian *beatae* of the thirteenth century, five belonged to the royalty, thirteen were gentlewomen, and one was described as rich.<sup>12</sup>

### Salimbene's Biases

Such statistical evidence demonstrates that this attitude was normative for a friar like Salimbene. It is not by accident that, according to him, the clarian abbess of Gattaiola, who was only "the lowly daughter of a baker woman," happened to be "extremely cruel, shameful, and dishonorable in her governance" (45). A similar expression of contempt was expressed when he characterized a certain bishop as "avaricious and unlearned like a layman" (528). Salimbene seemed to be particularly scandalized by the "Brothers of the Apostles," that is, the movement founded by Gerard Segarelli (around 1260) which, despite its official suppression by the Second Council of Lyon (1274), was still popular and appeared to the friars as a real competitor at the time Salimbene wrote his chronicle. According to the categories of pastoral usefulness adopted by his own order, Salimbene considered these brothers as "useless for preaching or singing the Church offices; they could not celebrate mass, nor hear confession, nor teach in schools, nor give counsel, nor even seek out benefactors" (249). This could not be otherwise, since their leader was "a man of base family, an illiterate layman, ignorant and foolish" (250) and had therefore rightly been rejected from entering the Franciscan Order in his youth. Accordingly, Salimbene wishes Segarelli's followers to be occupied with base occupations "like scouring latrines" rather than "serving in a religious order" (253). He is convinced that "[i]f these men were in the Order of the Friars Minor, they would scarcely be allowed to wait on the tables or wash dishes or go out begging for bread" (277).

From this statement we can already imagine how Salimbene will assess the situation of the lay friars in his own order. According to his convictions, they are, in fact, just as useless for the Friars Minor as are the "Pseudo-Apostles" for the Church, since they lack appropriate learning for any reasonable apostolate and even provoke scandal by their behavior. He thus shows himself content that after the era of Brother Elias, "the lay brothers were properly reduced in importance, for their admission to the Order was almost totally prohibited" (83). As a matter of fact, Salimbene refers to the legislation which the Order adopted in the early 1240s according to which lay friars were not only denied holding offices in the Order but could only be admitted by the minister general in cases of extraordinary exemplarity and particular usefulness to the Order!

By his contempt for a popular movement like that of Gerard Segarelli and his followers, Salimbene implicitly expresses his disdain for the very beginnings of his own Order which started off not unlike that of the "Pseudo-Apostles." Nor does he hold back his contempt for the "useless" lay friars in his own community, whom he considered a burden for the learned Order and its clerical mission. Seeing the situation through the lense of Salimbene at the end of the thirteenth century, one might wonder if young people attracted by the Franciscan way of life but without adequate education and honorable family background were not forced to find their spiritual home in other popular evangelical movements or under the umbrella of the Franciscan penitents.

### Later Developments

As Franciscan history moves into the fourteenth century, the picture does not change. Few lay friars were accepted, exceptions being made for members of noble families. The service of lay friars was not considered necessary, since many friaries employed secular servants. Within the fraternity, superiors and lecturers were given special favors such as having their own servants and being able to eat and pray apart from the "ordinary friars." The friars were now expected to find personal benefactors to supply their own needs. This practice created such inequality that the General Statutes of 1325 and 1354 had to remind superiors not to forget the "poor friars" (*fratres indigentes*). John Moorman relates the case of some young English friars who, in 1360, had to give up their novitiate for lack of means to buy their own clothes.<sup>13</sup> Similar observations could be made about the practice of social stratification among both fourteenth-century Poor Clares and some women members of the Third Order Regular.

During this time, Poor Clare convents all over Europe were not only being sponsored by the nobility and well-to-do burghers but were highly, if not exclusively, populated by descendants of the most powerful families. Such



members were allowed to keep private property and personal servants. Additionally, the dowry requirement introduced in the second half of the thirteenth century did not help members of lower social status to join the Order.<sup>14</sup>

This survey of the insertion of the Franciscan friars into thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century society reveals a self-understanding and subsequent practices that display the friars' identification with upwardly oriented groups of urban society. The concern to share the Franciscan charism with the poor in terms of means and membership seems noticeably lacking. The friars voluntarily assisted the knights, merchants, and professionals to deal in a proper Christian way with their social aspirations. The Franciscan preacher could admonish the rich not to forget the poor and the latter to bear in patience their destiny in view of the heavenly reward. But those "poor by necessity" did not qualify for membership with the Friars Minor who called themselves the "poor of Christ," exalting their voluntary poverty which so often came down to comfortable social security assured by the supportive network of dependable benefactors.

This, of course, is quite a black-and-white picture. We cannot say with certainty how the poor were welcomed quantitatively and qualitatively into the Order during its first hundred years of existence. The question did not seem to matter all that much. The poor are not given a face and a name in our historical documents. But, has history ever been written from the perspective of the poor? At least, we should not forget the rare Franciscan voices who seemed to advocate a life of proximity with the poor and marginalized. At the end of the thirteenth century, such a voice was raised in the person of Peter John Olivi, who articulated in his *Question on Highest Poverty* a denunciation of the hypocrisy of those religious who called themselves adherents of "true poverty" without knowing destitution and hardship by experience and without compassionately and lovingly being with the poor. Olivi even goes further. According to him—and here he appeals to common sense—"the poor are more easily attracted to the love and profession of poverty than the rich." "Was it not the rich young man who was not able to leave his riches behind?" he asks.<sup>15</sup>

## What of Us Today?

Olivi's perspective seems to encourage a mutual encounter between Franciscan religious and the poor. This poses questions for us today as does the opposite argumentation coming from texts like Salimbene's *Chronicle* or the *Determinationes questionum*. We are living in a different time and in highly diversified cultures. Yet, we have to try to make sense of our Franciscan commitment to minority and poverty in a given social context and in the sight of the poor. The questions we might want to ask the early friars are the same we have to address to ourselves. We need to give an account of our life-style,

which is sometimes far superior to that of the economically poor. We might ask who are our acquaintances? at whose tables do we sit? where are our communities located? and to whom do we ordinarily give hospitality in our houses? Are we not inclined to adopt the view that it is more promising, if not necessary, to be where the social and cultural elites meet? Have we not too readily agreed to educate the future elite of our respective countries, since "who moves the powerful to do good serves many people?" Can that ever be a specifically Franciscan educational option as long as there are masses of poorly trained youth?

