

**A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE**

THE LORD SHOWS FORTH THE REMEDY  
PRESENT IN THE GIFT OF HIS GRACE IN THESE  
WORDS: *HE SAID TO THEM: THINGS THAT  
ARE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MEN AND WOMEN,  
THROUGH THE STRENGTH OF THEIR POWERS,  
ARE POSSIBLE FOR GOD*, THAT IS THEY BE-  
COME POSSIBLE THROUGH GOD'S ASSIS-  
TANCE.

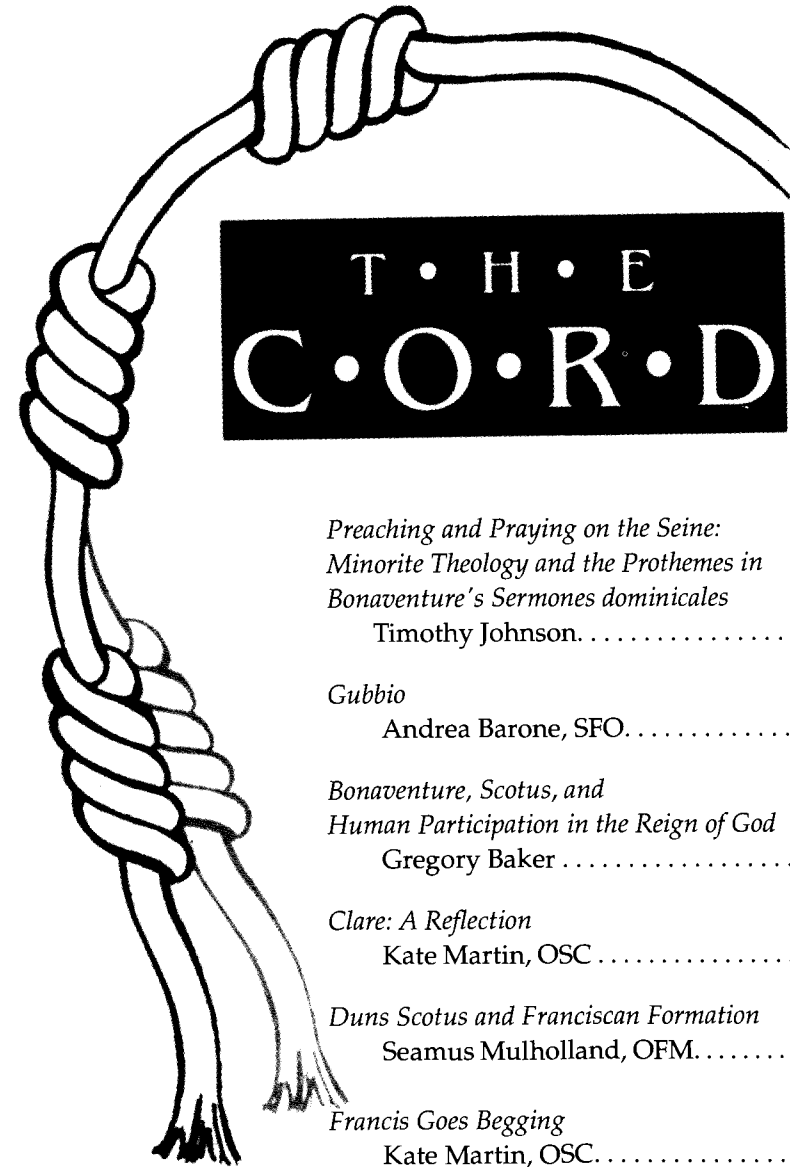
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**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

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**Editorial**

"Winter is the time for study, you know, and the colder it is the more studious we are." So Henry David Thoreau wrote to his sister Sophia in 1847. His words ring true even today: in the cold, darker days of what I like to call "high winter" the tendency to huddle up with a good book increases. Even the type of reading can become more solid, since there is less opportunity to be distracted by outdoor events. Or so it seems to me.

In this issue we offer the possibility of deeper reading, presenting material that takes us into the rich content of Franciscan theology and thought. A look at some of the Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure, the impact of the thought of Bonaventure and Scotus on seeing ourselves as part of God's plan for the world, and a look at Scotus as a resource for "becoming Franciscan" form the core of the following pages. We have also included selected poetry that touches the founding moments of the Franciscan story and, we hope, speaks to the inner life of all who read these pieces.

Once again the calendar has run its course, and we embark on a new part of the journey: 2005. Can it be that we are so far beyond the all the Y2K anticipation and the transition to the 21st century? Can it be that as I write this piece we are receiving the first real snowfall of our Allegany winter? The New Year offers an opportunity to mark transitions, and I want to take this opportunity to thank my editorial board of the last several years for their many contributions to the success of *The Cord*: Mary C. Gurley, OSF; Robert Karris, OFM; Beth Lynn, OSC; Margaret Mc Grath, FMSJ; Richard Morton, SFO; Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR; and Joseph Wood, OFM Conv. Some have written articles and poems, some have offered advice and support, all have been patient with the passage of the journal into my hands. I am grateful for all the ways in which they have enriched the content and quality of this journal. There will be a new editorial board in place by the time the next issue goes to press.

I share with you a wish sent me from one of my Poor Clare associates: "Our song may at times sound faint, the light seem distant and dim, our hopes weak and faltering, but if there is still a heartbeat of desire in even one person that is shared boldly with others, a renewed faith, vision, and purpose is reborn. Space for God's reign is created." May the coming year be for each of us a time of sharing the heartbeats of desire for peace, mercy, and justice in all parts of our world!

*Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF*

## Preaching and Praying on the Seine: Minorite Theology and the Prothemes in Bonaventure's *Sermones dominicales*

Timothy Johnson

*By virtue of what took place through the passion of the Lord, I, a servant of the cross, composed this present collection of sermons to praise the name of Christ and to honor his sacred cross . . .*

In *Exemplum e literatura*, Carlo Delcorno notes that although they are not sermon models, even the *reportationes* of Bonaventure's sermons have a normative value given his theological authority and position as Minister General of the Minorite Order. Consequently, a collection of model sermons such as the *Sermones dominicales*, or *Sunday Sermons*, edited by Bonaventure sometime between April 24, 1267 and May 17, 1268, are particularly significant; these texts constitute an eminent expression of the Minister General's desire, on both the theological and institutional level, to direct the preaching endeavors of his Minorite brothers.

Bonaventure's theological concerns permeate the *Sunday Sermons*, including his intensive interest in prayer, which is evidenced in the prothemes attached to twenty-five of the fifty sermons. As Jacques Bougerol indicates, this unique aspect of the medieval sermon underlines the necessity of prayer. This essay will examine the role of prothemes in preaching, delineate the salient aspects of the early Minorite perspective on prayer, and detail how Bonaventure utilizes the prothemes throughout the *Sunday Sermons* as a way to teach the Minorite theology of prayer as articulated at the University of Paris. This essay affords particular attention to Bonaventure's striking appeal to divine piety as this practice exemplifies how his conception of preaching presupposes the Minorite emphasis on interiority, both human and divine.

### Prothemes and Medieval Preaching

Prothemes, according to Thomas Charland's study of the *Artes praedicandi*, are inseparable from prayer in the practice of the thirteenth century *sermo*

*modernus*. Following the announcement of the biblical theme, the preacher quotes another text that is intended to unite the initial prayer to the declared theme. Bonaventure's sermon, the Third Sunday of Advent, elucidates this dynamic. Declaring the theme from John 1:26: In your midst stood one whom you did not know, he then adds the protheme:

*While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were listening*, etc. (Acts 10:44). These last words proposed here describe three noteworthy things pertaining to every preacher. The first is the certitude of the one speaking mentioned with the premise: *While Peter was speaking*. The name Peter is interpreted as the one who knows. The second is the swiftness of the one poured out mentioned by the following: *the Holy Spirit came*. The third is the multitude of people listening mentioned by stating: *upon all those who were listening to the words*. Given these three things, let us all devotedly implore the grace of divine piety, that it might fall on the one speaking with certain words and establish the one listening among the multitude of the blessed. In this way, both the one speaking and the one listening might rejoice in the swift effusion of the Holy Spirit by whom I might say and you understand these matters to the praise and glory of our Mediator and the health and consolation of our souls. Amen.

Bonaventure's usage of this protheme affords him the opportunity to invite the audience into a prayer to Christ the Mediator, who, according to John 1:26 stood among the Jewish people and as Bonaventure will later illustrate, is the perfect medium of reconciliation between humanity and God.

Given the repeated absence and, in the words of Nicole Beriou, apparent "fragility" of prothemes in medieval sermon collections, their frequent appearance in the *Sunday Sermons* is noteworthy and fortunate. They foster a detailed study of the relationship between prayer and preaching, which Bonaventure explored both as Master Regent at the University of Paris and as Minister General of the Minorite Order. When redacting another text as a guide to preachers, the *Commentary on Luke*, he reminded the brothers of the role of prayer in the life of those called to proclaim the Word of God. Just as Jesus looked to heaven before sharing the loaves with the crowd, so too should the preacher turn to God. There is little doubt the brothers are summoned to follow this evangelical example in the *Major Life of Saint Francis*, where Bonaventure constructs a paradigm of Minorite urban prayer and preaching representative of the clerical ministry of the mid-thirteenth century.

The text of the *Sunday Sermons* stands as a homogenous literary work; it emerges as a consciously constructed presentation of the identity, interior disposition, and thematic concerns of the Minister General's idealized Minorite preachers, the *virī spirituales*. This thematic can be traced through the *Sunday*

*Sermons*, where Bonaventure writes of the ecclesial import of prelates, priests, and religious dedicated to the contemplative study and active proclamation of the Scriptures.

## Minorite Prayer and Parisian Theology

Bonaventure's emphasis on prayer and preaching in texts like the *Commentary on Luke* is also evident in his frequent recourse to prothemes; consequently the prothemes of the *Sunday Sermons*, which lead to prayer, focus on preaching, and are directed toward contemplative mendicants, become an ideal medium for conveying the Minorite theology of prayer. Since they had established themselves at the University of Paris, Minorite theologians had elaborated a perspective on prayer that continued the Augustinian-Victorine predilection for interiority, and distinguished them from the Order of Preachers.

The presence of God within is undoubtedly a common thread Minorite writers weave throughout their treatments of prayer. Readers are reminded, time and time again, that the divine is nearer to them than they could ever hope to be to themselves. The divine presence is most evident in the memory, intelligence, and will, proper to rational creatures. The classical expression of the Minorite position is the *Journey of the Soul into God*, where Bonaventure fashions a model of interior prayer that guides contemplatives through the images and vestiges of the world, in order to uncover within the image of God, reflected in the powers of memory, intelligence, and will. When transformed by faith, hope, and love, these powers of the soul mirror the Triune God, thus fostering an ever-deeper entrance into the mystery of divine darkness, foreshadowed in the stigmata of Francis of Assisi on Mount La Verna.

## Minorite Preachers and Prayer

Similar to one presiding at liturgy, the preacher plays a pivotal role in inviting, animating, and directing the community gathered for prayer. Of all his sermon collections, the *Sunday Sermons* best reveals how Bonaventure carefully constructs the identity and the prayer of the Minorite preacher. His counterpart among the Preachers, Humbert of Romans, believed the protheme served multiple purposes, both practical and spiritual. Bonaventure's extant prothemes, however, exhibit an exclusive concern with the art and craft of preaching by individuating the subject, that is to say the preacher, together with the community, in relationship to God, who is the divine source of the ministry. As the protheme for the *Fourth Sunday of Advent* depicts through the image of the disciples fishing with Jesus, preaching is indeed a collaborative endeavor eliciting prayer:

*Master, we have worked through the night and have taken nothing; but at your word I will lower the net* (Luke 5: 5). If the net is the sermon by which we take in people like fish in a net, and the fisher is the preacher whose role is: to lower the nets, that is, compose the sermon; wash the nets, that is, to adorn the sermon; and to restore the nets, that is, to confirm the sermon with authorities, then it is God's role to command with his word that the nets be lowered. If this does not take place, the preaching is shrouded in darkness by the obscurity of error. This is suggested when it says: *through the night*; it is an onerous burden given the weight of the labor as worked indicates, and it is useless work, without benefit, as suggested when we *have taken nothing* is added. Before all else it is necessary to ask God, with his word of grace and piety, to wash the net, that is, our sermon, so the obscurity of error, the gravity of labor, and uselessness of the works might be removed and replaced by the clarity of truth, delight of rest, and usefulness of charity. With clear understanding, delighted affections, and beneficial works, we might be able to say, therefore, some things to the praise and glory, etc.

Given the respective role of the preacher, Bonaventure speaks of prayer as a necessity. The *Sunday Sermon* prothemes indicate that affective interiority, common to the Parisian Minorite theology, informs the context and content of the requisite prayer which initiates their preaching. More often than not, reference is made to the interior life of the soul by shaping the parameters of the protheme with language reflecting the affective and intellectual dimensions of human spirituality, the powers of the soul, and the crucial role of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. This effort is evident in Bonaventure's tripartite division of weaknesses confronting both the preacher and audience. Such defects inhibit both the effective delivery and efficacious reception of the word of God, so they are to be acknowledged and, like the ailments plaguing the body, treated. Not to do so would be analogous to ignoring the words of a physician when sick according to the protheme of the *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*.

The protheme of the *Second Sunday of Advent* speaks of a threefold defect in humanity, apparent before the coming of Christ, which consists in a weakness of strength, terse comprehension, and darkened understanding. Faced with this situation, those who preach are to pray for the clemency of divine piety that fortifies with strength and promotes effective action, heightens the capacity for comprehension, and clarifies understanding with veracious thought. The previously cited *Fourth Sunday of Advent* protheme mentions the obscurity of error, the burden of the preaching endeavor, and the uselessness of labor that is not commanded by the Lord. Preachers are to pray for the clarity of truth,

delightful affections associated with rest, and the charity to render work beneficial.

In the protheme of the *Third Sunday after Epiphany* based on the verse: *The little ones asked for bread, and there was no one to break it for them* (Lamentations 4: 4), the Minister General situates the imagined Minorite preacher within the mendicant state common to humanity due to the original fall from grace. Misery envelops men and women ensnared in a threefold state of affliction: weakened by sin and far from the highest majesty, they are unable to act in their indigence; separated from the greatest good, they are unable to make progress; and removed from the highest piety, they encounter cruelty and harshness. To be of use to those gathered in worship, the preacher turns to the font of every blessing, and prays to be fortified for action, open to progress, and rectified in affection.

Although the entire collection of prothemes in the *Sunday Sermons* implicitly or explicitly posits human indigence, Bonaventure crafts many with an accent on the gifts God intends to share with those entrusted with the ministry of preaching. His emphasis on interiority carries throughout the threefold structure of petitions addressed to the Father of mercies. The *First Sermon of Advent* sets the stage for a number of subsequent prothemes emphasizing the irascible, affective, and rational powers, which the Seraphic Doctor juxtaposes with the power, goodness, and truth found in the grace preachers seek in prayer, as they stand at the threshold of public proclamation. Under the influence of divine grace, they will be fortified in action, gladdened in will, and enlightened in understanding.

In the *Sunday Sermon* prothemes there is an underlying emphasis on interior dispositions and personal sanctity, but attention is occasionally given to the question of eloquence, especially in the case of the passion, where divine wisdom dictates humble reverence and profound content be joined to forceful eloquence. Yet, according to the protheme for the *Second Sunday of Lent*, Bonaventure's Minorite preacher should speak in a useful manner but briefly as suggested by Francis of Assisi, who reminds his brothers in the Later Rule that the Lord "used few words on earth."

More than the brevity and eloquence of preachers, Bonaventure extols the prayerful longing for wisdom in the Sunday Sermon prothemes, as he likewise lauds the myriad blessings that flow from this greatest of gifts. Commenting on the Epistle of James in the protheme for the First Sunday of Lent, Bonaventure reminds preachers that God, who is both generous and pious, alone bestows wisdom in prayer:

*If any of you are wanting in wisdom, let that one ask it of God who gives abundantly to everyone, and does not reproach.* James 1:5. Any preacher at the beginning of his sermon should consider the three things

understood in the canonical text chosen from blessed Jacob. The first is the indigence of human deficiency, second is the insistence of devout prayers, and the third is the affluence of divine liberality. The indigence of human deficiency is noted, therefore, when it says: *If any of you are wanting in wisdom*; truly the insistence of devout prayers is noted when it adds: *let that one ask it of God*; but the affluence of divine liberality is also noted when it states: *who gives abundantly to everyone*. On that account, most beloved, since we know from experience the indigence of our deficiency and the affluence of divine liberality, let us have recourse with the insistence of devout prayer to God, the father of lights and the bestower of wisdom, so that with his accustomed piety, God might give us his wisdom so we are able to offer something worthwhile to his praise and the consolation of our souls. Amen.

## Divine Piety and Prothemes

One striking aspect of the prothemes, which accentuates the interiority of prayer, is the concern with the image of God, who is invoked as pious. The Bonaventurian corpus, from the *Commentary on John* to the *Collations on the Six Days* suggest a nuanced understanding of piety that includes worship of God as well as a respect toward authorities and mercy for the needy, who bear within the image of God.

What is remarkable in the *Sunday Sermons* is that ten prothemes refer specifically to God's piety in petitionary prayer; thus, underscoring the interiority of the divine relationship with humanity as the image of God. God as pious, together with other descriptions of the deity as consoling, merciful, generous, and the source of light, further the Parisian Minorite perspective by linking the divine response to prayer with a desired influence on the three powers of the human soul.