On the other hand, we might look at our modes and criteria of recruitment and ask if they eventually exclude entire parts of the population out of an understandable quest for a high educational standard. Finally, are our fraternities, our structures, and our very hearts prepared to welcome the poor and the cultural world they bring along with them?

The Church's option for the poor aims at a *mutual* process of conversion and evangelization which liberates the poor from centuries of neglect and makes it possible for the Church to receive the gifts of the powerless. This cannot be realized without the poor opting for the Church. Accordingly, as a Franciscan family, we are invited to pave a way to meet the poor humbly, not only in our professional charitable relationships but also on our own grounds, in the sanctuary of our homes and communities, as associates or members, and as brothers and sisters in our common search for bread and peace for all.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Nos. 974-975, cited in Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*, trans. John Dierckmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 78.

<sup>2</sup>The following editions of the Franciscan sources will be used: *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. I: *The Saint*, eds. Regis Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 1999); *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion Habig (Chicago IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973); *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. and trans. Regis Armstrong (St. Bonaventure NY: Franciscan Institute, 1993).

<sup>3</sup>Lino Temperini, "Poor with Christ to serve the poor," *Propositum* 3.2 (1998): 5-26, here 16. For the beforementioned social activities of the friars see Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 123-128, and Luciano Canonici, "Leper, Leprosarium," *Greyfriars Review* 9 (1995): 247-258.

<sup>4</sup>This is the result of the examination of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century mendicant sermons on Lk. 16:19-31 by Jussi Hanska, "And the Rich Man also died; and He was buried in Hell"—*The Social Ethos in Mendicant Sermons*, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 28 (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1997), 168.

<sup>5</sup>Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan; with an introduction by Robert E. Lerner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 133f. Grundmann stresses the upper-class origin of many Franciscans as well as of the leaders of the poverty movement as such. He comes to a quite cynical conclusion that perhaps echoes the



mindset of "the typical friar" he describes: "A commitment to voluntary poverty would be an empty joke in the mouth of someone who was unable to lower himself any further than need had already placed him. Yet in the religious poverty movement, poverty and humility were chosen and experienced as religious values because they meant overcoming and renouncing the goods and honor of the world, demanding a conversion, a turning away from secular prosperity and social position to another way, which was that of the gospel."

<sup>6</sup>The two parts of this text are edited in *Sancti Bonaventurae Opera omnia, VIII* (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventurae, 1898), 337-374. The chapters that will be referred to are the pars I, qq. X, XV, XXII, XXIII, and pars II, q. XVI.

<sup>7</sup>John B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century*, The Medieval Academy of America Publication No. 86 (Cambridge MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1977), 171.

<sup>8</sup>Freed, 133. Freed refers, among others, to the singular career of Henry Knoderer, a baker's or miller's son, who, as a Friar Minor, became archbishop of Mainz and primate of Germany in 1286-88.

<sup>9</sup>D. R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 54. See also page 62: "A son's enrollment among the Santa Croce Franciscans opened avenues to power and control in Florentine society and politics. The avenues to socio-political participation and influence available through the Franciscan Order were especially attractive to Florence's upwardly aspiring immigrant population."

<sup>10</sup>The numbers given after the following citations refer to the pagination of the edition of Joseph L. Baird, Giuseppe Baglivi, John Robert Kane, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 40 (Binghampton, NY: Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies University Center, 1986). See also M. Boriosi: "The *Chronicle* of Brother Salimbene: A Polemical Chronicle?" *Greyfriars Review*, 12 (1998): 315-359.

<sup>11</sup>See Bartholomew of Pisa, "De conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu," *Analecta Franciscana*, 4 (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventurae, 1906): 175-364. The "ideological background" of this chapter is the author's effort to show how Francis was the seed for a flourishing movement in the Church comparable to the development of the Church at large. In his *Letter in Response to an Unknown Master*, Bonaventure adopts a similar perspective when confessing "that what made me love St. Francis' way of life so much was that it is exactly like the origin and the perfection of the Church itself, which began first with simple fishermen and afterwards developed to include the most illustrious and learned doctors." Cited from *St. Bonaventure's Writings Concerning the Franciscan Order*, trans. Dominic Monti, Works of Saint Bonaventure, 5 (St. Bonaventure NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1994), 54.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Goodich, *Vita perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1982), 184. See also pp. 159-168 for the social background of Franciscan First Order and Third Order saints.

<sup>13</sup>John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), ch. 28 "The Friars' Standard of Living," 350-368. See pp. 406-428 for the Poor Clares and the Third Order in the fourteenth century.

<sup>14</sup>The rejection of Poor Clare candidates without dowry is discussed in the above-mentioned *Determinationes*, p. II, q. XVIII, pages 369f. The tertiary community around Angelina of Marsciano in Foligno was called already by the end of the fourteenth century "monastery of the Contesses," which does not necessarily mean, though, that non-nobles were excluded from entry. See Raffaele Pazzelli, *The Franciscan Sisters: Outlines of History and Spirituality* (Steubenville OH: Franciscan University Press, 1992), 66.

<sup>15</sup>Cited from the edition of Johannes Schlageter, *Das Heil der Armen und das Verderben der Reichen: Petrus Johannis Olivi OFM. Die Frage nach der höchsten Armut*, Franziskanische Forschungen, 34 (Werl: Coelde, 1989), 168. See also 96f

## Contributors

**Michael Blastic, OFM Conv.**, is a friar of the St. Bonaventure Province, Chicago. He earned his doctorate at St. Louis University. He taught theology and courses in the Franciscan tradition at Washington Theological Union for a number of years. He is currently teaching at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, and edits the scholarly annual, *Franciscan Studies*. A popular lecturer, he has research interests in the early origins of the Franciscan Order as well as in the implications of the Franciscan tradition for contemporary issues of justice, peace, and the environment.

**Robert Karris, OFM**, is a friar of Sacred Heart Province, St. Louis, Missouri. He earned a Th.D. in New Testament at Harvard University in 1971 and taught at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago from 1971-1987. He then served as Provincial from 1987-1991 and as a General Definitor of the Order from 1991-1997. He is now Researcher in Residence at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, New York. Among his recent publications are *Prayer and the New Testament* (Crossroad, 2000) and *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* (The Franciscan Institute, 1999). He will soon publish an annotated translation of *Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke's Gospel, 1-8* (The Franciscan Institute).

**Clairvaux McFarland, OSF**, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Our Lady of Lourdes, Rochester, Minnesota. Her art work has frequently graced the pages of *The Cord* and other Franciscan Institute publications. Her current work involves the creation of icons.

**Benedikt Mertens, OFM**, a German friar of the Fulda Province, worked for a number of years as a missionary and formator in Togo, Africa. A graduate of The Franciscan Institute, he contributed a chapter, "The Eremitical Movement During the 11th Century," to *Franciscan Solitude* (The Franciscan Institute, 1995). He continues to serve in Africa as part of the friars' Africa Project.

**Giles Schinelli, TOR**, is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province and was Provincial Minister from 1986-1994. He was President of the Franciscan Federation from 1994-1995 and presently serves as retreat and spiritual director at the San Pedro Spiritual Development Center in Winter Park, Florida.

Finally the holy night arrives. Blessed Francis is there with many of his brothers. . . . The hay in the manger is prepared, the ox and the ass are arranged around the manger, and the vigil begins with joy. A great multitude of people stream together from various places, the night is filled with an unaccustomed joy and made luminous by candles and torches. And so, with a new ritual, the festival of a new Bethlehem is celebrated. . . . He who was asleep or dead in the hearts of many, owing to forgetfulness, was awakened and recalled to memory by the teaching and example of Blessed Francis. The solemnities were completed with great exultation, and everyone happily returned to their homes.  
(Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer 10)

## A Biographical Profile

### Voice from the Past

#### Sister Frances Léa Laughlin, SMIC

As a fitting event in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of *The Cord*, the Franciscan Institute had the pleasure of visiting with Sister Frances Léa Laughlin, SMIC, who spent a couple of days on campus at St. Bonaventure University from September 17-19. Sister Frances played a critical role in the earliest days of the Institute, (late 40s and early 50s) assisting Father Philotheus Boehner, OFM, in the vital work of retrieving and translating important works of the Franciscan tradition and beginning enterprises that would make Franciscan sources more available to English-speaking Franciscans worldwide.

As a young religious, Sister Frances got her bachelor's and master's degrees at St. Bonaventure University. She wanted to go to China as a missionary, but the war broke out and she couldn't get the necessary passport. So, her congregation, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (West Paterson, NJ), sent her to Catholic University to get a doctorate in English. While there, she also studied art. She minored in medieval Latin and paleography because her dissertation was a transcript of a medieval treatise on rhetoric. By the time she had finished that work, she had pretty much mastered fourteenth-century Latin paleography. But at the same time she had done some earlier paleography for a course on medieval Latin history. Thus she became a very skilled paleographer. She finished her degree work just before she left for China in the late 40s. She was in China just long enough to unpack her suitcase and her trunk when she was expelled, along with other missionaries. They flew out in a cargo plane in a rush and got as far as Shanghai, which was still open. There they slept in the freezing cold on bags of sugar which were stored on the docks ready to be shipped out. It was the middle of winter.

Having returned to the United States, she found herself as a qualified scholar with nothing to do. Mother Pacifica, her superior, told her that Father Philotheus Boehner needed her at The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, where sisters from her congregation were already working in domestic occupations. At that time, Father Philotheus was working on Bonaventure and Ockham texts. He had the theory that Ockham was the Father of Modern Logic. Sister Frances's work was to help transcribe texts from

photocopies of manuscripts. These photocopies were not always great, and the paleography was very tricky. The original scribes had not always been aware of what Ockham was trying to say. So the transcribers had to try to get a correct transcription. Thus, Sister Frances would read the manuscripts and write out transcriptions by hand, passing them on to Father Philotheus for editing.

As for the Bonaventure material, Sister Frances assisted Father Philotheus by translating the *Itinerarium*, the notes of which are still the standard after all these years. There has yet to be an English edition where the critical apparatus is as fine.

Sister Frances and Father Philotheus also collaborated on a new series of works called Spirit and Life. She helped translate a *Legend of Clare*, which was edited by Ignatius Brady, OFM, and also worked on *Margaret of Cortona*. The idea of this series was to make works available in English that would be hard to get hold of otherwise. At that time, there was almost nothing in francescana for the formation of young Franciscans, either male or female. Sister Frances was at the very beginning of the contemporary movement to make valuable Franciscan resources more accessible to English-speaking Franciscans.

In 1950, Sister Frances also worked with Father Philotheus in founding a new periodical called *The Cord*. The initial idea for this came from her acquaintance with many sisters who were studying at St. Bonaventure during the summer months. She realized that these sisters were very intelligent women, very knowledgeable in their fields, but, as she put it: "They didn't know beans about what it meant to be Franciscan!" Many of them, though identified as Franciscan, did not even follow a Franciscan Rule. She and Father Philotheus would talk about these sisters and how wonderful it would be to provide something for them. Doing formal Franciscan studies was not feasible then because they didn't have the necessary theological backgrounds. Sister Frances and Father Philotheus thought they'd start out with something solid, but simple—something on the level of the religious magazine, *Sponsa Christi*. They would do a Franciscan *Sponsa Christi*! And so *The Cord* was born in November, 1950. The rest, as they say, is history.

Sister Frances lives today in New Mexico among the Navajos in a little place called Blue Water Acres. Now in her 80s, she continues to design cards and posters, a work she began while at The Franciscan Institute fifty years ago. Her designs are widely marketed. She enjoys the missionary context and works as a volunteer for parishes and other agencies that serve the Native Americans of the area.

Sister Frances has seen many changes in the past fifty years and served in many capacities. She honored us by returning to The Franciscan Institute to tell us stories about our beginnings. She was glad to see that we are, in her words, "still alive." And we, of course, are very glad that she, too, is still alive to help us remember gratefully our origins.

# INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCAN LIFE

A distance learning program  
responding to the desire of Secular Franciscans  
to learn more about their unique identity as Franciscans  
in the contemporary world.

*offered through:*



OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

*currently offering:*

FRAN 201 Franciscan Gospel Living in the Contemporary World  
FRAN 202 The Franciscans: A Family History  
FRAN 204 Franciscan Spirituality

*Currently in preparation:*

Clare of Assisi: Her Life and Writings  
Servant Leadership for Secular Franciscans  
The Franciscan Sources

*proposed courses include:*

Christian and Franciscan Tradition  
Writings of Francis of Assisi  
Franciscan Ministry: Challenge and Response  
Integrative Project

*For more information contact:*

Saint Francis College Office of Continuing Education  
Loretto, PA 15940-0600 ~ phone: (814) 472-3219 ~ e-mail: ICFL@SFCPA.EDU

## Notice to all *Cord* subscribers

All *Cord* subscriptions end in December of each year, unless you have a standing order or have ordered *The Cord* for more than one year.