While piety is a theme Bonaventure admittedly treats on a number of occasions, the image of God as pious is prominent only in the *Sunday Sermons* and not in other major sermon collections. It is noteworthy that Bonaventure does consider the piety of God in the *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, which he preached during Lent at the University of Paris in 1268, it is noteworthy since this is the same period in which the Seraphic Doctor may have redacted the *Commentary on Luke* and composed the *Sunday Sermons* to assist Minorite preachers.

As the *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* reveal, Bonaventure devoted the third evening of his Lenten preaching to the gift of piety. This particular conference, read in conjunction with the prothemes speaking of divine piety, suggests the image of God as pious in the context of preaching took on prominence during Bonaventure's intense academic and pastoral activities in Paris between 1267 and 1268. Bonaventure proceeds beyond his previous

notions of piety, noting in the *Collations on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* that piety is predicated on the nature of God:

See, I say, that the gift of divine piety first arises from the *Uncreated Trinity*, namely from God the Father. While God has all of the most noble of properties, nevertheless God is most excellent in this property, that is, of piety; whence it is said in prayer: '*God, to whom it is proper to always have mercy and spare*' etc. And in Sirach: *God is pious and merciful, and forgives sins in the time of tribulation and the protector of all seeking him in truth. -He is pious and merciful* because he spares and protects.

## Conclusion

This essay began by referring to the enduring significance of Bonaventure's sermons for the appreciation of the Minorite ministry of preaching, and calling attention to the theology of prayer visible in the prothemes in the *Sunday Sermons*. As an author, Bonaventure could undoubtedly envision his literary endeavors, together with his secretary Marco di Montefalco, as an integral element of his vocation in the Minorite Order where, according to Atilio Langelli, the propensity to write originates in the preponderance of scribes in the early fraternity, like Leo, who served as secretary for the relatively prolific Francis.

Bonaventure is an example of this Minorite culture. This essay, accordingly, demonstrates the Minister General's intention to construct a literary paradigm of Minorite preaching and prayer, representative of his understanding of clerical ministry in the mid-thirteenth century. As a brother whose experience of the Minorite life was shaped almost exclusively in the environs of the University of Paris, he naturally employs the *sermo modernus* as the model for his fellow preachers with its characteristic protheme.

Unlike collections such as the *Seasonal Sermons* and *Diverse Sermons*, the seventh Minister General after Francis of Assisi composed the *Sunday Sermons* from beginning to end as a unified literary work. This reality rightly presumes a conscious effort to develop themes systematically throughout the text reflecting the intention, insight, imagination of the author. The prothemes represent an elegantly crafted, biblically based, and theologically sophisticated example of Bonaventure's personal and ideal perception of the Minorite preachers sought for, and supported by, the ecclesial community. Of course, he does not write in a vacuum. The concerted efforts of the Parisian Minorites to formulate a theology of prayer distinct from the Order of Preachers, with an emphasis on interiority, provided the content that shapes the prothemes and allows Bonaventure the opportunity to remind the brothers, the *virī spirituales*, of their identity as contemplative preachers. Beggars, truly mendicant before God like all of humanity, they have a precious ministry that is to be animated

less by subtle argumentation and eloquence, and more by the charitable compassion and transparent truth interiorly operative in their souls, and exteriorly visible in their deeds. This evangelical outreach is but an extension of the piety God has shown to them.

Bonaventure's piety, often termed as compassion for others, and his belief in the piety of God, are evident in the prothemes of the *Sunday Sermons*, where he repeatedly invites his brothers in ministry to pray with him, so as to invoke



divine compassion from the interior depth of the Triune God. This plea confirms and reinforces the Minorite partiality for interiority. Bonaventure's recourse to piety at the height of his ministerial activity is indicative, perhaps, of the growing realization that his efforts to guide and reform the Order of Minors depend ultimately on the mercy of God. Prayers for piety in the *Sunday Sermons* are then an invitation to God, a request that the Creator look anew at the divine image within the brothers, and indeed throughout the created cosmos, and respond generously to their needs. While the originating locus of piety is the mystery of the most high God, so too is the Father of mercies urged to encounter others within the soul, where the powers of memory, intelligence, and will manifest the interior signature of the divine and—when transformed by divine piety—proclaim the glory of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier in the unmistakable charity, truth, and

holiness of Minorite preachers—unmistakable charity, truth, and holiness—qualities no doubt just as desirable in preachers today as they were yesterday.

Source of image: *S. Boanaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum), 23. Artist: Tiberius of Assisi, part of the "Madonna with Saints" in the church of S. Francis, Montefalco.

## GUBBIO

***For there appeared in the territory of that city a fearfully large and fierce wolf which was so rabid with hunger that it devoured not only animals but even human beings. (LFI, 21)***

**Pledges and concessions were made that day.**

**Mouth open,  
he raced fiercely toward the tattered gray habit  
(who dared leave the gates of the city?)  
but at the sight of the cross in the air, he stopped . . .  
saw the small, weathered hand motioning to him,  
and understood.**

**Eyes lowered,  
the man softened at the sight of the creature  
(for the great war-torn body lay there at his feet)  
and as the Spirit moved through him, he paused . . .  
felt the touch of the gray, calloused paw in his hand,  
and understood.**

**Hearts joyful,  
the crowd filled the market place, eager for signs  
(and was this not the sign of God's favor?)  
leaning from windows and peering from corners,  
they beheld as the two sealed the pact . . .  
heard the words of the sermon – beheld also their sins,  
and, at last, understood.**

Andrea Barone, SFO

## Bonaventure, Scotus, and Human Participation in the Reign of God

Gregory Baker

### Introduction

One of the sticking points of contemporary Christian moral sensibilities is the extent to which humankind influences the course of salvation history. Jesus of Nazareth has already merited human salvation through his incarnation, life, passion, death and resurrection. Salvation is *already*, yet to some extent, *not yet*. Between eschatological concerns of the ultimate end of humanity and practical concerns of the actualization of the reign of God on earth there remains considerable debate concerning the role that humans play in realizing God's reign in its fullness. What part does humanity play in creation's return to God?

Liberation theologians have voiced criticisms of both theology and humanity as a whole. Theology, according to liberation theologians, has neglected the voices and experiences of a majority of humanity: poor, non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual. In short, theology has placed the white European male at the center. At the same time, humanity has failed in its societal/political structures to ensure basic needs to oppressed peoples. Liberationists assert that salvation history (realizing God's reign in its fullness) is a reality to which human beings, including theologians, are either active participants or impediments. As far as the present is concerned, the realization of God's reign is contingent upon human action.

It is not difficult to find that the concerns of liberation theology have, at least in part, arisen from voices in the Franciscan movement. The many writings of Leonardo Boff, a prominent liberation theologian, are just one example of this.<sup>1</sup> The way of life and social critique offered by Francis and Clare of Assisi proved to be so vibrant and radical that today we are still looking to their example.

Bonaventure's voice is profoundly pastoral and theological in thirteenth century debates, both those internal to the Franciscan order and those between Franciscans and the scientific, philosophical academy of the time.

Bonaventure shed theological light on the Franciscan project as a movement of the mind and will back to God. In a similar way John Duns Scotus grounded his theology of human freedom by casting the love of and return to God in the most practical terms—through love of neighbor. We will find in this Franciscan a radically positive view of humanity.

The conclusion of Bonaventure's *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*<sup>2</sup> (paragraphs 23-26) offers a glimpse into Bonaventure's systematic vision of humanity's place in returning to the God's fullness. I will first summarize the final four paragraphs of the *Reduction*. Then I will consider the Franciscan, Platonic and Scriptural references in the text to lead towards a discussion of the deeper structure of the text. Scotus's discussion of moral relationships found in *Ordinatio III, distinction 37* shows, in a fittingly Franciscan way, that the human road to love of God is found in love of neighbor. Finally, I will discuss the value of these texts for the Franciscan tradition particularly, and, more broadly, concerning humanity's role in realizing the reign of God. In positioning Scotus to build upon and strengthen Bonaventure's teachings, we will find a bolstered argument that the Franciscan tradition bases human moral life on praxis and love of neighbor.

## Bonaventure

Bonaventure teaches that Scripture illumines moral philosophy by showing humans how to live "rightly." We can understand this rightness in three ways. First, rightness is understood as "right (=straight) if its middle is not out of line with its extreme points."<sup>3</sup> Christ is the middle point between the Creator God who produces and the Spirit who is produced from God. Bonaventure offers Christ as an exemplar of the *exitus* (coming out from) and *reditus* (returning back to) the Triune God. Christ is the mediator between God and humanity, the one leading humankind back to God. As the mediator, Christ also models human life lived with an understanding of having come from and thus returning to God.

Rightness can also be understood as that "which is conformed to that by which it is ruled."<sup>4</sup> There is a rule of life towards which the will of the human person should be disposed to receive precepts, warnings and counsels to come to know the "*good and acceptable and perfect will of God*."<sup>5</sup> This is the life in which nothing is out of line. It is clear that for Bonaventure the life rightly lived is the life rightly ordered.

Finally, rightness is found in the human being of upright posture. The mind must be raised above to God in order to unite with God. For Bonaventure this "actually happens when our *rational nature* assents to the first truth for its own sake and above all things, when our *irascible nature* strives after the highest generosity, and when our *concupiscible nature* clings to the good."<sup>6</sup> Right living

leads to uniting the entire human person to God. Our mind leads the way to union with God, after which the entirety of our person joins in this union.

Bonaventure then summarizes the reduction that has taken place. All arts and fields of study are "servants of theology" and the reality of the divine "lies hidden within everything which is perceived or known."<sup>7</sup> Just as moral philosophy finds its fulfillment in right living that results in union with God, so all sciences bear fruit that leads to the union of the "Spouse with the beloved."<sup>8</sup> Charity is central to all of the fields of human activity, and indeed "charity in which the whole purpose of sacred scripture . . . comes to rest—a charity without which all knowledge is vain."<sup>9</sup> The fruit born of charity in all of the arts is thus: "that in all, faith may be strengthened, *God may be honored*, character may be formed, and consolation may be derived . . ."<sup>10</sup> While human rationality has been pivotal in coming to God, charity has been fundamental all along.

Before positing the deeper meanings of the text, it is necessary to consider how these final paragraphs fit into the overall scheme of the *Reduction*. Bonaventure has moved from an abstract explanation of light (par. 1-7) to how sense perception (par. 8-10), mechanical arts (par. 11-14), rational philosophy (par. 15-18), and natural philosophy (19-22) lead back to theology. Bonaventure ends with the "light of *sacred Scripture*" found in moral philosophy, which is concerned with the concrete positioning of the human person in relation to God.<sup>11</sup> First, Christ is shown as the originating mediator who makes possible the return of humanity to God. Next, it is the docile and obedient one who lives by a correct rule of life who will be able to come to understand the will of God, and thus the direction in which humanity should go. Finally, having the return to God made possible (faith in and through Christ) and having been shown the way in which to embark on this journey (character formation), the person can move forward with the Spirit towards loving union with God. The whole of human study has been reduced to theology which, in turn, shows us how to live rightly. Yet the fact of right living is not in itself enough. "No one comes to the Son except through the Spirit who teaches us all the truth."<sup>12</sup> Humans are held in the tension of learning the way to live yet remaining helplessly dependent on the illumination of God which comes through God's loving action and revelation in Scripture. To grasp Bonaventure's position more completely it is helpful to consider three significant influences in this short text: Franciscan life, Plato and Scripture.

To conform the human will to God within a rule of life (paragraph 24) is a thoroughly monastic notion, and although Bonaventure is Franciscan, we may consider him within this tradition. To say "that is called right which is conformed to that by which it is ruled" is to call to mind the Benedictine notion of no longer possessing one's will through obedient surrender to God. Francis's notion of obedience nuances this tradition. One places the will of the other above one's own, more out of a *loving relationship* than out of a sense of duty.<sup>13</sup>



Out of this right disposition (poverty, humility and charity) one can accept the necessary moral precepts. The idea of a "rule of life" inevitably brings to mind the rules of the three orders of Franciscans. Yet, whereas these Franciscan references are somewhat indirect, the references to Plato are much more blatant.

The *Reduction* is teeming with Platonic references. Bonaventure takes the geometrical notion of straightness<sup>14</sup> (paragraph 23) in moral philosophy from Plato. Paragraph 25 is almost entirely the thought of Plato. For example, the human is made right by elevating (pointing upward). Bonaventure's reference to the "union of the soul with God" echoes Plato's *Symposium*.<sup>15</sup> Finally, Bonaventure even divides the human soul into Plato's categories of irascible nature, concupiscible nature and rational nature. Yet we find this heavily (arguably entirely) Platonic understanding of the human sandwiched between two of Paul's epistles: Romans and Ephesians.

Bonaventure has three direct scriptural references in the section under consideration. Paragraph 24 echoes Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." This reference is a fitting summary of Bonaventure's entire theme in the *Reduction*: all of our learning and experiences should renew our minds so as to conform to God's will. Paragraph 26 begins with direct reference to Ephesians 3:10-11 and the manifold ways in which God's wisdom is revealed. Also, the reference to humankind standing upright can be traced to Ecclesiastes 7:30: "God made humankind upright."<sup>16</sup> Informed by philosophy, inspired by the Franciscan tradition and directed by Scripture, the human is ready to proceed (*reditus*) in charity towards loving union with God. Before considering the full significance of Bonaventure's theology of humankind's return to God, I will look to the deepening that Scotus adds to Bonaventure's position.

## Scotus

In *Ordinatio III, distinction 37*, Scotus speaks to the law of nature as found in the Decalogue. He begins by distinguishing the first three commandments (the first table) as belonging "to the natural law in the strictest sense,"<sup>17</sup> meaning that these are practical principles which any human being can know without the assistance of divine revelation. Yet, he goes on to say that this is not the case with the remaining seven commandments (the second table), which are commands without which a human could still find union with God: "... even if the good found in these maxims were not commanded, the last end [of man as union with God] could still be loved and attained. . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Scotus further explains his position, stating that God is the immediate object of the first two commands, and that it necessarily follows that we must

love and worship God. Whereas Scotus would refer to human reality as contingent (and thus open to at least the possibility that an opposite position could be true under the right circumstances) the first two commands could never be true in their opposite. God could never command us to hate God; nor could God command us to be irreverent to God. Scotus then discusses at some length why the third command to observe the Sabbath belongs to the first and second tables of the Decalogue. That we must worship God at some specific time is an imperative we can attribute to natural law. Yet it does not follow that "it requires that at some definite time worship be shown to God."<sup>19</sup> We know *that* we must worship God but we cannot say with perfect certainty *when* we must do so.

Scotus does not wish to nullify the significance of the second table. In another way the commands of the second table do "belong to the law of nature because they are exceedingly in harmony with that law, even though they do not follow necessarily from those first principles known from their terms . . ."<sup>20</sup> Even though we can come to particular examples of laws of living that are "greatly in harmony with the first universal principle they clarify,"<sup>21</sup> it does not mean that a positive law has followed that universal principle by any logical necessity. Scotus uses the principle that life and community ought to be peaceful to give the example that the possession of private property is not logically necessary for peaceful living. Even in the case of the sick, Scotus suggests, we cannot show that they *must* possess private property.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, all commandments, broadly speaking, still fall under the law of nature.

Scotus concludes that in Scripture we have had a "higher love of neighbor" revealed to us "that transcends that which is included in, or follows from, the principles of the law of nature."<sup>23</sup> In fact, the second table of the Decalogue follows from the commandment that all human laws depend upon: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Scotus finds it to be the intention of God, the Law-giver, that we understand love of neighbor through the commands of the second table. Scotus has shown that both tables of the Decalogue follow from nature: the first table consists of laws we could arrive at on our own accord; the second table consists of laws revealed by Scripture about God's (and human) nature: that loving the other as oneself brings the law of nature to fulfillment.

Scotus has accomplished three pivotal things in this text: (1) the notion that we love God through loving neighbor, (2) the notion of Christ as fulfilling the law of the decalogue, and (3) the primacy of praxis in Christian living.

Scotus has shown that the way to God in this world is through love of neighbor. All that has been revealed to us in Christ has to do with our social relationships—our ability to love other people as laid out in the commands of the second table. What we knew of God through the natural law (philosophy) was that we must worship and love God alone. But we did not fully know *how* to do this. Scotus has shown that all of the laws revealed in Christ (which

reveal to us our fullest nature as humans) are on the horizontal dimension of our lives. The way to God is not so much up as through—through the living of right relationships with other people.

Scotus has also rooted his argument in Scripture, and has done it in a particular way. He shows that we begin with a natural law that can tell us that there is a God to be worshipped and loved. We are then given commands (the second table) that we understand in their content, but not yet in their full context. We are given the full context in Christ. Scotus uses Paul (Romans 13:9) and Christ<sup>24</sup> to show that in the Incarnation a higher love of neighbor is revealed than we had known in the Decalogue. Scotus shows both *that* Christ fulfills the law and *how* he does this. Christ has fulfilled the law by revealing a new order (which is the original order existing in the Trinity) of loving that calls all people willing the good of the other in love. To understand how to live we begin where all of the rules of the Franciscan orders begin: by living the Gospel of Christ in poverty, chastity and obedience.<sup>25</sup>

Scotus moves his profoundly positive view of the human (each with his/her individual *haec*) to show that in Christ we see revealed the very activity of God. Our true nature is as yet unrealized. As Ingham says, “If one truly believes that human nature is fallen in its present state, then one must conclude that our *natural* state includes greater perfection, even if we do not experience it here.”<sup>26</sup> Scotus shows us how dignified we are by our nature. He also shows how we become increasingly true to our nature (our *haec*), in our praxis of love of neighbor. We are already deeply graced in our existence while offered the opportunity to become continually more united with the activity of God through our activity in loving the other.

## Bonaventure and Scotus

Bonaventure has synthesized a moral vision that is Franciscan and Platonic yet scriptural, and thus theological. The broader project of the *Reductio*, which brings all human arts to make sense within Scripture and theology, sets the stage for a way of doing theology that is not opposed to the arts, particularly philosophy. At the same time theology and knowledge about God are not placed under the confines of these fields, lest we lose sight of the ultimate *telos* of all human knowing: loving union with God. Yet this *telos* remains abstract without some grounding in this world. Scotus has offered the other person as the object of our charity. He gives us the immediate object through which the ultimate *telos* is realized. Bonaventure provides a helpful (though general and not necessarily novel) pattern for union with God. The human forms and develops character while properly surrendering the will to God. Then the human properly disposes the mind to God, which leads the way for the soul to unite to God. After all of the philosophical discussion it has all boiled down to

God’s love—though it has come here precisely and not haphazardly. We come here through the Spirit.

Scotus adds that this work of the Spirit is to draw us into relationships—loving God through loving our neighbor. When Bonaventure refers to the Spouse of Christ in paragraph 26, he implicitly offers an image of Church—which is the Spouse of Christ. I propose that we can find in Bonaventure a deeper message at work for the role of the Spirit in the salvation history of humankind. Our ultimate fullness in God is beyond the here and now, yet that process is realized through the moral rightness at the level of the Church where charity must be the norm. Here Bonaventure comes closest to the horizontal dimension of Scotus, yet Scotus’s emphasis on praxis gives a particular face to the object of our earthly affections. Scotus gives particularity to the general and necessary grounding found in Bonaventure’s thought. What Christ made possible as mediator the Spirit makes possible as that produced from God—the possibility of discerning the will of God and, through obedience, to be led to the union that only can take place through charity—love in action.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the most significant complementarity of Bonaventure and Scotus can be found in their philosophical foundations. Bonaventure reminds us that Plato is right in bringing our minds toward the God who is beyond the here and now. Yet Scotus balances this position with an Aristotelian emphasis on the impetus of human living in this world. Scotus grounds our free moral actions in our participation in the created world. Our means to finding God, as long as we live on earth, will be found in relationships grounded in Franciscan values of charity, humility and peace. Yet the goal of all right living lies in union with God. Should we forget this fact amidst Scotus’s emphasis, we cannot help but remember it through Bonaventure. Both Franciscans, true to their tradition, are highly Christocentric. Thus the usefulness of philosophy<sup>28</sup> is transformed in the moral life through the person of Christ. Despite (and because of) their philosophical frameworks, Bonaventure and Scotus are in their cores decidedly theological, not philosophical.

## Conclusion

I began this paper with a brief discussion of the human role in realizing the reign of God. Do Bonaventure and Scotus have anything to add to this discussion? I would say that Bonaventure does, but in an introductory sort of way. In making philosophical concerns of Plato amenable to theology Bonaventure has cleared the way for further (primarily Aristotelian) insights that would come after him. Bonaventure, in his heavily Platonic stance, offers the necessary ground to which one may return after working with Aristotelian themes (or, we might better say that Plato is the necessary sky to which one returns after the grounded-ness of Aristotle). This grounded-ness of Aristotle can be

found in Scotus, who has shown that human fulfillment is found in the law of Christ, which is realized in the praxis of loving one's neighbor. If one is going to engage in a discussion of the human involvement in building the reign of God, one must be able to maintain a real connection to God in the process. Or let me put it this way—God does not give orders as to how to live in this world and build the reign of God and then stand aside to either watch or leave entirely with a promise to come back later. That is just a nuanced form of Deism. Humanity's role in realizing God's reign is, for Bonaventure, to act out of a proper disposition to the working of the Spirit and the wisdom of Scripture. And, Scotus adds, this wisdom of Scripture has revealed that our fullest nature is found in the higher love of neighbor.

These Franciscan thinkers have shown that the concerns of liberation theology—whether sociological, political or economic, *can* be reduced to theological concerns. This is precisely the burden of liberation theology—to show that its concerns, which sound like merely political, sociological statements, are grounded in theological truths. The danger in liberation theology is the danger of Aristotle, for whom this-worldly concerns dominate to the extent that the ultimate *telos* in this life becomes living this life as well as possible for its own sake. Scotus brings our gaze to the things of this world—and to the rightly ordered relationships that we can live here. For the Christian tradition the ultimate *telos* has always been the loving union of humans (and humanity) with God. Thus Bonaventure's grounding of all human arts in theology and scripture, and, more significantly, in the charity of God has provided a litmus test to ensure that a more Aristotelian method (like we find in Scotus) does not become lost in this world and thus lost to God's will. Meanwhile Scotus assures that a Bonaventurian focus on the God beyond this world does not turn our eyes away from our fellow humans. Our manner of loving God is, in this world, our manner of loving other humans.

Francis and Clare gave strong social critiques and were involved in working, serving and living in this world. Yet the vision of these founders was to live the Gospel in a new and radical way and to accept radical poverty as the means to a fuller union with God. The Franciscan theology of Bonaventure and Scotus emerge as the result of a lived experience akin to that of liberation theology. We are offered a framework to give due dignity to a movement's concerns without being compelled to accept or reject it in its entirety. Bonaventure offered a fragmenting movement a clear sense that radical ideas can find their legitimate place within a grounded theology. He reminds that our work and our experience of God are here and now, yet our ultimate union and our fullest realization are utterly beyond. And all of our living should be rooted in Scripture and charity. Charity, Scotus adds, is to be lived in realizing our individual *haec* in the process of sharing in the divine activity of loving the other. The

Franciscans have shown that Plato and Aristotle maintain worthy themes, but that in Christ we have found a way to be in this world while transcending this world in a way befitting our image of the divine nature. We return to God in a straight way yet through complex and circuitous journeys—moving laterally through charity with our neighbors, yet moving towards God in an upward spiral.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>For example, in *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1985) Boff concludes with these words: "Francis of Assisi, more than an idea, is a spirit and a way of life. The spirit and way of life are only made manifest in practice, not in a formula, idea, or ideal. Everything in Francis invites practice: *exire de saeculo*, leaving the imperial system, in an alternative act that makes real more devotion to others, more gentleness with the poor, and greater respect for nature" (157).

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter I will refer to this only as *Reduction*.

<sup>3</sup>Paragraph 23. All references to paragraphs are from the *Reduction*.

<sup>4</sup>Paragraph 24.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Paragraph 25.

<sup>7</sup>Paragraph 26.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Paragraph 23.

<sup>12</sup>Paragraph 26.

<sup>13</sup>For example, Admonition III: 9: "For whoever chooses to suffer persecution rather than wish to be separated from his brothers truly remains in perfect obedience because he lays down *his life* for his brothers." Also, Clare says in her Testament: The abbess is to lead by virtuous living "so that, stimulated by her example, they obey her not so much because of her office as because of love" (verse 62).

<sup>14</sup>Zachary Hayes, translation, introduction and commentary, *St. Bonaventure's On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1996), 31 in the commentary.

<sup>15</sup>Found on website: [radicalacademy.com/philplato2.htm](http://radicalacademy.com/philplato2.htm).

<sup>16</sup>Hayes, page 32 of his commentary.

<sup>17</sup>Translation from M. B. Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 180.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>*Scotus for Dunces*, 181.

<sup>20</sup>*Scotus for Dunces*, 182.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>This is not an arbitrary example. Franciscans were deeply divided over whether the life of poverty, practically speaking, does or does not necessitate some private property.

<sup>23</sup>*Scotus for Dunces*, 183.

<sup>24</sup>From translation by Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 281, 285.

<sup>25</sup>This beginning (or a very similar version) can be found in the Early Rule, the Later Rule, and Clare's Rule.

<sup>26</sup>Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 62.

<sup>27</sup>Bonaventure's text leaves seemingly dissonant images to settle. Within the wider spectrum of a circle of coming from and returning to God (*exitus* and *reditus*), we have been given a very linear image in paragraph 23. Our rightness is to be found in straightness, which offers the image of God as a line between Father and Spirit which is made straight by the perfect centrality of the Son. And in paragraph 24 Bonaventure suggests that "the order of life is right when nothing can be found to be out of line." Certainly here we can see Bonaventure's notion of the mind's journey into God, in which one ascends to the ultimate unutterable mystery of God. So is it a circle or a line? Does our circle result from the fact that the human life is a process, moving from experience to reflection in a continual cycle? Or are we on a continual line upward, which spirals around the axis of Christ?

<sup>28</sup>It is worth noting that for Scotus philosophy is helpful in the case of the first table of the decalogue. Natural law in this sense is synonymous with philosophy. We can come to the realization that God exists and that this God is to be loved and worshipped without Christian revelation. Theology builds upon this foundation to offer the full picture of what the human nature is—the loving image of God. So we could say that Scotus does not find philosophy to be reduced to theology as much as he might say philosophy is deepened by theology.

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*Francis was overwhelmed by the humility of the incarnation. This humility . . . demands a reverence for all created beings, especially the most humble of these beings. . . . Creation is the beginning of the incarnation, and the incarnation means relationship—the Logos became flesh, Jesus is truly God and truly human. When we view the incarnation through the lens of its humility and in the light of . . . Trinitarian theology, creation itself takes on a new aspect—the immense and sacred beauty to be discovered in the "non-event," in the insignificant and socially rejected.*

Kenan Osborne, OFM

*The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition:*

*Tracing Its Origins and Identifying Its Central Components*, 63.

### **CLARE: A Reflection**

*When you are so poor at heart that the needle in your hand  
is silver enough for you;*

*When you are empty with fasting, dry with thirst  
of longings too generous for fulfillment;*

*When the green garden, the sun and its shadows on stones  
are all the splendor you need;*

*When you are entranced by the silent music  
that clings to dawn;*

*When strength flows to you from the firmness of earth  
under your bare foot;*

*Then how mightily the cries of psalm and prophecy strike you,  
even their square letters on the page;*

*how the gestures of ritual and the preacher's words console,  
how blessings curve against the air like colored birds,  
how the worn choir benches shine like palaces.*

*And when the sighs, the needs, the querulous complaints  
of those whose lives press against yours day by day  
flame within you as the presence of the One you seek,*

*Then what joy fills your heart, how your attention flowers;  
how gentle the hand you reach out,  
how true the word of comfort on your lips;*

*Then your life's grace comes down to us  
like song, like incense, like the light.*

**Kate Martin, OSC**

## Duns Scotus and Franciscan Formation

Seamus Mulholland, OFM

The recent developments in the work of the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition (CFIT) serve to highlight not simply the importance of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition historically, but also the importance of that tradition for the Franciscan Movement today. The importance is not just the contribution that the Franciscan intellectual tradition makes to the history and ongoing development of Christian thought, but also its vital contribution to some of the main preoccupations of Franciscan life and vision in the world today.

One of the key emphases today is in the whole area of Franciscan formation. The CFIT documents/volumes (four to date) seek to assist those involved in formation to examine and explore the Franciscan intellectual tradition and interpret it in their own contemporary Franciscan experience. By deepening our knowledge of that tradition, those who seek to live Franciscan life can be brought to an understanding that they are part of, and contribute to, the continued emergence and growth of that tradition spiritually, historically, ecclesially, intellectually and theologically, and, in the present context, formatively.

By studying and praying about our Franciscan intellectual tradition we can come to a deeper understanding of our Franciscan-Spiritual heritage since there exists a profound relation between the Franciscan intellectual endeavor and the Franciscan spiritual endeavor. Recognizing the giftedness of our intellectual heritage we can express that giftedness in our daily interrelations with the community and the world.

### The Dialectic of Formation

So then, in what way can the theology and philosophy of Duns Scotus be used in Franciscan Formation? Before coming to that, let me for a moment examine formation from a dialectic perspective. Franciscan formation presumes two things: a) that there is "someone" to be formed, and b) that there is some

"thing" to be formed within and into. Its end purpose is to ensure that those being accompanied on the formation path come to fullness as mature, well-balanced, integrated people at the human, Christian and Franciscan levels.

Hence, we can speak of a "Tripartite Franciscan Formative Process," or a multi-level initiative in Franciscan formation. If we return to the two presumptions referred to above, it can be stated that the "someone" who comes to us is a human person to be formed into Franciscan life as a way of being-in-the-world. However, when it is realized that the primary way of being-in-the-world is the human way, the application of the Franciscan formative process becomes broader than "formation." It becomes a "Franciscan anthropology" since formation is about the human project and its endeavor in the world.

Franciscan formation, therefore, is also a human formation. But the human person who comes to this brother/sisterhood is also a Christian person. That Christian person seeks to give expression to the baptismal calling, values and commission by committing to a specific and identifiable "Christian" way of being-in-the-world, which we call Franciscan life and it is "life" that is the operative word since life can only be lived in a given existential context in a given historical moment. That existential context is Franciscan "specificity" and the given historical moment is the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

So it is the specific Franciscan way of being-in-the-world that this human person is seeking, and it is this that gives Franciscan life its particular contextuality in Church and world. Franciscan life serves the kingdom through its involvement with and contribution to the evangelically commissioned life and vision of the Church to the world. But it particularizes or specifies that service in its own unique way of being-in-the-world.

### Formative Contextuality

The commission given to Franciscan life as a way of announcing the kingdom is a divine commission since Francis says in the Testament: "And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do, but **THE MOST HIGH HIMSELF** revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel." (Test 14, emphasis mine.) Francis's way of being-in-the-world was the gospel way, a way that was revealed by God himself, and it is this way that forms the context for contemporary Franciscan life in its present historical existentialism: The Rule and Life of the Franciscan is this: to live the holy gospel. As Francis's way of being-in-the-world as a human and Christian was the gospel way, so, too, is it our way. But Francis also specifically states that the revelation that he should live the gospel life was given to him "after the Lord gave me some brothers." From this it can be determined that formation into the Franciscan way of being-in-the-world (gospel living) is concretized and contextualized by the fraternal/sororal relationship.

The life of the fraternity/sorority that we are formed into is that same gospel life that Francis says God revealed to him. The specificity of Franciscan anthropology, therefore, is living the gospel life in the world, in the context of the fraternity/sorority. Given that this fraternity is a gospel fraternity, Franciscan formation is, therefore, formation into both the evangelical and evangelizing fraternity, which is Franciscan being-in-the-world. Formation to and in this evangelical/evangelizing fraternity is consequently existentially shaped by three main dynamics: formation as a human person, formation as a Christian person, and formation as a Franciscan person.

Now, while it is undoubtedly true that Scotus can assist us in our formation as a Christian person, he can also assist us in our formation as both a human person and a Franciscan person. So the Franciscan intellectual tradition, as well as the Franciscan spiritual tradition, has a lot of insights that can be utilized in contemporary formation processes.

Before beginning to unravel some of the ways in which Scotus's theology and philosophy can be used in the area of formation, let me try and answer the thorny question of Scotus's complexity.

### Scotus as Formator: Complementarity, not Complexity

There is no doubt that Duns Scotus's theology and philosophy are notoriously complex, very difficult to read, study and understand. It is even more difficult to try and make that wonderful structure that is Scotus's thought available to others who are not specialists, but not impossible! Certainly it was not for nothing that Scotus was called the "Subtle Doctor."

But there is one essential element in the life of Scotus that we must keep to the forefront of our minds: Scotus was a Franciscan, we are Franciscans. Simple, direct, and crucial.

As Francis's way  
of being-in-the-  
world as a human  
and as a Christian  
was the gospel  
way, so, too, is it  
our way.  
Franciscan  
formation is  
concretized and  
contextualized by  
... relationship.

It is simple, direct and crucial because the formation of Scotus would have been a Franciscan formation. Therefore, it was his Franciscan life which shaped his being-in-the-world. Before he was a theologian or a metaphysician, Scotus was a friar with the duties and responsibilities of a friar, viz.: to live the gospel. He was assisted in doing this by the formation he received as a boy when he first joined the Order, and while at Oxford and Paris, and which informed his life even as he died in Cologne. His ministry was as a teacher, thinker, professor; his life was a simple Franciscan life. We are formed into Franciscan life; we receive training for our specialist ministries but our primary ministry is that of being brother and sister to and in the world. Scotus was the same. So the profundity of Scotus's intellectual endeavor was informed and shaped by the simplicity of his own Franciscan being-in-the-world.

So, if we proceed from the basis that Scotus is our brother, then we can arrive at the point where we consider his teaching as being grounded in a formation oriented to Franciscan living, and that he offers this teaching to us as one Franciscan to other Franciscans.

### Utilizing Scotus's Theology

So we begin with Scotus on the Trinity since the Trinity is the primordial community. All Christian community experience has its source in the Trinity and the dynamic inter/intra-relatedness of the Trinitarian Persons. Our approach to Scotus on the Trinity dwells not so much on the "nature" of the Trinitarian relationships as on the consequences of them. As with all Scotus's theology, his starting point and his end point is love. He considers the Trinity to be grounded in love and presents his theology of the Trinity as a "*Communio*" of Love, where the giving and receiving of love is expressed in total self-giving. And the dynamic inter/intra relationality of the Trinity is "sourced" in this love since it is Love that is the essence of Trinitarian life.