**IT IS NOW TIME TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!**

Subscription price: \$20.00 a year for six issues.

*The Cord* continues its tradition of helping to effect among us a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life. It is an essential resource for every Franciscan community.

Please return your renewal notice now or send a new order.

(And please consider giving a gift subscription to our sisters and brothers who cannot afford their own.)

Send your order to: The Franciscan Institute  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778  
Ph.: 716-375-2105 FAX: 716-375-2156



## FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

### THIRD ORDER REGULAR

OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

The Franciscan Federation of the Third Order Regular of the Sisters and Brothers of the United States is seeking an Executive Director. The Executive Director serves as the chief operating officer of the Franciscan Federation and is responsible to the National Board. Qualifications for this position include being a member of the Third Order Regular, sharing a belief in the vision and mission of the Franciscan Federation, and having the ability to collaborate and serve with a variety of groups both internal and external to the Federation. The person demonstrates skills in administration, organization, fiscal management, communications, fund raising, and computer proficiency. **Deadline: November 30, 2000.**

Send inquiries to:

**Position Opening:  
Executive Director,  
Franciscan Federation**

Executive Director Search Committee  
c/o Sister M. Ellen Lamberjack, OSF  
200 St. Francis Avenue  
Tiffin, OH 44883  
419-447-0435, Ext. 180  
Fax: 419-447-1612  
stclare@tiffinohio.com

Now available on Audio Cassette  
**Franciscan Symposium 2000**

**FRANCIS AND CLARE: NEW EVIDENCE AND NEW IMAGES**  
 Sponsored by The Washington Theological Union on May 27-28, 2000

- \_\_\_ 010 *Introducing the New Omnibus: The "Hows" and "Whys"* (Bill Short, OFM)
- \_\_\_ 020 *Outsiders Looking at Francis* (Dominic Monti, OFM)
- \_\_\_ 030 *The Writings of Thomas of Celano: Dancing Between the Two Lives of Francis* (Wayne Hellman, OFMConv.)
- \_\_\_ 040 Panel Discussion: *Where Do We Go From Here?*
- \_\_\_ 051-2 *The Strongest Stone of the Whole Structure: Clare and the Women Who Followed Francis* (Ingrid Peterson, OSF) (2 cassettes)
- \_\_\_ 099 Complete set of six tapes.

**Each cassette is \$9.50. Complete set is \$57.00.** (Domestic postage included in the price.)

Total individual cassettes @ \$9.50 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total complete sets @ \$57.00 ea = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Maryland residents add 5% sales tax = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subtotal = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 International postage:  
 Add \$3.00 per cassette (\$35 maximum) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grand total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please check method of payment:

\_\_\_ Money Order Enclosed  
 \_\_\_ Check Enclosed  
 \_\_\_ Credit Card Payment: \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ Visa  
 \_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_ AMEX

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required on all orders) \_\_\_\_\_

Please print clearly:

Account # post00241

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed  
 order form  
 with payment to:

Chesapeake Audio/Video  
 Communications, Inc.

6330 Howard Lane, Elkridge, MD 21075

Credit card orders phone: 410-796-0040 or fax: 410-379-0812.

## The Fourth Annual Franciscan Forum

At the Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
 Sponsored by The Franciscan Institute  
 St. Bonaventure, New York

### SHAPING THE 21ST CENTURY AGENDA FOR MISSION EFFECTIVENESS AND ONGOING FORMATION IN THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION

**June 5-10, 2001**

- Sources and methods for continuing education in the Franciscan tradition.
- Sources of our Franciscan identity: continuing the conversation around Evangelical Life
  - the theological perspective: worldview
  - prayer
  - living together
  - work
- A Festival of Franciscan Art and Music

Through teachings, table discussions, panel, breakout sessions, study, liturgy and celebration, this Forum is designed so that we may learn from one another together with:

- the scholars of the Tradition in the spirit of the Franciscan Institute
- the brothers and sisters among us who are serving or have served in the ministry of ongoing formation
- those who minister as Mission Effectiveness Directors in our sponsored ministries.

**Faculty to date:** Margaret Carney, OSF, Canice Connors, OFM Conv., Celestine Giertych, CSSE, William Hugo, OFMConv., Ingrid Peterson, OSF, Jeff Scheeler, OFM, William Short, OFM.

**Steering committee:** Margaret Carney, OSF, Celeste Crine, OSF, John Joseph Dolan, OFMConv., Marilyn Huegerich, OSF, Denise Roberts, OSF, Norma Rocklage, OSF, Gabriele Uhlein, OSF, (facilitator); Kathleen Moffatt (forum coordinator).

Cost: \$650.00 inclusive of room, meals, forum, resources  
 Brochures available in January 2001.

For further information contact:  
 Kathleen Moffatt, OSF  
 302-764-5657 (skmoffatt@aol.com)

**IN SOLITUDE AND DIALOGUE:**

**CONTEMPORARY FRANCISCANS THEOLOGIZE**

Edited with an Introduction by Anthony M. Carrozzo, OFM

Contributors:

Gerald M. Dolan	<i>Words of Hope in Troubled Times</i>
Gabriele Ühlein	<i>Creation: A Franciscan Conversion Conversation</i>
Jane Kopas	<i>Mortal Diamond: The Body in Theological Anthropology</i>
Regis A. Duffy	<i>Contexts for a Franciscan Theology of the Eucharist</i>
John J. Burkhard	<i>Being a Person in the Church</i>
Xavier J. Seubert	<i>The Cross and Death of Jesus: A Franciscan Interpretation</i>
Joan Mueller	<i>Models of Evangelical Poverty: Eschatological Implications</i>

Price \$18.00. 208 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-167-0

**THE ADMONITIONS OF ST. FRANCIS:**

**SOURCES AND MEANINGS**

by Robert J. Karris, OFM

The author examines similarities between these writings of Francis and other spiritual writings of the Christian tradition. He looks at how Francis uses the Scriptures and how he adapts his spiritual legacy in creative ways. A new translation of each Admonition and a commentary on each verse, concluding with practical reflections.

Price \$28.00. 312+xv pages paper.