A realization of this allows us to determine that loving and loved inter-relationality is the core of community living. As the Trinity is THE exemplar (to borrow a Bonaventurian term) of mutual loving "*communio*," so then loving "*communio*" is the sign of Franciscan inter/intra relatedness as a being-in-the-world. This can be linked to the Franciscan ideal of universality of brother/sisterhood. Franciscans are brothers/sisters to "all." (Here it might be noted that it is the same "all" that Francis speaks of in the Canticle, thereby constituting the Canticle as the template for Franciscan universality.) Hence, Franciscan being-in-the-world is a lived, loving evangelical communion that is offered to the whole of creation both in its corporate dimension as fraternal/sororal communion, and its individuated dimension by the brothers and sisters who live it out in the world every day. And it is in this area of individual

Franciscanism that we can apply Scotus's metaphysical doctrine of *haecceitas* to the Franciscan formative process.

## Scotus's Metaphysics and Formation

What does Scotus say about *haecceitas*? We need not go into the metaphysics too much, but it can be said that its rhetorical power lies in its dialectic logic. Basically, it goes like this: among classes of things there are species and genera. So, humanity is a special class (*homo sapiens*); within that class there are genera (male/female). But since we are all male or female, in what way are we differentiated from each other within the genera of the special class? If Seamus is of the genus male in the species of *homo sapiens*, and George is of the genus male in the species *homo sapiens*, what is there beyond the sensible data, e.g. height, weight, color, and, indeed, our own DNA, that differentiates us each from the other as unique individuals?

Scotus says it is *haecceitas*, or "this-ness." In other words, beyond the sensible data (and DNA is sensible data) individuals possess a "something" which is un-quantifiable, un-descriptive, un-sensible, which differentiates them in classes, species or genera of things as possessing an unrepeatable, once and for all individual existent thing that is uniquely theirs as an individuated principle of essential being: their *haecceitas*, their "this-ness." So Seamus and George are males in the species *homo sapiens* but Seamus has something he possesses which uniquely differentiates him from George, his "Seamus-ness" which no other living creature possesses (there are other interesting consequences of this, e.g. environmentally, ethically, but that belongs to another study).

How on earth does one even begin to think that this could be applied at the level of Franciscan formation? First, because Scotus's doctrine of the Trinity shows us a Communion of Love, Franciscan communities must be "communions" of love. But within the Trinity there is "individuation," a *haecceitas* whereby the Father is the Father precisely as Father, and possessing a Father-ness that is not a Son-ness or Spirit-ness and so on. So that even as the Individuated Persons are One in essence/nature/substance, or God-ness, each is differentiated from the other by their "-ness": Son-ness, Father-ness, Spirit-ness. If this is not so, then the doctrine of the Trinity as Three-in-One descends to the level of defining what there is in each of the Persons of the Trinity that would make them equal divinely but not the same hypostatically.

## Individuated Franciscanism

Using this as a reference point, Scotus's doctrine of *haecceitas* can be applied to our "communion of love" using the same principle. The Franciscan communion of love exists precisely as community but while it has a being of its own as "community," it is constituted by individual Franciscans. So each

Franciscan contributes at the individual level and shares in the "being" of that community which is a Franciscan "being" (if we utilize Scotus's idea of the univocity of being). If we then apply the notion of "individuated" rather than "individual" (this term carries too many pejoratives within understandings of community), we can say that "individuated Franciscanism" is the Franciscan life lived *haecceitally* by individual Franciscans precisely as human, Christian and Franciscan persons who are not any "other" Franciscan but THIS Franciscan living THIS life at THIS given moment in THIS historical context.

So it is then that individuated Franciscanism is the entirety of the Franciscan tradition at every level, from every age, lived out on a daily, concrete existential basis by individual Franciscans as a way of being-in-the-world in the dynamic contextuality of evangelical and evangelizing fraternity/sorority. Franciscanism is individuated in the communion by the human, Christian person who freely asks to live Franciscan gospel life as a way of anthropologically being-in-the-world in the inter/intra relatedness of human and Christian personhood. And this is inclusive of every area of the human person: the psychic, the somatic, the affective, intellectual, sexual, and so on.

Each person who comes to us to be formed in this way of being-in-the-world is a unique unrepeatable human being. Each brings a unique history, a unique story, and a unique mystery. Formation does not seek to destroy this, or even replace it; it seeks to use it, enrich and enhance it so that the individuated person in human history becomes an individuated person in Christian/Franciscan history. And it is a history that each carries; to paraphrase the great Chaka Khan (a disco diva and not some esoteric philosopher): "I'm every woman, it's all in me" to "I'm every Franciscan, it's all in me."

## The Primacy of Christ for Formation

It is here that we can begin to examine and explore the doctrine of the Primacy of Christ formationally. I prefer the term "primacy" rather than "Absolute Primacy" as more in keeping with the contingent quality of the human creature Jesus: what is contingent cannot be necessary, and what is necessary cannot be created; since the human nature of Jesus is created it is therefore contingent, if contingent then not necessary, if not necessary then not absolute because contingency cannot be absolute. And the Scotus concept of the primacy is a primacy among created things and so a contingent primacy. The actual theology of the primacy I will not go into here, but from the doctrine of the primacy we can extrapolate a conception of Christ as the *haecceitas* of God, which further enriches not just the Franciscan theological understanding of the action of the divine in human history, but the concretization of the Franciscan theological tradition in the formation context.



Scotus centers his doctrine of the primacy on two main factors that are co-terminus, co-significatory, and co-existent: the Trinity and Love. The Incarnation is conceived in the mind of God prior to sin, since God sees the end of his willing and then supplies the means to bring this about: grace. So, God foresees the Incarnation before he foresees sin, since his will is that all be united to him in grace and love, and the Incarnation is the means to bring this union about. Hence, the Incarnation is sourced in the Communion of Love that is the Trinity. Sourced in the Communion of Love, the end of the Incarnation is unity-in-communion for the whole cosmos.

Here we can fuse both Scotus and Bonaventure. Bonaventure's Trinitarianism is rooted in the pseudo-Dionysian idea of God as "self-diffusive Goodness." The Word is the "first fruit" of that self-diffusive goodness in the eternal generative processions from the Father, the origin and source of all reality. The Word is everything that the Father is outside himself as source and contains within it everything that the Father could possibly conceive. While Bonaventure maintains the traditional notion of Incarnation as "response" to sin (though I believe that it is possible to challenge this assumption of Bonaventure's Incarnational theology), it is nevertheless true that the Incarnation is present in the Word since it has already been conceived in the mind of the Father. The modalities may differ but the essential determinant remains the same: the Incarnation is in the mind of God from all eternity.

Therefore, Christ holds the primacy in the totality of created nature. Since it is the human nature of the creature Jesus of Nazareth which holds the primacy among all other natures, itself already conceived in the mind of God as Exemplar, then human nature has the primacy among all other created things. But Scotus makes it clear in his doctrine of the univocity of being, that it is being precisely *as being* that is the fundamental unitive principle of all things in the metaphysical or intelligible order. God has being, we have being, the entirety of creation has being; so, our common determinant existent principle is "being." But God has being that is being as being and is the source of all other being, ours included. It sounds typically complicated Duns Scotus! – but not really.

Jesus has being and is being, that being as a creature is a created being, a participate being in the Being that is the "essence" of the Divine which is the origin of all other being. But the creature that is Jesus of Nazareth is unique in that he is the enfleshment of the pre-existent Divine Word which contains within it everything that is possible and potential as idea. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth is the "thisness" of God since he is the Word Incarnate and that Word is the same nature as the Father, Spirit differentiated beyond the hypostatic by Word-ness.

So, we can tie all this together. Scotus teaches us that the essence of the Trinitarian life is "*communio*-in-love." Franciscan life, sourced and rooted in

the Trinity, has the exemplar of the Trinity as its "blueprint" for its own *communio*-in-love as a way of being-in-the-world. Those being formed are being formed for communion-in-love. Scotus also shows us that even among special classes there is a principle of individuation that makes something utterly unrepeatable and unique, so that it is THIS thing even in a genera or a species and not "that" thing, or "a" thing. In reality, each person being formed in the communion-in-love that is Franciscan life is utterly unique and in this uniqueness embodies individuated Franciscanism. Our being is a common existent principle, a participation in the Being of the Divine as creatured being.

The Scotus doctrine of the Incarnation shows us that the human nature of the creature Jesus holds primacy among all other created natures and is its unifying and individuating principle. As the Word is the Exemplar of all other existents either potentially or actually, then so, too, it is the Exemplar of the human nature of Jesus. As the first fruit of the self-diffusive goodness of God, the Word, containing in an exemplary way all natures as ideas, contains the nature of the creature Jesus and hypostatically unites itself to this creature historically in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

But this also had been foreseen by God before the historical fact of sin (here the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception can be interpreted in a very radical anthropological manner). Since God wills that all be united with him in the Communion-in-Love that is the Trinity, the Incarnation cannot be the result of sin. It is the result of God being God, precisely as God. In other words: God has Being, so we know that it is an existent ontologically, but we know what that ontological existent is—Love. God is Love, John tells us in his first letter. Therefore what God conceives and brings about both in potency and act is grounded in love and freedom.

And it is here that we can situate Scotus's doctrine of voluntarism. What God wills, he wills both as potency and act and it is sourced in the Love that is the Trinity. God wills before he "thinks" or brings it about in actuality. Therefore, the will has primacy over the intellect since it is the will, not the intellect, which is oriented to love. The *Communio*-in-Love that is the Trinity, the Being that is the Divine, the Incarnation in temporal reality of the Divine Word, the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth conclusively point to the incontrovertible truth that Love, and only Love, is the determinant principle for any of God's inter/intra will and action with and for his creation.

## Is Scotus Useful for Formation and Formators?

Franciscan formation, therefore, interpreted in the light of the teachings of Duns Scotus, is grounded in the very heart of God himself as its teleology. In its being-in-the-world it seeks to live out the gospel and everything that is



constitutive and constituent of the Word made flesh, who is himself the very essence of the divine, its *baecceitas*. Duns Scotus, therefore, in my humble opinion, is a rich, challenging and rewarding field of teaching on both the theology and philosophy of Franciscan Formation. Ultimately, of course, we are called to unity and union with the *Communio-in-Love* that is the sublime, transcendent Other, the ineffable, unapproach-able Trinity of life and love. Franciscan theology has always maintained in its orthopraxis that this union is for this life and not some post-mortem utopia.

Scotus's theological and metaphysical explorations are as pertinent to us today in our own explorations of our role, meaning and relevance to the world in which we live our Franciscan being-in-the-world. In the end it is the whole of created reality, summarized and epitomized in Christ the Center, who is all at once beginning, middle and end of all reality both ontologically and eschatologically, that is destined to union in love with the Divine Trinity. The Incarnation, and all that it implies, as it is examined and explored in the work of Duns Scotus, is our absolute guarantee that God calls us ever more deeply into intimate, loving, lived and living communion with him. And that is the clarion call that Franciscan formation makes to both its own life and the life of the world.

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***Since God wills that all be united with him in the Communion-in-Love that is the Trinity, the Incarnation cannot be the result of sin. It is the result of God being God, precisely as God. In other words: God has Being, so we know that it is an existent ontologically, but we know what that ontological existent is – Love. God is Love, John tells us in his first letter. Therefore what God conceives and brings about both in potency and act is grounded in love and freedom.***

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*Seamus Mulholland, OFM*

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*The Cord*, 55.1 (2005)

#### FRANCIS GOES BEGGING

**My spirit is a beggar's bowl  
chipped, hollow,  
held in the cup of my hands  
like a question, like my self curved around a core of longing.**

**The empty bowl fills slowly  
with silence, reflected light, my heart's hunger.  
When I have carried the bowl a long way,  
held it out often enough,  
I feel another pair of hands supporting mine.  
We hold the empty bowl together.**

**Kate Martin, OSC**

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Ilia Delio, OSF. *Franciscan Prayer*.** (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004). 198 pp. \$12.95.

Franciscans have been heralded for their active ministry of preaching and working among the marginalized in history. There was, however, was a clear and integral place for prayer, for liturgy, and for solitude in the life of the early brothers and sisters of the fraternity. Historically, the tendency toward solitude and contemplation may sometimes have been a forgotten or downplayed component of the life of a Franciscan. Recently, however, much has been said and written in rediscovering the eremitic treasures of the past. Ilia Delio's new book brings attention to the presence of a dynamic kind of prayer that bears witness to the deep hunger of people for contemplative vision and a distinctively Franciscan approach to God.

Delio is clear at the beginning of the book that this work is the fruit of personal research to answer the question, "What is *Franciscan* prayer?" The question surfaced for her in light of her own experiences as a teacher at Washington Theological Union as well as from her early formation as a Discalced Carmelite, where she admits that she developed a very different relationship to God, to others, and to the world than she now knows and embraces as a Franciscan. In this current work, Delio uses the voices of Clare, Francis, and Bonaventure through their writings, through the *legendae*, and through her own theological and scientific reflections. Using spiritual and theological themes as entry points, she weaves together a comprehensive answer to her question about Franciscan prayer.

Delio stresses throughout the book that the Incarnation is the beginning and end of Franciscan prayer. She writes, "It begins with encountering the God of overflowing love in the person of Jesus Christ and ends with embodying that love in one's own life, becoming a new Incarnation" (181). It is the enfleshed God, the God who descended, the God who was revealed in Jesus and the leper, the God whose life was poured out on the cross, the God who comes again and again in the Eucharist that Franciscans pray to. Therefore, as Delio states, "Franciscan prayer is not an escape from the world but an entrance into it" (25). Franciscans pray "not to 'ascend' to God but to 'give birth to God,' to allow the image in which we were created to become visible" (57).

The author discusses an array of elements of a Christian life, and particularly a Franciscan life: contemplation, poverty, the cross, imitation, contemplation, peace, desire, penance, and martyrdom—all in the context of the Incarnation.

Delio makes it clear that Francis, Clare and Bonaventure each lived out and wrote about these elements differently, but she clearly is looking for one thread that then underlies their approach. She stresses that if the Franciscan would "see" God's presence in the world, embrace it, and then live it, then that Franciscan would find him/herself living or incarnating, like Christ, a "prophetic life on the margins" (148). She highlights how giving birth to Christ in our world should put us at odds with privatism, individualism, consumerism, and with the imperialistic and oppressive ideologies at work in our world. The life of Franciscan prayer does not permit anything or anyone who turns God's incarnational presence into a commodity or does violence to it. The prayer life of a Franciscan should always be engaged with these social issues because, as Delio points out over and over, this is who God is—an engaged God, a God who longs for transformation, healing, and wholeness in our world, a world both saturated with God's presence and, at the same time, in dire need of it.

Although Delio is comprehensive in her analysis, this is not an historical or overly abstract work. She is hoping to connect with readers in a more personal and intimate way than pure scholarship allows. Most of us have personal prayer techniques, our own affinities for certain places where God's presence is closest and our own images of who God is in our life and in the world. Delio asks us to re-examine these areas of our prayer life, to pause and reflect on what is particularly Franciscan about our prayer. Each chapter ends with several questions that facilitate the process of reflection.

This book can be recommended for those who hunger to know what is distinctive about the Franciscan tradition of prayer. The book is not an exploration into the history of the hermitage in Franciscan life, nor is it a work that places a great deal of emphasis on the eremitical component of the tradition. It is, rather, a journey through the eyes of a contemporary Franciscan theologian and the sources of Francis, Clare and Bonaventure. In the end, it is one's interiority that transforms into action, silence into useful speech, and time away into a deeper presence and clearer vision. Delio helps us cultivate this Franciscan balance.

*Trevor Thompson*  
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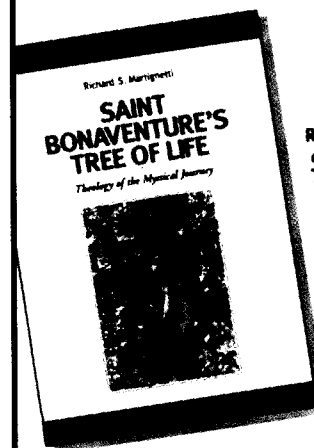
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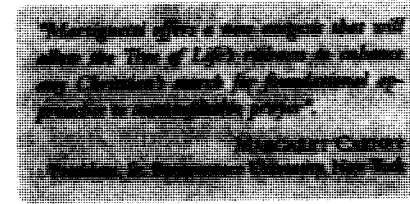
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Richard S. Martignetti is a member of the Order of Friars Minor, Immaculate Conception Province, New York. In 2002, he was awarded a Doctorate in Sacred Theology, with a specialization in Franciscan Spirituality, from the Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum in Rome, Italy. Richard has served his province both as Director of Post-Novitiate Formation and as Secretary of Formation and Studies. He is currently serving as Guardian of the OFM General Curia in Rome and teaching Franciscan Spirituality at the Antonianum.

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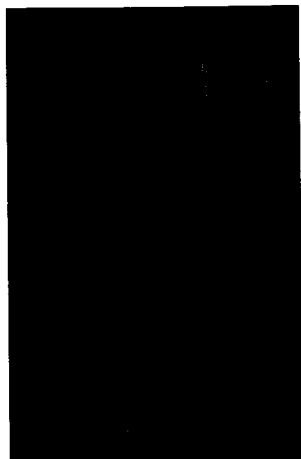
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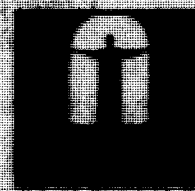
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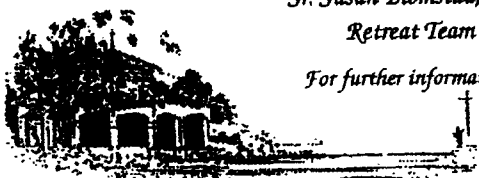
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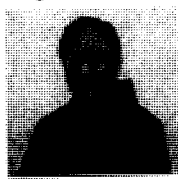
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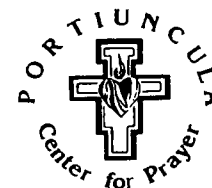
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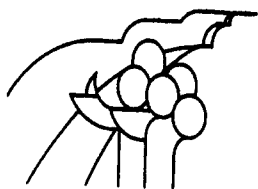
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**February 18-24, 2005. Friday evening-Friday noon.**

**Conversion: A Process of Transformation.** Joanne Schatzlein, OSF. At Shalom Retreat Center. Dubuque, IA. See ad, p. 41.

**February 26-March 3. Saturday-Thursday.**

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## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation of the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OfP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFl	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano

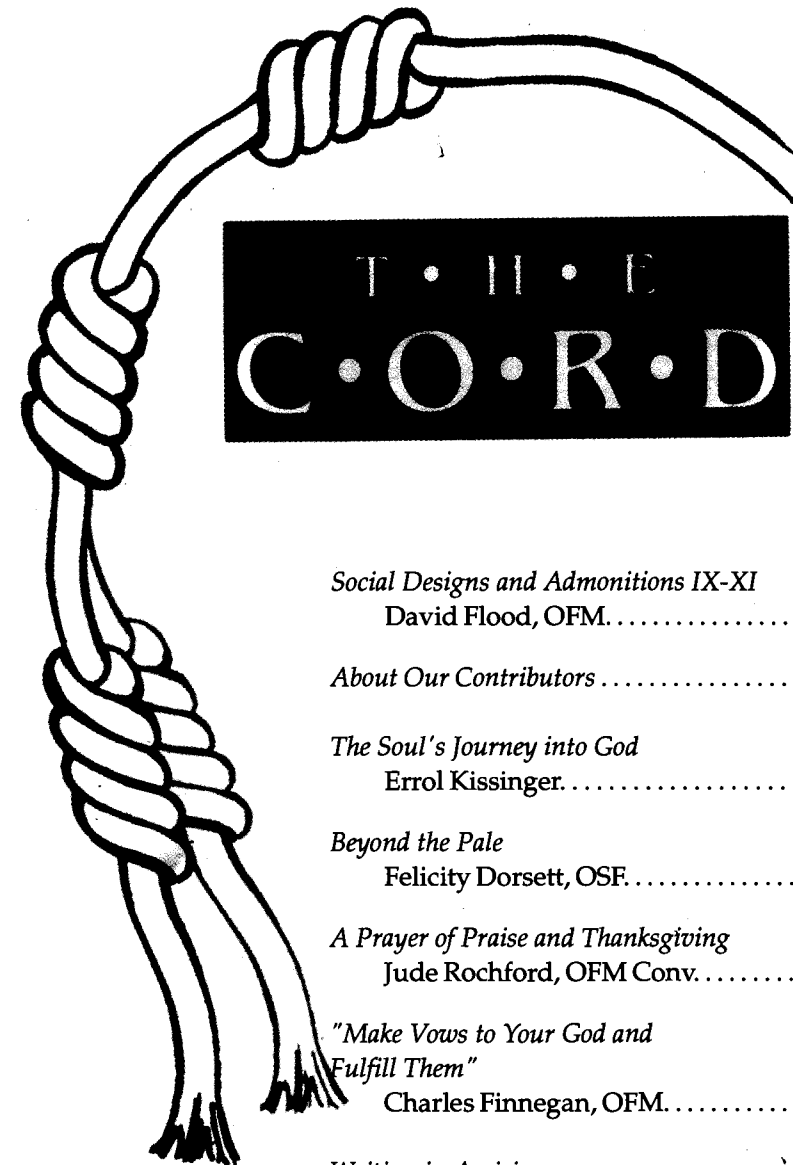
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BUT IF YOU WISH TO KNOW HOW THESE THINGS COME ABOUT, ASK GRACE, NOT INSTRUCTION; DESIRE, NOT UNDERSTANDING; THE GROANING OF PRAYER, NOT DILIGENT READING; THE SPOUSE, NOT THE TEACHER, GOD, NOT MAN; DARKNESS, NOT CLARITY....

*ITINERARIUM MENTIS IN DEUM  
VII:6*

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**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Michael Cusato, OFM  
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2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 14th ed., is to be consulted on general questions of style.
3. Titles of books and periodicals should be italicized or, in typed manuscripts, underlined.  
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(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.

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*The Cord*, 55.2 (2005)

**Editorial**

When the cold of winter changes unexpectedly to temperatures fifteen degrees higher than normal (as it has today here in Allegany), one is reminded of the power of nature and the fact that, although we pretend to have control of many things in our lives, too often we practice the fine art of self-deception. Lenten conversion is the journey out of self-deception about oneself, about one's relationship with others, with society, and with God. This issue will arrive in our subscribers' hands as the season of Lent is drawing to a close, so we hope that its essays and poems will enrich the closing days that lead us into the season when we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection.

An article by David Flood, centering on three Franciscan Admonitions, invites us into deeper conversion. David addresses the need to move away from our self-centeredness in order to fully accept the invitation of the Lord to be part of a movement whose purpose "is economic, social, historical, and celebratory, [a movement which] begins with bread for the world and ends celebrating the work of the Spirit in time." We also offer a reflection rooted in the message of Bonaventure's *Soul's Journey Into God*, a classic work that challenges us to practice what both Francis and the Seraphic Doctor did: living as if we know "the reality that only through the crucified Christ can we make our journey into God." There are also poems by Murray Bodo, OFM, and Felicity Dorsett, OSF, two frequent contributors, and what I consider a prose-poem-prayer by Jude Rochford, OFM Conventual. We hope the variety of content touches the heart of the spiritual journey each of us is making.

Lastly, as many of our subscribers are members of one or the other of the Franciscan Orders, we present a reflection by Charles Finnegan, OFM, that reminds us of the custom of renewing our vows on April 16th each year, in solidarity with the profession of Francis himself. Simply written but profoundly meaningful in its examination of the meaning of the vows today, this final article, fittingly enough, calls us to rekindle our commitment to the gospel and the day-to-day witness that commitment requires.

One more thing. In the last issue we published an article by Tim Johnson, "Preaching and Praying on the Seine...." The genesis of the article was a presentation Tim made at the International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo; he is currently working on a full length text focusing on Bonaventure's Sunday Sermons, with full critical apparatus, going to press in 2006. We thought it important to share that information with you.

May the Paschal Mystery be our light and our salvation!

*Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF.*

## Social Designs and Admonitions IX-XI

David Flood, OFM

Among the early Franciscan writings we find a collection of brief considerations and instructions called the Admonitions.<sup>1</sup> There are twenty-eight of them. We do not know how they ended up as a collection, but we do know that they existed as a collection well before the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Admonitions IX-XI form a small group within the collection. They propose that those of Franciscan mind hate the sin while loving the sinner. I argue that Francis and his brothers had good reason to recall this teaching.<sup>3</sup> Though Franciscans put themselves at the service of others, they did not put themselves at the service of others' social designs. Here are the three Admonitions, translated from the Latin:

Admonition IX. *The Lord says: Love your enemies. He truly loves his enemy who does not bemoan the injury done him. Rather, in his love of God, he flares up at the sight of another in sin. He shows him his concern by the way he acts.*

Admonition X. *People commonly lash out at others, friend or foe, when they go astray or suffer injury. That is a mistake. Each one has his enemy in his power, the body by which he sins. And so, blessed the servant who keeps a tight reign on the bodily enemy, given into his power, and wisely maintains his distance from him. As long as he does so, no other enemy, visible or invisible, can do him harm.*

Admonition XI. *Nothing should displease the servant of God save sin. The servant of God stores up guilt when, seeing someone sin, he does not become uneasy, challenged as he is in his love for others. That servant of God rightly lives without possessions when he remains calm and untroubled among others/about things [pro aliquo]. Blessed is he who ends up with nothing, giving to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.*

### The Structure of Admonitions IX-XI

Admonition IX tells the brother to love his enemy by combating his enemy's sin. Admonition X points out that, in truth, we have but one enemy, and that

enemy is our capacity for evil. Admonition XI tells the brother to fight against the sin that is destroying the sinner and his world. It's sort of like a three-act drama. The complication arises in Act One, where the servant of God immediately distinguishes between the wrong done him and the agent of that wrong. Act Two clarifies the field of combat by identifying the source of danger. Then, in Act Three, the servant of God focuses on and vanquishes the real enemy, confirming his initial response.

Admonition IX is clear enough. Those who have written on the Admonitions have pointed out the parallels between this text and Sermon 82 of Augustine of Hippo. However, we do not have to posit a dependence on Augustine's sermon. The sentiment proposed by the sermon and, much later, by the Admonition had become traditional, for it follows easily from Scripture. The novelty of our Admonition lies in the role it played in Franciscan life, and that is what we are exploring.

The translator of Admonition XI, the third in the series, has to decide what to do with "*pro aliquo*." The indefinite pronoun can refer to something or to someone. The interpretation of the Admonition determines the translation of the phrase. I read "for anyone" because I understand the claim of possession to involve social dynamics and not merely things. In the Franciscan dictionary, poverty means living outside the social conventions of the day (which has definite material consequences). It would lead us too far afield to explain in sufficient detail the grounds for this view.

Admonition X raises a problem we do better to face head on. It has to do with the body. The words body and flesh, *corpus* and *caro* in Latin, make a frequent appearance in the early Franciscan writings. At times the term *corpus* designates the quantitative extension of the human composite. It is the way God made us, and what God makes is good, and with that use we have no problem. At times, along with *caro*, *corpus* refers to cravings of the body and the ambitions of the spirit. These tendencies have to be reigned in, for they drag us into sin. But there is more to it than that. Basically, in the life of the movement and in the early writings, body opposes spirit. The spirit in question here is "the Spirit of the Lord," who, according to Early Rule, XVII: 14-16 and The Salutation of the Virtues, 14-18, inspires and strengthens and leads the Franciscan movement and those who belong to it. The Spirit turns the brother into the servant of the Lord, given to the transformation and completion of the world. The Spirit, finally, sees to the return of God's good creation to the source whence it arose.

We find the clearest and strongest expression of the brothers' involvement in the Spirit's action, making all new, at the end of Chapter XVII in the Early Rule: *omnia bona Deo reddere*, give God back all good things. At one moment the text ended here, for in these words Francis and his companions

had reached the final stage in their effort to define the movement's purpose. There exists a logic arising out of their commitment to work in Chapter VII and their social involvement with others in Chapter XIV; the logic led them to the final lines of Chapter Seventeen. For that reason, they finished the chapter with an Amen. K. Esser did not see fit to put the exclamation into his edition of the Early Rule, but the manuscripts censure the omission.<sup>4</sup>

When, however, a given brother accomplishes something good and claims authorship of the deed, he turns himself into someone in the eyes of society. He uses his good deed for his own social promotion. At that moment, he ascribes the deed to the body, not to the Spirit, and has gone astray.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, then, the body designates the individual's status in the world. It describes who he is in the eyes of the world's denizens and not before God. But a Franciscan has no status in the world. He is *servus Dei*, the servant of the divine will on the universe. In the terms of Augustine of Hippo, the brother is wholly given to realizing the city of God in time and is a stranger, a pilgrim, to the city of man. This is the full meaning of *corpus-caro* in early Franciscan history.

With that done, we can turn our attention to another word in Admonition X, and that is *servus*, servant. The term occurs in Admonition XI as well. In fact, it pervades the early writings. It arose out of the early experience of work. The early brothers developed a notion of work as service to others: first of all, there where they labored and eventually in setting the world right. (That required the help of everyone and so they called everyone to do penance.) Their service included both the common meaning of the word as well as the social role out of which the word arose: *servire* comes from *servare*; service is the immediate dimension of preserving the world, keeping it on course.<sup>6</sup> *Servire* and *servare* (serve and preserve) cover the Franciscan effort to sustain and keep intact the process whereby the Spirit of the Lord is leading us to, well, wherever we are going.

These two terms have led us into the semantic system of the early Franciscans. The meaning of body comes from the contrast between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of the Lord,<sup>7</sup> while the meaning of service arises out of the experience of the brothers at work. Both terms take on their specific meaning as the brothers struggle to "leave all to follow Jesus." Their proposal of service and their reference to the Spirit could only function outside the world they had abjured in order to follow in the footsteps of the Lord. From these two meanings we can proceed to give a Franciscan definition to the other terms in these three Admonitions. I do point out the obvious, as we leave our explanation of terms, that a semantic system functions at the social level. The system belongs to and serves movement orientation.<sup>8</sup> This leads me to my thesis on Admonitions IX-XI.

## The Danger of Social Assimilation

My thesis is that the early brothers needed the Admonitions to help them break free from the social mores they had absorbed prior to joining the association around Francis of Assisi. They had to do away with their good manners and the social proprieties of their education, just as they had stripped the fine (or commonplace) clothing of their social identities off their backs. Unless they disturbed Assisi, they remained subject to Assisi's ways and ambitions, its customs and rules.

As a first step in justifying this thesis and the three Admonitions, let us observe the company the brief texts keep. They are preceded by Admonitions VII and VIII and followed by Admonition XII. Admonitions VII, VIII, and XII have to do with the definition of purpose as put in Early Rule, XVII: 10-19. Chapter Seventeen in the movement's basic document first prepares the brothers for the distinction between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of the Lord. Francis urges his brothers to take responsibility for their failures; their successes result from the Spirit of the Lord doing good through them.<sup>9</sup> Then, to legitimate their doings, they distinguish between the two spirits and declare themselves led by the Spirit of the Lord. With that in place, finally, they dare interpret the work of the Spirit within them and fix the outlook of the movement: they resolve to see to it that all good returns to God. That covers what we today call distributive justice (while going much further). The brothers understand that their commitment brings them into conflict with other forces at play in the lives of their contemporaries and in the organization of Italian communal life.<sup>10</sup> They definitely accept the challenge.

Let us turn to the several other Admonitions with which IX-XI are grouped. Admonition VII lays down the policy on learning in the brotherhood. After setting aside learning that redounds to the individual's material and social advantage, the brothers acknowledge and encourage learning that sustains the commitment made by the brothers at the conclusion of Chapter Seventeen in their *vita*<sup>11</sup> (Early Rule, XVII: 17-19). There are three details in the final sentence of Admonition VII that integrate it into the action defined by the brothers in the conclusion to Chapter Seventeen. First of all, learned brothers are not to ascribe their knowledge to the body; they will authenticate its origins in the Spirit (detail two) when they see to it (third detail) that it sustains the return of all good things to God. They give God back their learning by using it to explain and justify, to correct and strengthen the life of the brothers who give God back all good things.

A movement such as that of Francis and his companions needed a set of ideas that justified the movement's existence, explained its values and ideals, and specified the rules by which the brothers agreed to abide. It was difficult

for the brothers to do this without, at the same time, identifying contrary currents that they opposed (the binary dialectic). Consequently they needed learning; they needed the study and the discussion that results in such learning. The result of learned labor sustained Franciscan culture, the system and practice of the brotherhood's basic meanings. The movement's basic document, formally termed the Early Rule, is the primary expression of those meanings. Inevitably, then, that text gives us the context in which we read the Admonitions.<sup>12</sup>

Francis and his companions could not leave the world, in the sense of drawing up their own ways of living, simply because they wanted to. They had to organize and they had to justify their different behavior. Otherwise their effort would not outlast an initial enthusiasm. They had to explain it first of all to themselves in order to extricate themselves effectively. To do that they readily turned to the gospels, which gave them the incentive as well as the language to do so.<sup>13</sup> Then, given the religious language of their explanations, they had to seek confirmation for their legitimacy from church authorities. Finally, they had to offer the people among whom they lived, officials as well as ordinary citizens, some explanation. They could not inhabit the same space as the population at large and go about a completely different way of seeing to their needs without offering some acceptable explanation. To do so was to court the designation heretic or lawbreaker.

They handled these matters first of all by getting clearance from Pope Innocent III. Insofar as the pope was ready to give them approval, he wanted to fit them into the Church's structure. At that moment the brothers had to know how to distinguish themselves from other forms of religious life. They needed to argue their distinctive case both theoretically and rhetorically, both clearly and persuasively. Otherwise Innocent would legislate their future (as did Pope Gregory IX when he got the chance). But then, once they had acquired papal recognition, how could any other authority not acknowledge their way of life? Had they contented themselves with the clearance of the local bishop, they would have been drawn too easily into his wake. Had they sought communal forbearance, it would have been worse. Their journey to Rome and its consequences did not happen serendipitously.

Once legitimated in the public eye, they had to elaborate the details of daily life themselves. The brothers would not last long without a conscious effort to systematize their life together. There they needed the inspiration and the confidence of someone like Francis. They also needed men with learning who knew where to look for arguments in their defense and how to get the common intentions into clear prose. Admonition VII, as are Admonitions IX-XI, is well put together. This takes training in logical process and not only a natural intelligence and a feel for words. It results in disciplinary principles rather than in poetry. Those who stood out when the movement needed tex-

tual clarity had to understand the role of learning in the common life. It did not come natural to learned brothers to turn their knowledge into a service of the brotherhood. They were deploying abilities that had their natural place in the circles of learning, abilities that gave them power. The brothers needed an Admonition VII.