ISBN 1-57659-166-2

**ST. FRANCIS AND THE SONG  
OF BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD**

By Eric Doyle, OFM

A reprint of *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood*, (Seabury Press, 1981)

Dedicated to the United Nations Organization, this book presents the Canticle of Brother Sun as a "charter of peace, . . . a charter of creaturely rights: human, animal, vegetable and mineral." A practical starting point for the application of the Franciscan way to everyday life.

Price \$18.00. 235 pages, paper.

ISBN: 1-57659-033-8



**SPIRIT AND LIFE**

Volumes 9 & 10

Two new issues

*Islam and Franciscanism: A Dialogue.* Ed. Daniel Dwyer, OFM, and Hugh Hines, OFM. Spirit and Life, Vol. 9, 2000. 120 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-169-7. \$10.00.

This volume deals with the tradition of dialogue between Islam and Franciscanism that has perdured since Francis met the Sultan.

*Daniel Dwyer*, Introduction

*Imam Mohammad Bashir Arafat*, "Islam and Christianity: Two Faiths and One God"

*Fareed Munir*, "Islam and Franciscanism: Prophet Mohammad of Arabia and St. Francis of Assisi in the Spirituality of Mission"

*François Paquette*, "Breaking Down the Walls of our Differences: Islamic-Christian Encounter through Prayer"

*Thomas Mooren*, "The Exodus Motif in Christianity and Islam"

*Anselm Moons*, "The Arrogance of Ownership"

*True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion, and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans.* Ed. Elise Saggau, OSF. Spirit and Life, Vol. 10, 2000. 175 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-57659-171-9. \$14.00.

This volume presents issues arising from the tension between where the early friars should live and how they could be faithful to a prayerful life in fraternity.

It looks at how the Order did, and still does, attempt to resolve, or at least live creatively, with this tension.

*Michael F. Cusato*, OFM, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan Locus in the World"

*Michael F. Cusato*, OFM, "Wall-to-Wall Ministry: Franciscan Ministry in the Cities of Thirteenth-Century Italy"

*Keith Warner*, OFM, "Pilgrims and Strangers: The Evangelical Spirituality of Itinerancy of the Early Franciscan Friars"



Enter the Center



a Franciscan place of peace

## Franciscan ART & Spirituality Retreat

Saturday, June 2 - Friday, June 8, 2001

Retreatants have the opportunity to come to a deeper awareness of God through art and music as windows into the spirituality of Francis and Clare.

Reflections will be followed by sessions of prayer using art and music as the medium for gracefilled insights.

No artistic or musical talent is needed; just a heart open to the experience of an Incarnate God!

### Leaders:

Kay Francis Berger, OSF: internationally known Franciscan artist and sculptor  
Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF: Franciscan scholar, author, retreat leader  
Joe Rayes, OFM: retreat director  
Kathleen Hook, OSF and  
Joy Sloan: WoodSong Ministries: composers and facilitators of the spirituality of music

## 40-Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat

based on the Rule for Hermitages  
November 11-December 21, 2001

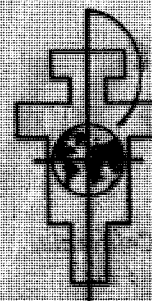
We invite you to come to the woods and immerse yourself in an experience with the Incarnate Son of God in the length of time and the type of solitude typical of Francis himself. Spend time in one of our hermitages: San Damiano, Greccio, La Foresta, or in the house of solitude, Poverello.

This retreat is thoroughly and uniquely Franciscan. It is based on the Third Order Rule with elements faithful to Francis' Rule for Hermitages. It was designed by Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF, as part of her Master's thesis for St. Bonaventure University, titled: *The Franciscan Solitude Experience: The Pilgrims' Journal*.

Registration deadline: May, 2001.

For brochure, contact:

Portiuncula Center for Prayer  
Att: Mary Ann  
9263 W. St. Francis Road  
Frankfort, IL 60423-8330  
Ph: 815-464-3880 Fax: 815-469-4880  
portc4p@aol.com



## FRANCISCAN FEDERATION

### THIRD ORDER REGULAR

OF THE SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

ANNOUNCES A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM

## THE CANTICLE OF CONVERSION: SINGING THE COSMIC SYMPHONY

"Christ comes to be the father of the universe when each person comes to be in the father of Christ. This is the essence of the Franciscan Vision."  
—St. Basil, OSF

### Includes:

- Contemporary celebration of our changing universe through the Canticale of Creation
- Reflection on our personal change-of-heart experiences
- Presentation on the Franciscan tradition of conversions
- Application of our evolving conversion in the present world
- Quiet time to touch the mystery of God in our life stories
- Appearance and dialog with a figure from our lineage
- Integration of our individual and cosmic stories to bring the future to birth
- Invitation to enter into the growing and transforming of the cosmos

### Program dates and places:

November 17-19, 2000—Tin Center, Winona, MN  
February 9-11, 2001—Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, CO  
March 16-18, 2001—St. Joseph Center, Tiffin, OH  
April 27-29, 2001—Franciscan Center, Andover, MA  
May 4-6, 2001—Millvale Motherhouse, Pittsburgh, PA  
September 21-23, 2001—Holy Spirit Center, San Antonio, TX  
October 5-7, 2001—Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL  
November 2-4, 2001—Center of Renewal, Stella Niagara, NY  
November 30-December 2, 2001—Avila Retreat Center, Durham, NC

Cost: \$225—Room, meals, program, materials (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Commitment fee: \$150—Program, materials, meals (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

### Location:

The Franciscan Federation,  
Sisters and Brothers  
211 E. 17th St., Washington, DC 20017  
Ph: 202-224-2334; Fax: 202-224-2016

## ***Junípero Serra Retreat***

### ***A Franciscan Renewal Center***

***Malibu, California***

*Established in 1942 by the Franciscan Friars of California, Serra Retreat is nestled between the ocean and the mountains in serene Malibu, conveniently accessible from LAX and Burbank airports.*

- *Private retreats*
- *Married couples*
- *Recovery retreats*
- *Days of Recollection*
- *Specialized retreats*
- *High school and college groups*
- *Women's and men's weekends*
- *Conferences*

*With a maximum occupancy of 100 guests, Serra Retreat provides a chapel with a panoramic view, large and small conference rooms, a fully staffed dining room, and grounds for walking and silent reflection.*