In formulating a policy on learning, Francis and his associates had to see to it that all, and especially the learned among them, saw clearly the role of learning in their ranks. Admonition VII ends by flowing into an action larger than study, discussion, policy formulation, and so on. It finishes by declaring: Brothers must not give what they learn to the body, "but by speech and action return their learning to the Lord most high, to whom belongs every good." The Latin phrasing, *sed verbo et exemplo reddunt ea altissimo Domino Deo cuius est omne bonum*, belongs to the more encompassing action proposed in Chapter Seventeen of the Vita, *omnia bona . . . Deo reddamus . . . cuius est omne bonum*. Learning has its role within the explicit purpose of the movement. The movement's purpose is economic, social, historical, and celebratory. It begins with bread for the world and ends celebrating the work of the Spirit in time. Outside that perspective there is no place for learning in Franciscan life.

The commentary on the Rule drawn up by Alexander of Hales and his associates in Paris in 1241-1242 reverses the role of learning among Franciscans. To their mind, the brothers need an infusion of learning from outside their ranks, from the authoritative teachings of the church, in order to understand what the brothers have committed themselves to by professing the Rule. And woe if they do not heed the professors' learned lessons! Ignorance, they argue, without being able to apply their logic to learned ignorance, is no excuse for the debacle that will follow.<sup>14</sup>

Admonition VIII defines blasphemy. The term blasphemy, as noun and as verb, occurs four times in the early Franciscan writings, three in the Early Rule. The noun occurs in Chapter XXII in a list of sins. The verb occurs in Early Rule XI among a series of quotations from scripture. The two usages depend for their meaning on scripture passages. I concentrate on the verb blaspheme in Early Rule XVII and on the noun blasphemy in Admonition VIII. Here we have the word used in a specifically Franciscan way. So particular was its meaning in Chapter XVII of the Early Rule that it needed explanation, and that is what Admonition VIII supplies.<sup>15</sup>

It suffices to look at Admonition VIII and apply what we find to the passage in Chapter XVII, for the point of the brief text is to explain the meaning of blasphemy. One does not envy the good another does, the text explains, for in doing so one envies God, the author of that good, and that is blasphemy.<sup>16</sup> The Admonition strengthens the commitment made at the end of Chapter XVII. The brothers intend to contest and oppose those who blaspheme God. People blaspheme God when they do not recognize God as author of all good

things, to whom all good must return. Francis and his associates will not only correct those who act that way; they will act to see to it that the good things of life do in fact circulate as they should, seeing to the sustenance and welfare of all.

We need an explanation for the addition of this short text to the cultural material of Franciscan life. We find it in the fact that this particular, very Franciscan notion of blasphemy needed explanation. The brothers were using it, as in Chapter XVII, to contest the offense given God by not acknowledging good as necessarily of God. It is a telling use of the term, a valid determination of its implications, given the Franciscan perspective. If we did not have Admonition VIII, we might miss the implications of the verb at the end of Chapter XVII. We might even wonder what the word is doing there: it hardly fits the context, if we take it as abusive speech addressed to the divinity, which was its common meaning.<sup>17</sup> Admonition VIII can serve as an explanation of the term, should some brother have wondered what it meant in proposing the movement's basic purpose, and surely someone new to the brotherhood needed the explanation.<sup>18</sup>

On the other side of the three Admonitions we are studying (IX-XI), we have Admonition XII and its answer to the question: How can I know that I have the Spirit of the Lord? That it answers a question seems clear from the way it begins, as well as from the sound answer it delivers: *This is how a servant of God can know if he has something of the Spirit of the Lord.* (Question: How can I know that I have . . . ) *Suppose the Lord does good through him. His flesh feels no elation, opposed as it always is to the good. Rather, he continues to look on himself as vile and hold himself as less than all others.*

We saw above how Francis and his brothers confessed (Early Rule, XVII: 14-16) that the Spirit of the Lord was guiding the brotherhood. They had rejected the spirit of the world, by which they meant, immediately, the politics of cooptation of Assisi's leading citizens. They had no intention of letting the commune's busy burghers pre-empt them as these busy burghers had pre-empted "the peace of 1210." By the spirit of the Lord, Francis and his friends meant, immediately, their own mind and their common determination about their Christian ways. They believed that God was at work in their lives. They had done their best to "walk in Jesus' footsteps" and, they were convinced, it was working. Forced by attempts of another spirit to claim them, they put their belief into words and confessed that the Spirit of the Lord was leading them. Once Francis and his brothers had declared that they followed God's will and not Assisian willfulness, they laid down the movement's purpose of "returning all good things to God." Forced by circumstances, they clarified and confirmed their practice of circulating life's good things.

## From Theory to Praxis

How did that work in the consciousness of an individual brother? The individual might have been satisfied with the theory and purpose as stated in the Early Rule. The statement (Early Rule, XVII: 10-19) did suppose, all the same, that he was part of the action, which required the Spirit work within him. How could the individual brother know he was well placed in the transformation of the world underway? He asked, several asked, and, as answer, they got Admonition XII.<sup>19</sup>

In Franciscan language, the flesh feels elation when I seize on a deed as my own, as a means of placing myself advantageously among others. I wear it as a sweater that fits me well. I wear my help at a food kitchen as a brightly visible badge of my social conscience. That's my worldly me pursuing its advantage, diverting the good action to a foreign purpose and ruining the work of the Spirit. It is opposed to the good. However, when I focus my attention on what is transpiring and stay on purpose, I remain sensitive to me as flesh capable of ruining the good and keep the flesh's inclinations at bay. That's it. The whole admonition has to do with focusing on the good happening, of which I am not the author but the instrument, and my blessedness results from being involved in the action. If I do focus on myself, an entity constructed by my attention, then I harm others, for I induce them to live a lie. I use them, in sum, instead of loving them and battling their sin (in the terms of our study). I oppose our common good. I drop out of true human relations, out of the day's tasks, and out of history. I cannot do both, coordinate with the Spirit and live in my private world, trying to own the good. It cannot be done.

The brothers could offer this brief rule of discernment, for that is what Admonition XII is, because the development of Franciscan language made these words intelligible to movement members. Francis and a few others exemplified the practice. They were "useless servants" in deed and in mind. They showed that it worked, as an astounded public knew well. The brothers who raised the question had both explanation and encouragement to help them get into the swing of the jubilant service at the core of Franciscan life. Was the brother in truth not prompted by the Spirit to put the question to Francis and the others?

I propose that the immediate occasion of Admonitions IX-XI is the integration of Chapter XVII of the Early Rule, and especially its concluding section, into the life of the brotherhood.<sup>20</sup> As a principled statement of their ways and purposes, the early brothers had to work the implications of the chapter into their practices as well as they could. Along with Admonitions VII, VIII, and XII, Admonitions IX-XI form a group apart. Admonition XIII initiates a new series of Admonitions. The series, as distinct from Admonitions VII-XII, all begin with the term blessed.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, we pass from one gathering of



Admonitions to another when we turn to Admonition XIII. Admonition VII certainly has to do with Early Rule, XVII: 17-19, for the specific determination of Franciscan study fits it into the movement's basic action, as verbalized in Early Rule, XVII. This urges the conclusion that the Admonitions between VII and XII have to do with Early Rule, XVII. So let us look more closely at the interpretation of the three brief texts proposed above: They strengthen the brothers' sensitivity to the struggle in which they are engaged and offer further confirmation of the dialectics sketched out in Early Rule, XVII: 10-19.

The "wisdom of this world, "the prudence of the flesh," (Early Rule, XVII: 10) did not only offer the brothers admiration, respect, and a role in the Assisian organization of life. That wisdom also moved the good burghers of the commune to shame the brothers when they sought alms, as described dramatically in Chapter IX of the Early Rule. The first brothers also had to take heavy and constant flack given their mode of dress (Early Rule, II: 15). By their dress, they declared that they belonged to the Penitential movement. Their simple dress said that they belonged to those Christians who took their profession of faith seriously, beginning with their Baptismal vows. There were people who called their piety hypocrisy. So besides the approving names of Early Rule, XVII: 10-12, the brothers contended with other language not as admiring as the encomium of Chapter XVII. Language not only negotiates social life. It proposes and propagandizes a social design. The social design implies who people are; it names them, and some people, such as the early brothers, insisted on naming themselves. They were "useless servants."

## Conclusion

In 1210, Assisi had emerged from the wars with Perugia and from internal tensions. It had set its sails for success as an influential, and wealthy, commune in Central Italy. Perugia's inner conflicts gave Assisi room to pursue the dream (until the 1230s). The city fathers of Assisi proclaimed their ambitions publicly in the municipal charter of 1210. They urged everyone, they pleaded with everyone to overcome differences and to pull together for the glory and growth of Assisi. (At the end of the charter, they threatened those who did not.) They pleaded with everyone to live *more bonorum civium*, to live "in the way of good citizens." With those words, the city fathers named the good people of Assisi. Behind the charter of 1210, there stood the charter of 1203, referred to at the end of the 1210 document. The defining sentence of the 1203 document was: "All the men of Assisi must help one another hold onto what they have and even acquire further possessions." ("All the men of Assisi," of course, have ample possessions.) In sum, "good citizens," as defined by Assisi's city fathers, labored and lived in a way that favored material acquisition, not for everyone and not justly.

The *more bonorum civium* infused the conventions of Assisi according to the design of the city's property-holders. The terms of good citizenry inspired both industry and celebration, both the politics of communal life and the worship of God. (The charter of 1210 began in the name of God and with an invocation of the Holy Spirit.) J. Butler has explored the power at play, the force of language, when a well-supported social design constitutes its subjects, stigmatizing those who do not go along. For his part, J. Habermas has explained our capacity to oppose the rule of convention and posit a new beginning.<sup>22</sup> These contemporary philosophers, in the context of new developments in communicative interaction,<sup>23</sup> help us analyze the experience of the early Franciscans, which led them to develop Chapter XVII of the Early Rule and to give it the supporting applications of the Admonitions under study. The brothers could not allow the social design that sought to fix them within "the public religion" (*religionem foris apparentem*, Early Rule XVII 12) of Assisi. The distinction between love for the sinner and resolute opposition to his/her sin clarifies the opposition at the end of Chapter XVII of the Early Rule: When we hear people blaspheme God, we will act in a way that praises him. The good behavior expected of Assisi's citizens goes by the board.

The three Admonitions culminate in a restatement of the commitment that ends Chapter Seventeen of the Early Rule. Admonition XI tells the brothers to rise in passionate disapproval of the social design being spread abroad in Assisi and elsewhere. They have to show their love for others by promoting the social design of "true peace" (Early Rule XVII, 15) promised by the movement. The Admonition ends with a new formulation of the Franciscan ideal of self and service. A brother has nothing when he lives wholly within the action of the Spirit, guiding history into the groove of blessedness. It is clear, then, what is given to God. That has been defined at the end of Chapter XVII of the Early Rule. By implication, there was no doubt about the resolute opposition to Caesar.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>I say the early Franciscan writings and not the writings of Francis of Assisi because the writings arose within a social movement as instructional texts for the movement. Francis belonged to that association; he did not sit on some mountain, commune with God, and by his words mold people to some high purpose. That we have good grounds for calling early Franciscan history a social movement I have explained in *Work for Everyone*, Manila/Quezon City, 1995. My thanks to *The Cord* editors and Michael Blastic for help with this essay.

<sup>2</sup>See L. Pellegrini's study of the manuscript: "La raccolta di testi francescani del codice assisano 338" in *Revirescunt chartae* I (Rome, 2002), 289-340.

<sup>3</sup>I say Francis and his brothers, without adding "and his sisters," because the terminology of early Franciscan life arose through elaboration of the Early Rule and its

appendices, of which I consider the Admonitions the foremost texts. These writings were unquestionably part of the brothers' common life. We have no evidence ready at hand that women played a role in the basic considerations of the movement's life. I believe they did, but here is not the place to develop the historical argument I would offer to explain and perhaps to justify that belief.

<sup>4</sup>For a longer explanation of this point, see: *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement* (Manila/Quezon City, 1989), 91-100.

<sup>5</sup>See Early Rule XVII 12: "The spirit of the flesh . . . wants a public religion and a holiness that men can see." ("*Spiritus enim carnis . . . desiderat habere religionem et sanctitatem foris apparentem hominibus.*")

<sup>6</sup>See a longer development on *servire* and *servare* in: "And Never Talk to Strangers!" in process of publication.

<sup>7</sup>We find the contrast drawn sharply in Early Rule XVII 10-16.

<sup>8</sup>See the development "Constructing communication" in C. Grant's introduction to *Rethinking Communicative Interaction* (Philadelphia, 2003), 18.

<sup>9</sup>This is a psychologically healthy way of understanding the Franciscan life of service. We participate in goodness. It would, again, take us too far afield to lay that out in detail.

<sup>10</sup>See note 4.

<sup>11</sup>That is the term Francis uses for the text when he attaches a cover letter to its recent edition: Study what's in *ista vita*, study what's in the preceding chapters. See Early Rule XXIV.

<sup>12</sup>The idea of a Franciscan culture lies at the heart of the argument on the Rule of 1223 in: "Regulam melius observare," *Verba Domini Mei* (Rome, 2003), 329-61. Out of the learned labor sustaining the system came "the early Franciscan writings."

<sup>13</sup>This does not mean that they used the gospel texts without any involvement in the texts. It also does not mean that the gospels did not fit their need.

<sup>14</sup>In his study on Admonition VII ("Dem Geist des Buchstabens folgen" Schriftlesung nach Admonitio VII des hl. Franziskus von Assisi" in *Domini Vestigia Sequi. Miscellanea . . . Boccali* (Poziuncola, 2003), 229-69), Johannes Schneider brings Chapter XVII of the Early Rule into play in his discussion of the Admonition's conclusion (262-63). However, he is reading the Admonition as a lesson in studying Scripture and not as a definition of the role of study in movement life. His context is theology and not history.

<sup>15</sup>Its occurrence there tells us that it belonged to the Franciscan vocabulary. It certainly works well in branding the implications of opposing the return of all good things to God.

<sup>16</sup>We have here a good example of a misleading title. The text does not counsel against envy; it explains that envy is blasphemy, for the reasons the text gives. As titles, "No Envy" speaks morally to the individual, whereas "No Blasphemy" strengthens the encompassing purpose of the Franciscan movement.

<sup>17</sup>See for example *Legenda maior*, III:9.

<sup>18</sup>Admonition VIII has to do with the terminology of Chapter XVII in the Early Rule. Admonition XVIII recalls the individual brother's commitment to return all that he has to God. In Admonition XVIII we have again a title at odds with the text's contents.

<sup>19</sup>See the essay on Admonition XII in the 1997 volume of *Vita Minorum*, pages 29-42. It presents this argument in more detail.

<sup>20</sup>We do not have Chapter XVII of the Early Rule as originally formulated, but as reworked. It was reworked in order to heed determinations made at the fourth Lateran council (November 1215). The *vita* was a living document, trying to keep up with a dynamic way of life as well as with the times.

<sup>21</sup>There is a reason for that, which has to do with the role of these Admonitions in Franciscan life, but that argument deserves an essay of its own.

<sup>22</sup>See J. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford U. Press, 1997), Chapter 3, "Subjection, Resistance, Resignification," 83ff. See also J. Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Philosophical Essays* (MIT Press, 1992), Chapter 7: "Individuation through Socialization," 149ff.

<sup>23</sup>See note 8, above.

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## The Soul's Journey into God

Errol Kissinger

With Christ crucified  
let us pass out of this world to the Father  
so that when the Father is shown to us,  
We may say with Phillip:  
It is enough for us.  
Let us hear with Paul:  
My grace is sufficient for you.  
Let us rejoice with David saying:  
My flesh and my heart have grown faint;  
You are the God of my heart, and the God who is my portion forever.  
Blessed be the Lord forever and all the people will say:  
Let it be; Let it be.  
Amen.

In surveying Christian mystics through the medieval period, Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God* re-appropriates a radical spirituality that is best articulated as wisdom theology. Excerpts from Bonaventure's major work will be used to illustrate an investigation of his spirituality. Harvey Egan describes this spirituality as an "integration of the Franciscan love of Christ's humanity with the Dionysian joy of finding God ultimately beyond all things in a mystical ecstasy of superluminous darkness."<sup>1</sup> This investigation of Bonaventure's spirituality begins by situating the text within its historical context and demonstrates Bonaventure's meaning of God, the human person, and how the God-human relationship is integrated with themes of creation theology and Trinitarian love mysticism.

From these understandings, it will become clear how Bonaventure empowers personal spirituality through what can be experienced as a power of radical contradictions—a recurring theme in Bonaventure's theology that communicates the authentic paradox, the parabolic experience, and the radical irony that inspires faith.

Bonaventure (c.1221-1274), following the spiritual path of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), stood at the crossroads of a new emerging spirituality. This

spirituality is situated in the thirteenth century, at the height of the development of medieval mysticism. This was a period of tension and transition in the realm of theology and spirituality. The monastic tradition of the prior era began to be transformed by an emerging scholastic theology that was highly influenced by Aristotle. Zachary Hayes explains that during the late eleventh century and on into the twelfth century, Aristotle's logic became better known. "This encouraged a more critical approach to human knowledge and a far more systematic approach to logical argumentation. This also offered different ways of developing ideas and thought through logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, and so on. As this approach influenced the field of theology, it led to a far more dialectical style of theological development."<sup>2</sup>

This dialectical style of theological development united the Franciscan love of Christ's humanity with the tradition of intellectual theology. These two paths converged in the work of Bonaventure and created a form of wisdom theology, to be discussed below. Although Bonaventure's spiritual orientation is significantly Franciscan, there are many other pre-Franciscan Christian mystics who also influenced his spirituality.

Early Christian mystics influential in the works of Bonaventure include Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo, and Pseudo-Dionysius. He was also significantly influenced by the symbolic character of creation and the spirituality of the inner way of Augustine, the dark apophatic mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius as well as the threefold way of purgation, illumination, and consummation of Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>3</sup> From these diverse sources, Bonaventure developed a positive metaphysical significance of the external world of creation and human experience. Other medieval mystical writers such as Christian mystic Bernard of Clairvaux also contributed various themes on the primacy of love and living in the Trinity. This became expressive of a Trinitarian love mysticism that would shape Bonaventure's Christocentric mysticism. One may appropriate in Bonaventure's masterpiece, an understanding of his spirituality that combines the dominant themes of purgation, illumination, and consummation with St. Francis's submissive themes of love, humility, and humanity.

Bonaventure experienced the power of Francis's submissive forces of love, humility, and humanity in his extraordinary mystical experience on Mount LaVerna. Hayes employs the story of Bonaventure's miraculous vision on Mount LaVerna to elucidate the inspiration of his mystical theology and Christocentric spirituality. When Bonaventure ascends Mount LaVerna, in the footsteps of St. Francis, he experienced the same miraculous vision of the crucified seraph; a six-winged angel, whose three pairs of wings came to symbolize for him the three major phases of the soul's ascent to God. Bonaventure recounts his mystical experience in the prologue of his *The Soul's Journey into God* to which he gave the subtitle *The Mendicant's Vision in the Wilderness*. (Because of this vision

of the seraph, Bonaventure was later called "The Seraphic Doctor.") The mystical experience on Mount LaVerna became a mystical theology; which provided spiritual instruction centering on the unifying experience of the divine illumination. The trans-formative experience that Francis and Bonaventure received on Mount LaVerna is representative of the mystery of intellect and humanity that yearns for God.

The overall structure of *The Soul's Journey into God* takes its shape from the spiritual allegory of the seraph with six wings grouped in three pairs symbolizing the three major phases of illumination in the soul's ascent to God. Louis Dupré and James Wiseman provide a helpful analysis of the spiritual treatise:

The first six of its seven chapters deal with six steps or degrees of ascent to mystical union with God: in the first two the mind turns outside itself to find God through the vestiges in the universe (chap. 1) and in the world of the senses (chap. 2); in the next two the mind turns within itself to contemplate God both through his image imprinted on our natural powers of memory, understanding, and will (chap. 3) and in this image reformed and purified by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity (chap. 4); and in the last two the mind rises above itself to consider the divine Unity through its primary name, "being" (chap. 5), and also the blessed Trinity through its name, "the good" (chap. 6). Having here reached "the perfection of its illuminations," the mind is drawn on to mystical ecstasy.<sup>4</sup>

Bonaventure provides a body of spiritual wisdom for those who seek the knowledge needed for the ascent to the divine. King explains that "the six stages of ascent correspond to the six stages of the soul's power through which the ascent is made: sense, imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence and the illumination of conscience. The final ultimate goal beyond the six stages is not within the soul's power to reach. It is given as a gratuitous gift: a seventh stage of repose and illumination by supreme wisdom made possible through Christ as mediator. It is the seventh stage of mental and mystical elevation where all-intellectual operations cease, and one is confronted with the ultimate revelation of God.<sup>5</sup> The final goal of the seventh stage where this supreme wisdom is only made possible through Christ as mediator is expressed in the following passage from *The Soul's Journey*:

But if you wish to know how these things come about,  
Ask grace not instruction,  
desire not understanding,  
the groaning of prayer not diligent reading,  
the Spouse not the teacher,

God not man,  
darkness not clarity,  
not light but the fire  
that totally inflames and carries us into God  
by ecstatic unctions and burning affections.  
(Chapter 7, Section 6)

With this language one begins to experience Bonaventure's use of contradictory images (e.g., *desire not understanding, the groaning of prayer not diligent reading, the Spouse not the teacher, and God not man*), which foretells what is to come. On the final stage of the journey a glimpse is given of another path where one can only ascend to Christ's divinity by descending to His humanity. Paradox. The final stage where one surrenders one's imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence and the illumination of conscience to arrive at the same place with the crucified Christ.

The *Soul's Journey into God* contains the description of God, the human person, and the God-human relationship. These realities are integrated with Bonaventure's themes of creation theology and Trinitarian love mysticism. Like his spiritual father, Bonaventure found God in all of creation; like Augustine, he also experienced God in the depths of the soul, and like Dionysius, he experienced God in all created reality articulating a creation theology of all matter and spirit flowing from God and returning to God. Egan describes Bonaventure's creation theology where "all creatures are shadows, echoes, pictures, vestiges, representations, footprints of the Trinity."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore Bonaventure connected the affective Franciscan love of Christ's humanity with the psychologically oriented Dionysian metaphysical joy of God. This dialogue of opposites is exemplified in the following passage:

For if you are the Cherub  
contemplating God's essential attributes,  
and if you are amazed  
because the divine Being is both  
first and last,  
eternal and most present,  
utterly simple and the greatest or boundless,  
totally present everywhere and nowhere contained,  
most actual and never moved,  
most perfect and having nothing superfluous or lacking,  
and yet immense and infinite without bounds,  
supremely one and yet all-inclusive,  
containing all things in himself,  
being all power, all truth, all goodness –  
(Chapter 6, Section 6)

Here, the language of contradiction appeals to the intellect. This intellectual language appears in the six stages of the soul's power through which the ascent is made. In contrast to the language of the intellect is Bonaventure's language of Christ's humanity:

if you are this Cherub,  
look at the Mercy Seat and wonder  
that in him there is joined  
the First Principle with the last,  
God with man, who was formed on the sixth day;  
the eternal is joined with temporal man,  
born of the Virgin in the fullness of time,  
the most simple with the most composite,  
the most actual with the one who suffered supremely and died,  
the most perfect and immense with the lowly,  
the supreme and all-inclusive one  
with a composite individual distinct from others,  
that is, the man Jesus Christ.  
(Chapter 6, Section 6)

Here, Bonaventure brings us to a seventh stage of Divine lumination. It is only "*the man Jesus Christ*" and not imagination, reason, intellect, intelligence and the illumination of conscience that can deliver one to God. Bonaventure makes the appeal that a supreme love must transcend our very being and radically surrender us in order to make the final ascent to divine illumination. His usage of contradictory language brings together the critical paths to divine ascent by way of both heart and mind. But it is precisely here that reason and love are mutually dependent on each other in order to make the journey home to God. In this affirmation, Bonaventure begins to articulate for us an image of the God-human relationship to be further explored below.

The language of *The Soul's Journey* for the God-human relationship, expressed in wisdom theology, overwhelmingly expands one's image of the journey to God through Christ. Just as Francis before him, Bonaventure presents the reality that only through the crucified Christ can we make our journey into God. Ursula King states that Bonaventure's spirituality is "inspired and motivated by the Franciscan devotion to the humanity and passion of the crucified Christ."<sup>7</sup> It is this wisdom theology that opened new insights into the humanity and passion of the crucified Christ together with a mysticism of Trinitarian love. This expanded image of the journey to God through Christ would not have come about if it were not for an awareness of Bonaventure's wisdom theology, which will be discussed below.

The convergence of the intellectual and spiritual traditions within the Aristotelian movement of Bonaventure's time articulated such a wisdom theol-

ogy, which enhanced an understanding of the distinction between wisdom and knowledge. As alluded above, the monastic tradition of *doing* theology was giving way to a new style of thought developing within the university context, which pursued a study of pure theoretical knowledge. Hayes states that the convergence of the intellectual and the spiritual traditions developed a unique wisdom tradition that was concerned with the integration of all levels of reality into a unified vision of the world and multiple levels of human experience into a unified sense of the spiritual journey of humanity.<sup>8</sup> Hayes further remarks that *the goal of the journey is not to be a knower, but above all to be a lover.*<sup>9</sup>

As will be discussed below, Bonaventure insists that knowledge is not the ultimate goal in the spiritual quest, but rather one element along the way. Hayes states that "one can ask questions; one can make use of all classical disciplines to come to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a person of faith and what it is that Christians believe in and one can wish to have a deeper understanding of that which one loves."<sup>10</sup> Franciscan wisdom, as King states, "touches on the heart of human, cosmic and divine reality. Therefore, entering into the poverty of the cross of Jesus is to know and find there the compassionate wisdom of God from within God."<sup>11</sup> In an eleventh-century monastic context, Anselm of Canterbury described theology as "faith seeking

understanding." Bonaventure's wisdom theology amplifies this definition.

A discussion of the Trinity and of Trinitarian love mysticism includes the Christocentric event in which the Christian faith journey begins. Bonaventure's account of the experience of Francis's experience on Mount LaVerna significantly influenced his image of the mystical Christ. The following passage from his *Life of St. Francis* provides a further clue in this context. He writes:



Francis saw a seraph with six fiery and splendid wings descending from the highest point in the heavens. When the vision in swift flight came to rest in the air near the man of God, there appeared in the midst of the wings the image of a man crucified, with his hands and feet stretched out and nailed to a cross. Two of the wings were raised above his head and two were stretched out in flight, and two shielded his body. Seeing this, Francis was overwhelmed, and his heart was flooded with a mixture of joy and sorrow. He was overjoyed at the gracious way Christ looked upon him under the form of the seraph, but the fact that he was nailed to a cross pierced his soul with a sword of compassionate sorrow. . . . As the vision disappeared, it left his heart burning with a marvelous ardor and impressed upon his body an image of the signs which was no less marvelous. There and then the marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet, just as he had seen them in his vision of the crucified man. (Chapter 13, Section 3)

This description of the crucified Christ presents an eschatological crossroad where divinity and humanity intersect. Following Bonaventure's description of the seraph, one may imagine an ascent by one's own intellectual illumination. At the moment when the seraph comes to rest on the cross, the anticipated glory of intellect and reason begins to fade into a thin mist where one is confronted with the crucified Christ. It is here that the power of the intellect becomes powerless and the weakness of vulnerable love becomes powerful. The radical reversal of the power and weakness can transform one's entire being. This can only be expressed by the ecstasy of the moment where one drops to one's knees in adoration and tears before God.

Bonaventure's synthesis of the compassion of Christ with the metaphysical mystical Christ demonstrates the supreme coincidence of opposites. He appropriates the humanity of Jesus and the divinity of the Christ into a mystical theology that allows one to ascend to the divinity of God by descending to one's humanity in Jesus. The following passage exemplifies this radical contradiction that is the paschal mystery:

This fire is God,  
and his furnace is in Jerusalem;  
and Christ enkindles it  
in the heat of his burning passion,  
which only he truly perceives who says;  
My soul chooses hanging and my bones death.  
Whoever loves this death  
can see God because it is true beyond doubt that  
man will not see me and live.  
Let us, then, die

and enter into the darkness;  
let us impose silence  
upon our cares, our desires and our imaginings.  
(Chapter 7, Section 6)

Bonaventure's phrase "Whoever loves this death can see God" presents the text's treatment of the human person. These words speak a new language in order to describe what is essential about dying in Christ. The text affirms the spiritual conviction that Christ is our journey, which brings about two realities; the reign of God to come and the reign of God now. In the reign of God to come, one is confronted with the eschatological reality of death and judgment. However, in the reign of God now, one knows that personal sinfulness must suffer and die in order for one to rise again. The paschal mystery essentially calls for suffering and death on some spiritual level before physical death. Only by dying to self can one obtain the poverty that God intended for His creation.

Bonaventure's use of contradictory language describes wisdom as a union in which "immensity is tempered by smallness; strength by weakness; clarity by obscurity; immortality by mortality; divinity by humanity; and riches by poverty."<sup>12</sup> Like the Greek Fathers, says Egan, "Bonaventure views the Father as the womb, or the "fontal fullness" of divine fecundity, the Son as the Father's perfect image, and the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and Son, or Gift, in and through whom all gifts are given."<sup>13</sup> It is within the Trinity that Bonaventure again contemplates the greatest coincidence of opposites.

In contemporary theological reflection, mirroring medieval era, Richard Rohr provides a description of the Trinity, articulating a Trinitarian love mysticism that expands the imagination through the "coincidence of opposites:"

The Father symbolizes that part of God that demands and desires his sons and daughters to become all they can be, that demanding expectant part of God. . . . It's the expectant part of love, that part of love that pushes a bit. It's tough love. It is a necessary part of love. . . . Jesus for me represents that part of God that is wounded, that part of God that is losing, that part of God that is failing, that part of God that doesn't get his way, that part of God that is broken and that we celebrate in every Eucharist. That part of God who has involved himself in love and therefore is involved in the suffering of the world: the Lamb of God. . . . The Father and the Son perfectly accept one another from their different positions—the Son, the weak part of God, if you'll allow me that word, and the Father, the powerful part of God. Maybe the Father is the powerlessness of power and the Son is the power of powerlessness, which is precisely the image of Jesus. They complement one another. . . . In that relationship, is the dove symbolizing the

Holy Spirit. In that relationship, when each accepts the other, there is a huge explosion and release of power we call the Holy Spirit, the relationship between strength and vulnerability. There is the power. There is the passion. There is the water, there is the breadth, and there is the air, the wind. The Church is born in that creative love and tension between the Father and the Son.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that Rohr's description of the Trinity was significantly influenced by the likes of Dionysius and Bonaventure. Nonetheless, Rohr appropriates a contemporary worldview of the Trinity using contradictory imagery to raise our consciousness of a relational Trinity. His description of Trinity illustrates the notion of "radical grace" which can comfort those wanting a deeper spirituality of love. The use of the term "radical grace" refers to both Bonaventure's and Rohr's appeal to this wisdom theology. It is through radical grace that the tension between the Father (the powerlessness of power) and the Son (the power of powerlessness) is reconciled by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, only faith sheds light on why the tension must exist.

The survey of Christian Mystics through Bonaventure's *The Soul's Journey into God*<sup>15</sup> articulates an unspoken spirituality of Trinity, Christ, and Creation and re-appropriates an image of God in all creation. One may find in Bonaventure's work a Franciscan journey from the crucified Christ, to the mystical Christ, to the unfathomable grasp that all creation is God. Through Bonaventure's *Soul's Journey*, the Trinity can significantly enrich and enhance the Christian tradition of theology.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Harvey Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (New York: Liturgical Press, 1991), 235.

<sup>2</sup>Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ursula King, *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages* (Mahwah: Hidden Spring, 2001), 78.

<sup>4</sup>Louis Dupré and James Wiseman, *Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (New York: Paulist, 2001), 134.

<sup>5</sup>King, 78.

<sup>6</sup>Egan, 237.

<sup>7</sup>King, 78.

<sup>8</sup>Hayes, 38.

<sup>9</sup>Hayes, 38.

<sup>10</sup>Hayes, 39.

<sup>11</sup>King, 78-79.

<sup>12</sup>Egan, 237.

<sup>13</sup>Egan, 237.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Rohr, *Radical Grace: Daily Meditations* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony, 1995), 203-04.

<sup>15</sup>See Works of St. Bonaventure, Vol. II, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, ed. Philotheus Boehner, OFM and Zachary Hayes, OFM (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002).

Source of image on p. 67: *S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum), no date, 13. Artist: Benozzo Gozzoli, in the church of St. Francis in Montefalco.

## Beyond the Pale

I. The brothers had no buildings at first  
cloister unconsidered  
not so the sisters  
contained  
(were they constrained?)  
by stone and wood  
sturdy enough  
still standing after centuries

The grate, the grille  
under lock and key  
something precious  
(not Gollum's but God's)  
safe haven  
sanctuary  
nest  
school of sanctity

II. The brothers pushing the envelope  
outside the box  
(Francis, really)  
from the outside of enough  
to the back of beyond and beyond

The sisters radiant within  
glowing like a hearth  
(Clare, bright exemplar)  
warming  
all nearby

Felicity Dorsett, OSF

## A Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving

Jude M. Rochford, OFM Conv.