*Fr. Warren Rouse, OFM  
Director*

*Fr. Michael Doherty, OFM  
Retreat Master*

*Sr. Susan Blomstad, OSF  
Retreat Team*

*For further information:*



***Serra Retreat***  
***A Franciscan Retreat Center***

*Serra Retreat  
3401 Serra Road  
Malibu, CA 90265  
Ph: 310-456-6631 (Reservations)  
Fax: 310-456-9417  
srmalibu@aol.com  
www: sbfranciscans.org or  
globalretreats.com*

## **FRANCISCAN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

**2001**

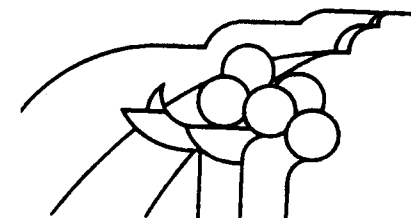
**2001**

**in  
Spiritual Direction  
and  
Directed Retreats**

**All sessions in 2001 will be conducted in  
Canterbury, England, and Toronto, Ontario**

A three-month ministerial and experiential program born out of the conviction that our Franciscan charism enables us to bring a distinctive Franciscan approach to our ministries.

Helpful to religious and lay formators, retreat directors, parish and hospital ministers, contemplatives, missionaries, community leadership, personal renewal.



*For more information contact:*

**David Connolly, OFM Cap.  
Mt. Alverno Retreat Centre  
20704 Heart Lake  
Caledone, ONT L0N 1C0**

# Franciscan

## GERMAIN GRIEZ

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume III: Difficult Moral Questions*

In this **newest** volume, Grisez answers 200 practical, moral questions raised by the readers of the first two volumes.

ISBN 0981-5 927 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume II: Living A Christian Life*

Prof. Grisez deals with the specific questions that concern all or most Catholics.

ISBN 0961-0 950 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

### *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Volume I: Christian Moral Principles*

Treats the foundations of Christian morality.

ISBN 0861-4 971 p. (hardcover) \$35.00

**Buy all three volumes for \$90.00!**

### *The First Franciscan Woman: Clare of Assisi and Her Form of Life*

Margaret Carney, osf

A scholarly study of Clare's Rule.

ISBN 0962-9 261 p. (paper) \$12.95

### *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*

Ingrid Peterson, osf

Drawing from historical, sociological, spiritual, theological, and ecclesiological backgrounds and specialists, Ingrid Peterson created the definitive biographical study of Clare of Assisi.

ISBN 0964-H 436 p. (cloth) \$23.50

### *A Dwelling Place for the Most High: Meditations with Francis of Assisi*

Fr. Thaddée Matura, ofm

Paul Lachance, ofm, trans.

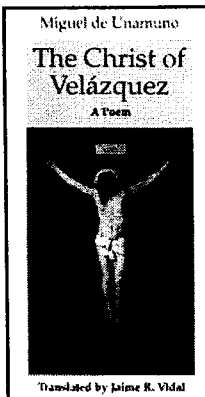
This work is a brief synthesis of a distinguished Franciscan scholar's thoughts on the life and example of the founder.

ISBN 0985-8 101 p. (paper) \$11.95

## NEW!

### The Christ of Velázquez

Miguel de Unamuno,  
Jaime Vidal, Ph.D.,  
trans.



Translated by Jaime R. Vidal

A classic of 20th century spirituality and a classic of Spanish literature, *The Christ of Velázquez* is a poetic meditation on Velázquez's painting of Christ Crucified by an outstanding figure of 20th century existentialist philosophy.

phy.

ISBN 0992-0 112 p. (hardcover) \$19.95

### *Marriage: The Sacrament of Divine-Human Communion: A Commentary on St. Bonaventure's 'Breviloquium'*

Sister Paula Jean Miller, fse

A new and original study of St. Bonaventure's theology of marriage as it is expressed in his *Breviloquium*.

ISBN 0967-X 268 p. (paper) \$24.95

## NEW!

### Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ

Sr. Ilia Delio, osf

This work examines the essential role of the crucified Christ in Bonaventure's mystical theology. Bonaventure advocated a type of mysticism that necessitated radical conformity to the suffering Christ.

ISBN 0988-2 268 p. (paper) \$15.95

# Press

Call or write for a  
free catalog.

## Francis in America



A Catalogue of Early Italian Paintings of St. Francis of Assisi in the United States and Canada

William R. Cook

ISBN 0984-X

\$39.95

193 p. (hardcover)

50 full page illustrations/22 in color 8 1/2 x 11

### *The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry*

(2nd series, 2nd edition) John M. Huels, osm, jcd

ISBN 0968-8 432 p. (paper) \$25.00

## Now in 2-volume paperback!

### *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources: Writings and Early Biographies*

Marion A. Habig, ofm, ed.

The classic English resource for primary texts on the life of St. Francis.

ISBN 0862-2 1665 p. (paper) \$35.00

### *The Trinity of Love in Modern Russian Theology: The Love Paradigm and the Retrieval of Western Medieval Love Mysticism in Russian Trinitarian Thought from Vladimir Solov'ev to Sergius Bulgakov*

Michael Aksionov Meerson

This monograph studies the emergence of the love paradigm in contemporary trinitarian doctrines, giving special emphasis to tracing this paradigm's development in modern Russian philosophy and theology. This paradigm explains the triune relationship of the Divine hypostases by the ontological love within God.

ISBN 0987-4 255 p. (paper) \$15.95

## SFO Resource Library

*SFO Resource Library*, coordinated by Benet Fonck, is a complete reference library for members of the *Secular Franciscan Order*. Vol. V & VI are yet to be printed.

### *Vol. I: Called to Follow Christ: Commentary on the Secular Franciscan Rule by the National Assistants' Commentary Commission*

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0975-0 139 p. (paper) \$15.95

### *Vol. II: Called to Rebuild the Church: A Spiritual Commentary on the General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order*

Lester Bach, ofm Cap.

ISBN 0976-9 206 p. (paper) \$16.95

### *Vol. III: Called to Live the Dynamic Power of the Gospel*

Philip Marquard, ofm

ISBN 0977-7 1203 p. (paper) \$13.95

### *Vol. IV: Called to Proclaim Christ*

Benet A. Fonck, ofm

ISBN 0982-3 60 p. (paper) \$12.95

For more information on these and  
FHP backlist titles write:

## Franciscan Press

Quincy University

1800 College Avenue

Quincy, IL 62301-2699

Telephone: 217-228-5670

Fax: 217-228-5672

Web site: [www.quincy.edu/fpress](http://www.quincy.edu/fpress)



# *The Strategy That Saved Assisi*

## **The Real "Assisi Underground" During World War II**

Francesco Santucci, historical documentation  
Aldo Brunacci, preface and appendix  
Josef Raischl, SFO, editor  
Nancy Celaschi, OSF, translator

Don Aldo Brunacci describes Alessandro Ramati's book and movie, *The Assisi Underground*, as "truly a wonderful work of fiction, but pure fiction, because it distorts the historical truth." *The Strategy That Saved Assisi* provides what is necessary to satisfy people's legitimate desire to know this truth.

The historical research of Professor Santucci brings to light the data about how the city of Assisi was saved from destruction in 1944 and how many refugees, especially Jews, found a safe haven there.

The most important part in this strategy for saving the city was played by the local Bishop, Giuseppe Nicolini, and the German commander, Dr. Valentin Mueller.

This volume combines within 78 pages detailed historical documentation, personal memories of the Mueller family, and reflections and memories of Don Aldo Brunacci, eye witness.

Published in Assisi by Editrice Minerva

Distributed in the U.S. by  
The Franciscan Store  
503 S. Browns Lake Dr., Burlington, WI 53105-0368  
Phone: 414-767-3630; fax: 414-767-3631  
e-mail: [franstor@genevaonline.com](mailto:franstor@genevaonline.com)

\$16.50 per copy plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

*The Cord*, 50. 6 (2000)

## **Index to *The Cord* Volume 50 2000**

### **Articles by Author**

- Barton, Thomas, OSF. "Habits of the Heart." July/Aug., 175-6.
- Beha, Marie, OSC. "Clare's Prayer: Office of the Passion." July/Aug., 166-74.
- Blastic, Michael, OFMConv. "Francis and Clare's Joy in Being Human: The Mystery of the Incarnation." Nov./Dec., 262-74.
- Buchanan, Mary Regina, PCC. "St. Clare of Assisi: Rooted in the Passion of Christ." July/Aug., 189-91.
- Carney, Margaret, OSF. "Edit." Jan./Feb., 1
- Chinnici, Joseph P., OFM. "This is What We Proclaim to You." Jan./Feb., 2-22.
- Cirino, André, OFM. "A Powerful Woman: Marianne Cope." Mar./Apr., 66-9.
- Flood, David, OFM. "Early Franciscans and the Radical Practice of Democracy." May/June, 119-24.
- Hardick, Lothar, OFM. "The Modernity of St. Clare." July/Aug., 186-8.
- Fukes, James, OFM Conv. "Mystical Lessons of Angela of Foligno." Mar./Apr., 77-81.
- Hinwood, Bonaventure, OFM. "The Holy Spirit in St. Francis." May/June, 110-17.
- Karecki, Madge, SSJ-TOSF. "Franciscan Life in the Midst of Social and Moral Upheaval." Sept./Oct., 236-9.
- Karris, Robert, OFM. "Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke 2:6-7." Nov./Dec., 275-80.
- Kindiki, Leonie, LSoSF. "The Circle of Life: A Symbol of Union and Strength." Sept./Oct., 240-2.
- Lewis, Alexander J., OFMConv. "Franciscans in Vietnam: Faithful Sons and Daughters." Sept./Oct., 229-35.
- Lobo, Florine, FMM. "Mary of Passion." Mar./Apr., 82-7.
- Lucker, Raymond A. "St. Francis: Person of the Millennium." Sept./Oct., 215-7.
- McKelvie, Roberta A., OSF. "Angelina of Montegiove." Mar./Apr., 58-65.
- Merkel, Jeanne, OSF. "Taoism and St. Francis of Assisi." Sept./Oct., 218-28.
- Mertens, Benedikt, OFM. "A Home for the Poor? A Look at the Social History of the Friars Minor in the Thirteenth Century." Nov./Dec., 289-300.
- Merton, Thomas, OCSO. "Franciscan Eremitism." Jan./Feb., 23-9.
- Mueller, Joan, OSF. "Visiting Agnes's Prague: A Pilgrim's Report." July/Aug., 192-8.
- Nobis, Mary, OSF. "Living Francis's Document on Solitude." May/June, 143-7.
- Nothwehr, Dawn, OSF. "Cosmic Mysticism, Cosmic Christ, Cosmic Mutuality." May/June, 125-37.
- Peyovich, Lyle, OFMCap. and Gregory Francis Smutko, OFMCap. "St. Francis in Russian Spirituality." Sept./Oct., 243-6.

- Riley, Maura, OSF. "Mother of Molokai." Mar/Apr., 76.
- Rochford, Jude M., OFM Conv., "Trees: Our Green 'Brothers'." May/June, 138-42.
- Schinelli, Giles, TOR. "Elizabeth of Hungary: Medieval Princess or Sharper Image?" Nov./Dec., 281-8.
- Schoenstein, Erwin, OFM. "Franciscans in Mindanao." Sept./Oct., 248-9.
- Smutko, Gregory Francis, OFM Cap. and Lyle Peyovich, OFM Cap. "St. Francis in Russian Spirituality." Sept./Oct., 243-6.
- Snyder, Janet, OSF. "Clare of Assisi and Beauty." July/Aug., 177-85.
- Thom, Frances Ann, OSF. "One Woman's Courage." Mar/Apr., 70-5.
- Wood, Joseph, OFM Conv. "A Franciscan Inspires the Jubilee." Jan./Feb., 30-4.

### Books Reviewed

- Carpenter, Charles. *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999. 222Pp. (Anthony Carrozzo, OFM), Jan./Feb., 38-41.
- Hayes, Zachary. *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings*. A Spiritual Legacy Book. New York: Crossroad, 1999. 152Pp. (Michael Blastic, OFM), May/June 149-53.
- Mormando, Franco. *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. (Winifred Whelan, OSF), Mar./Apr., 91-4.
- Mueller, Joan, OSF. *Francis: The Saint of Assisi*. Thomas More Publications, January, 2000. 296Pp. (Anthony Carrozzo, OFM), July/Aug., 200-1.
- Robson, Michael. *St. Francis of Assisi: The Legend and the Life*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1997. 294Pp. (Anthony LoGalbo, OFM), Jan./Feb., 42.
- Sobel, Dava. *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith and Love*. New York: Walker and Company, 1999. (Anthony Carrozzo, OFM), Mar./Apr., 89-91.

### Poems

- Craddock, Patricia. "The 'Francis' in Franciscan." Sept./Oct., 242.
- Juracek, Joseph, OFM. "oh, hugger of lepers." Sept./Oct., 228.
- Juracek, Joseph, OFM. "a prayer to st. francis." Sept./Oct., 228.
- Mary Frances, PC. "Transitus." Sept./Oct., 247.

### Biographical Profiles

- Laughlin, Frances Léa, SMIC. Nov./Dec., 302-3.
- Roebuck, Waldemar A., SFO. Jan./Feb., 35-6.

### Subject

- Africa, symbols and culture, Sept./Oct., 240.
- Angela of Foligno and mysticism, Mar./Apr., 77.
- Agnes of Prague, July/Aug., 192.
- Angelina of Montegiove, Mar./Apr., 58.
- Andrew of the Counts of Segni (Blessed) and Jubilee, Jan./Feb., 32.
- Bonaventure (Commentary on Luke), Nov./Dec., 275.

- Christ  
cosmic, May/June, 125.  
incarnate, Jan./Feb., 2.
- Clare of Assisi  
and beauty, July/Aug., 177.  
and contemplation, July/Aug., 175.  
and Eucharist, July/Aug., 175.  
and Incarnation, Nov./Dec. 262.  
and joy, Nov./Dec. 262.  
and Office of Passion, July/Aug., 166.  
and Passion of Christ, July/Aug, 189.  
and prayer, July/Aug., 166, 175.
- Democracy, radical practice of early Franciscans, May/June, 119.
- Ecology, trees, May/June, 138.
- Elizabeth of Hungary, Nov./Dec., 281.
- Eremitism, Franciscan, Jan./Feb., 23; May/June, 143.
- Frances Léa Laughlin, SMIC, Nov./Dec., 302.
- Francis of Assisi  
and Holy Spirit, May/June, 110.  
and Incarnation, Nov./Dec., 262.  
and joy, Nov./Dec., 262.  
and Millennium, Sept./Oct., 215.
- Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Mar./Apr., 82.
- Franciscanism  
and Jubilee, Sept./Oct., 214; Jan./Feb., 30.  
and Incarnation, Jan./Feb., 2.  
post-conciliar, Jan./Feb., 2.  
and eremitism, Jan./Feb., 23.
- Helen de Chappotin (Mary of the Passion), Mar./Apr., 82.
- Holy Spirit and Francis, May/June, 110.
- Incarnation  
and Franciscanism, Jan./Feb., 2.  
and joy, Nov./Dec., 262.  
and compassion, Nov./Dec., 262.
- Joy, Nov./Dec., 262.
- Jubilee and Franciscanism, Sept./Oct., 214; Jan./Feb., 30, Nov./Dec., 262.
- Luke (Bonaventure commentary), Nov./Dec., 275.
- Marianne Cope, Mar./Apr., 66, 70, 76.
- Mary of the Passion (Helen de Chappotin), Mar./Apr., 82.
- Millennium and Francis, Sept./Oct. 215.
- Molokai and Marianne Cope, Mar./Apr., 66, 70, 76.
- Muslims in Mindanao and Franciscans, Sept./Oct., 248.
- Mutuality, cosmic, May/June, 125.
- Mysticism  
and Angela of Foligno, Mar./Apr., 77.  
cosmic, May/June, 125.
- Office of the Passion and Clare, July/Aug., 166.
- Poverty and early Franciscans, Nov./Dec., 289.
- Prague (contemporary), July/Aug., 192.
- Reconciliation, Nov./Dec., 262.
- Rule for Hermitages and solitude, May/June, 143.
- Russian spirituality and Francis, Sept./Oct. 243.
- Solitude and Rule for Hermitages, May/June, 143.
- South Africa, Franciscans in, Sept./Oct. 236.
- Taoism and Francis, Sept./Oct. 218.
- Trees, as brothers (ecology), May/June, 138.
- Vietnam, Franciscans in, Sept./Oct. 229.

## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events

### Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19, 2000

**The Cantic of Creatures.** With Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. \$100. At Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, Pittsburgh. Contact: Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2340; ph. 412-881-9207; email: fslccom@aol.com

### Friday, November 17-Sunday, November 19, 2000

**The Cantic of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Tau Center, Winona, MN (see ad p. 311).

### Friday, December 8-Sunday, December 10, 2000

**Advent Retreat Weekend.** With James Gavin, OFM Cap. \$100. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Sunday, December 31, 2000

**End of the Year Retreat.** With Lorraine Campanelli, OSF. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Friday, February 3-Thursday, February 8, 2001

**Franciscan Gathering: Spiritual Formation and Direction in the Franciscan Tradition.** With Edward Coughlin, OFM, and Celeste Crine, OSF. At Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL. Contact Franciscan Center, ph. 813-229-2695; fax: 813-228-0748; email: francntr@aol.com

### Friday, February 9-Sunday, February 11, 2001

**The Cantic of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At Franciscan Center, Colorado Springs, CO (see ad p. 311).

### Sunday, February 18-Friday, February 23, 2001

**Conference Retreat for Sisters.** With James Gavin, OFM Cap. At Franciscan Center, Hastings on Hudson. Contact Franciscan Center, 49 Jackson Ave., Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706; ph. 914-478-3696.

### Friday, March 2-Saturday March 3, 2001

**8th Annual Central New York Franciscan Experience: A Single Branch of Flame—Meeting the Discerning Hearts of Francis & Clare.** With Clare A. D'Auria, OSF. Contact: The Franciscan Center, 2500 Grant Blvd., Syracuse, NY 13208; ph. 315-425-0115; email: osfsyr@eznet.net

### Friday, March 16-Sunday, March 18, 2001

**The Cantic of Conversion.** Sponsored by The Franciscan Federation. At St. Joseph Center, Tiffin, OH (see ad p. 311).

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions	ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo	FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
BenBern	Blessing for Brother Bernard	1Fragm	Fragment of other Rule I
CantSol	Cantic of Brother Sun	2Fragm	Fragment of other Rule II
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony	LaudDei	Praises of God
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy	LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians	OffPass	Office of the Passion
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians	OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful	RegB	Later Rule
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful	RegNB	Earlier Rule
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
EpMin	Letter to a Minister	SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples	Test	Testament
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God	TestS	Testament written in Siena
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies	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
RCI	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
BCI	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 Jacques 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 Commernium
SP	Mirror of Perfection