*My Lord, heavenly Father, we honor, praise and worship you. "You are our God, and we give thanks to you; our God, we extol you" (Ps 118: 28).*

*You, Oh Lord God, are the most good, the most powerful, the most loving and merciful. You are the Master of life, the Artist and Planner of all creation. Each form molded by your hands is good, beautiful in all its existence.*

*O Lord, the magnificent One, you created the sun, which guides us unto the morrow; the moon to change the seasons; the millions and millions of stars in their galaxies to guide our faltering steps. "He spoke and it was made; he commanded and it stood forth" (Ps 33:9).*

*You are the One, who nourishes the red earth with rain. It makes the grass grow for a variety of animals. You make the seed to unfurl, blossom and ripen, one fold, two fold, and a hundred fold. You fill the oceans and rivers with many aquatic species.*

*You, our Creator, have formed man and woman alone of all your creation into your own image and likeness to continue the work begun in Eden. As a sign of your love and trust you told them: "Taste and see how good the Lord is; happy the person who takes refuge in him" (Ps 34:9).*

*You calm the mighty storms; the savage beasts. At times we are prisoners of drought with nasty tongues. Stillness quiets the varied insects and birds of the air in pity as we languish in famine slowly lifting our beseeching eyes and our bare palms heavenward. Other times you give us a plentiful harvest to fill our bellies, calabashes, and bins overflowing.*

*O Lord our God, we thank you for these adverse and prosperous times. When abundant food is given our families you make us happy, cheerful, and thankful. Our "daily bread" makes us strong, healthy and wise as our ancestors of yesteryear. When we languish in hopelessness and brittleness of spirit, we hope to find your presence in our brothers and sisters to help us as we are unable to help ourselves.*

*As You give to us may we, too, give and share what we enjoy with others: truth, justice, mercy, righteousness, and unselfishness.*

*Humbled before You, O infinite God, hear our simple prayers. If it is your will in these times of scientific and technical progress as we prepare anew the planting of various, resourceful fields, may the seeds sowed enrich and better our lives and those of your many sons and daughters.*

*We depend upon You, O Lord, as your beloved creatures, to feed, clothe and care for us. If you turn your face away, darkness engulfs us. If you stop our breathing, we turn to fine dust. Only with your breath, new life begins and goes on and on into eternity.*

*Finally, we ask You, Ruler of heaven and earth, to bless the fruits of our labors. Bless us, our friends and strangers too. Let your love fall upon us and the whole universe like a soft, fine rain to gladden our hearts and grateful spirits. May we recognize and proclaim your goodness and love in our conversation in Faith over sin and weakness of the human will. We ask your forgiveness. Pardon us.*

*You created us for joy, O Lord of Creation. We thank You for the gift of creation and we ask you to listen to the prayerful hymns of the tillers of your various fields, as the work of creation continues with many hands.*

*Let heaven rejoice to invite and welcome us to your house and sit at table with You, your Son, Jesus, and the Spirit of Truth, with Mary, our mother, and all the angels and saints especially with Francis of Assisi, the patron of Ecology and the environment. Amen.*



N. Parrendo



## **"Make Vows To Your God And Fulfill Them" (Ps. 76)**

Charles Finnegan, OFM

For many years it has been customary for a number of Franciscan communities to make a devotional renewal of profession on April 16<sup>th</sup>. On that date in 1208 Brothers Bernard and Peter became Francis's first followers, to be joined a few days later by Brother Giles. It was around that date a year or two later that Francis and his first eleven followers went to Rome and obtained verbal approval from Pope Innocent III for their way of life—radical gospel living, so radical that at first the Pope hesitated to approve it. On returning from Rome Francis and his brothers lived for some two years in Rivo Torto, the "first Franciscan friary." What Francis's first biographer recalls about those years of extreme poverty and first fervor was how happy Francis and his brothers were. (Cf. 1C 42). We could call it "Rivo Torto happiness." April 16<sup>th</sup> then is a date that reminds us of our humble and joyful beginnings as a Franciscan family. May it not also remind us of the joy we too experienced when we first made our profession as Franciscans? Of the sincerity with which we made that commitment? As the years go by should not each anniversary find us even more committed to the way of life we promised God we would observe all the days of our lives?

As an aid to the renewal of our Franciscan profession (whenever customary in your community) we review briefly St. Francis's very rich teaching on the religious vows. He mentions them explicitly in the first sentence of the Rule: we are to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ "by living in obedience, without anything of one's own, and in chastity." That is the way we give God the whole of our life for all of our life. Since the virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience, according to each one's state in life, are important for all Franciscans, this reflection is offered to Secular Franciscans also.

### **In Obedience**

Vatican II sees the vows not as ends in themselves but as ways to foster a life that is preeminently characterized by love. *Perfectae caritatis* is the title of

the council's Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life. The purpose of religious life is described in that Decree's first sentence: "the pursuit of perfect charity by means of the evangelical counsels." The vows are not ends in themselves but means to an end: living the great gospel command of love. In other words, if our religious vows do not help us to live lives that are more loving, they are not fulfilling their purpose.

That is the way St. Francis views the vows, and particularly the vow of obedience. In his Salutation of the Virtues, Francis greets the virtues as "ladies" and "sisters." What is distinctive in his list of virtues are not the virtues he mentions but the way he couples them, choosing in each couplet the two virtues that uniquely belong together. In each couplet the first virtue is the more important of the two, the "lady." The second is the lady's "sister," her faithful companion. Verse 3 of the Salutation reads:

Lady, holy Charity, may the Lord protect you  
with your sister, holy Obedience.

Obedience is at the service of love. Francis sees obedience not as an escape from assuming adult responsibilities in one's life but as an expression of love for the community. It is loving cooperation with the community: "through the charity of the Spirit, [we] are to voluntarily serve and obey one another." (ER 5:14) All obey, since all are called to love and service. Obedience enables us to transcend the self, and leads us to live generously, with our time and with our talents. By obedience we give ourselves in faith to a cause bigger than we are: the Kingdom of God. Our Franciscan family exists to serve that Kingdom, and we are rightly convinced that by cooperating with it in cheerful obedience we do more for the Kingdom of God than by living independently, "doing my own thing."

Francis understands that obedience helps us to transcend that self-centeredness which is "living according to the flesh." Obedience helps us to live "according to the Spirit":

Holy Obedience destroys every wish of the body  
and of the flesh,  
And binds its mortified body to obedience of the Spirit  
And to obedience of one's brother[/sister]. (SalV 14f)

"Obedience of the Spirit" and "obedience of one's brother/sister" go hand in hand, for faith-filled obedience frees us from our prejudices and biases, even our prejudices about what we are able to do or would be happy doing. Obedience stretches us, giving us opportunities to do things for the Kingdom of God that we would never have had outside our community.

Evangelical obedience is a call to generosity, not to passivity. Our documents call for obedience that is "responsible and active" and we are encour-

aged to “make our views known” to our ministers. The history of our Franciscan family is replete with examples of outstanding ministries that owe their beginning to the creativity and hard work of Franciscans at the grass roots and the wisdom of ministers who encouraged good creativity and approved those initiatives. In his letter on mission Pope John Paul II noted that the times we live in call for “new and bold endeavors” (*Redemptoris missio*, 66). Only obedience that is “responsible and active” will meet today’s challenges.

### Living “*Sine Proprio*”—Without Anything of One’s Own

If anything is clear in the life of St. Francis, it is the absolute primacy of God. He expresses this clearly in his Praises written on Mount La Verna after receiving the Stigmata. Marveling at the stupendous grace given him he prays to God: “You are all our wealth. You are enough for us.” Hence, the importance of poverty. If I am convinced that “God is enough,” I will not clutter my life with things I do not need. Above all, I will not “appropriate anything, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all” (LR 6: 1).

What do I appropriate? Whatever impedes me from coming to God in prayer and saying honestly: “Lord God, you are all our wealth. You are enough for us.” It need not be material things at all. Francis forbids appropriating an office, such as that of minister or preacher. (Cf. ER 17:4.) The sin of Adam consisted precisely in Adam’s “appropriating his own will” to himself (Cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Adm). Appropriating something so spiritual and close to us as our own will impede us from being poor, for appropriation takes away our freedom to focus totally on God and live an ever more God-centered life. When I appropriate, I am striving in some way to build up a kingdom for myself, rather than rejoice in being “the herald of the great King,” as Francis wanted to think of himself (Cf. 1C 16.) So Francis does not appropriate even his own poverty, for then not having possessions could become his possession. History records instances of people who chose material poverty for reasons very different from those of Francis. For example, groups of Stoic philosophers chose very poor lives, saying in effect: “I don’t need things, I only need me.” Their poverty was a declaration of self-sufficiency; for Francis poverty is a declaration of God-sufficiency. Francis would say the Stoics were rich: they appropriated their own ego.

Evangelical poverty, much like living “in penance,” frees us from idols that enslave us, promising fulfillment but failing to keep the promises they make. Poverty frees us to ground our whole existence on God and the free gift of God’s love. Poverty convinces us that any other grounding is a false grounding. It is easy to believe St. Bonaventure’s claim that Francis used to tell the friars that “we have chosen poverty as our only wealth” (LMj 7:6) and that “no

man ever longed for wealth as much as Francis longed for poverty” (LtMin 3:5).

Evangelical poverty, while not calling us to live in destitution, will lead us to show compassion towards those who do. In his Testament Francis dates his conversion from his compassionate encounter with lepers—he then begins to redefine what is bitter and what is sweet. As Francis came to the end of his life he wanted to revisit the favorite places of prayer that had been especially dear to him, and go again among lepers and serve them. (Cf. 1C: 103.) These were the two great loves of his life. He lived in a radical way what we call today “the preferential option for the poor.” That is an option, claims John Paul II “to which the whole tradition of the church bears witness” (On Social Concern, 42). To be Franciscan is to embrace that option whole-heartedly, even though the concrete ways of living that option will vary. Direct service to the poor is one way, and surely most Franciscans could do that at certain times. Another way is to study and proclaim the social teaching of the church, and see that teaching as “an essential part of the Christian message” (John Paul II in *Centesimus annus*, 5). We become God’s own partners in the work of salvation when we strive to liberate the poor from degrading and dehumanizing poverty, for as Paul VI noted, salvation is “liberation from everything that oppresses human beings” (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 9).

### In Chastity

In his writings Francis uses the noun chastity twice, in both Rules: “living . . . in chastity.” He speaks of a chaste body only once, in his 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Faithful (v. 14). His major concern is to stress the importance of purity of mind and heart—of this he speaks often—by which he means a mind and heart totally focused on God, deeply in love with God and given to deep worship of God. Thus: “Let us love God therefore, and adore him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because he who seeks this above all else has said ‘true worshippers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth’” (v. 19). Francis claims that “the pure of heart” are those “who despise the things of earth and seek the things of heaven, and who never cease to adore and behold the Lord God living and true with a pure heart and soul.” (Adm 16) The pure of heart live *sine proprio*, totally free and available for God their only Lord, totally given to deep worship. To have a pure heart and mind is to “love the Lord God with all our powers, with every effort, every affection, every emotion, every desire, and every wish” (ER 23:8)—that is, completely, with everything we are and have. For St. Francis, bodily chastity follows from that.

Similarly, St. Clare, who sees chastity, purity and virginity to be a question of love and attachment to Christ. For her too bodily chastity follows from that:

When you have loved [Him – Jesus Christ],  
 you are chaste.  
 When you have touched [Him],  
 you become more pure.  
 When you have accepted [Him],  
 you are a virgin. (1LAg 8)

Franciscan religious embrace a life of chaste celibacy “for the sake of the Kingdom of God.” Celibacy frees us to take risks for the Kingdom and is thus quite different from worldly bachelorhood/spinsterhood whose aim is a care-free and comfortable existence. We give up that which is good (e.g. holy matrimony) for the sake of that which is the only Absolute Good: the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom is not an abstraction or an ideology; it is God making Himself present to us; it is God’s saving presence in the world. Since that is what Jesus came to bring, the Kingdom is the one thing He talks about more than anything else: “I have to go to other towns also to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, because that is what I was sent to do” (Lk 4:43). And: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his way of righteousness, and all the rest will be given you besides” (Mt 6:33). There is the Kingdom, and everything else is “the rest.” The two shortest parables in the gospels (Mt 13:44-46—the buried treasure and the pearl of great price) make the same point: nothing can be compared in value with the kingdom of God. Nothing can be allowed to compete with the Kingdom of God. Paul VI drew the obvious conclusion: “Only the Kingdom of God is absolute, everything else is relative” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8). Surely that is why Francis spoke to his first followers “at great length about the Kingdom of God” and traveled tirelessly “through towns and villages” proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom (Cf. 1C 29 and 36). We do things for the Kingdom of God that we would not do for anything else. The more we appreciate the centrality of the Kingdom, the more we will esteem celibacy for its sake.

The scandals and heartbreak that have so distressed the church in recent months are due to failures by some priests and religious to keep their promise and vow of chastity. We cannot allow this to blind us to the beauty and nobility of human sexuality. Sexual abuses are heinous precisely because they are a desecration of something sacred. That which in God’s plan is to be at the service of love and life is turned into an instrument of domination and oppression. A human being is treated as an object, made into an instrument of the abuser’s selfish pleasure.

A positive outlook on human sexuality is an important support in living chaste lives. Contemporary authors frequently distinguish three realities: sex-sexuality-genitality. As Fran Ferder and John Heagle (in their *Tender Fires*:

*The Spiritual Promise of Sexuality*) note that sex increasingly means sexual intercourse, or “having sex,” a use first recorded by D.H. Lawrence. Genitality specifies biological, physical, or genital sexuality. Sexuality is a much broader term, and is increasingly understood as

... love energy. It refers to the spiritual [sic!], emotional, physical, psychological, social and cultural aspects of relating to one another as embodied male and female persons. Sexuality . . . has to do with all the ways we try to reach one another at the level of the heart. It involves our efforts to communicate, our acts of tenderness. . . . It is the constantly burning fire within us that compels us to turn towards one another.<sup>1</sup>

Sexuality is thus understood nowadays as energy for relationships. As the same authors state:

Any healthy experience of sexuality summons our participation in this energy known by many names: Friendship, Play, Parenting, Mentoring, Making love, Prayer. Each involves a unique interpersonal connection, a sharing of self with another, joining of spirit with spirit. The energy inherent in sexuality tugs at the heart and preoccupies the mind as it invites us into all types of interactions and relationships.<sup>2</sup>

We are all immersed in the fragile beauty of our sexuality. Male and female, young and old, gay and straight, . . . we are all sexual, all the time. Unlike our genital feelings, our sexuality does not wax and wane. It is always with us. Its omnipresent energy urges us to connect in some way and on some level to one another—indeed to all creation.<sup>3</sup>

By the vow of chaste celibacy for the sake of God’s kingdom we who are Franciscan religious renounce genital sexual activity, even as we thank God for the great gift of sexuality—a gift which Jesus Himself as a true human being also had, since he was like us in everything except sin. By this gift we share in God’s own loving and creative powers. We take the vow of chastity not to love less but to love more, and chastity lived for the sake of God’s kingdom is indeed *life-giving* in its own unique way. In that light Vatican II sees chastity as “an outstanding gift of divine grace given to some by the Father” (LG, 42). It is obviously not given to all or even to very many. When with the eyes of faith we see it as a gift we will be able to treasure it as a gift, recognizing that it is a fragile gift, and take all the means necessary to keep the gift unsullied. Married secular Franciscans, living in loving fidelity, live the virtue of chastity according to their calling, and thus become human expressions of the love that Christ has for His bride, the Church. That witness is also a great service to the Kingdom of God.

## Conclusion

As every baker knows, you need a lot of flour for baking but only a little yeast. We were never meant to be the flour in the church. We are meant to be yeast. To fulfill its purpose, yeast has to be alive. April 16<sup>th</sup> is a good opportunity to heed St. Paul's advice: "Rekindle the gift that is within you."

April 16<sup>th</sup> provides us again this year, perhaps with special urgency, the opportunity to undertake an examination of conscience, without scrupulosity but with honesty. If it is true that the much-publicized violation of vows has done terrible damage to the church, it is also true that living the religious vows with ever growing fidelity does enormous good. The same is true of fidelity in marriage. Contemporary men and women are very keen on authenticity and Paul VI was surely right when he claimed that people today "pay more attention to witnesses than to teachers." (EN, 41) The Franciscan approach to evangelization always gives priority to witness, including the witness of "a simple Franciscan presence." We need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the ways in which we might live more faithfully and more joyfully the very high ideal St. Francis left us, and empower us "to begin to serve the Lord God, for until now we have done but little" (1C 103)—like Francis, "always new, always beginning again" as both Celano and Bonaventure say of him. All Franciscans are called to do nothing less than experience "the joy of the Gospel" and bring that joy to others.

If the devotional renewal of our Franciscan profession is really sincere we will surely experience again the joy we felt when we made our first profession, and by God's grace, perhaps even something of the "Rivo Torto joy" experienced by Francis with his first brothers. As we make this devotional renewal of profession, we pray to God with the psalmist: "So I will always praise your name, and day after day fulfill my vows" (Ps. 61).

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>New York, 2002; see page 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ferder and Heagle, 34.

<sup>3</sup>Ferder and Heagle, 27.

*Evangelical poverty, much like living "in penance," frees us from idols that enslave us, promising fulfillment but failing to keep the promises they make. Poverty frees us to ground our whole existence on God and the free gift of God's love. Poverty convinces us that any other grounding is a false grounding.*

## Writing in Assisi

*Even now  
nearing seventy,  
there is the daily making:  
pen against paper,  
curling letters into words  
solid and smooth as the wood  
of the carver whose cave-like studio  
I pass each morning  
on my way for cappuccino and broche.  
He keeps his mallet and chisel  
warm against the chipping wood  
to feed his family. But I suspect  
he chips away every day,  
mallet to chisel to wood,  
to surprise himself  
with something more than food.*

Murray Bodo, OFM

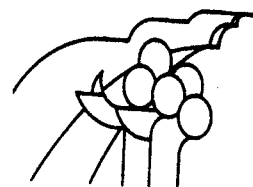
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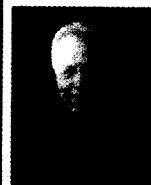
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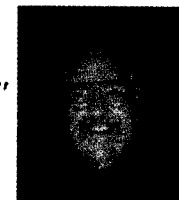
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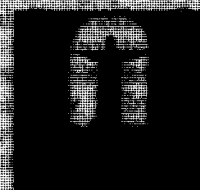
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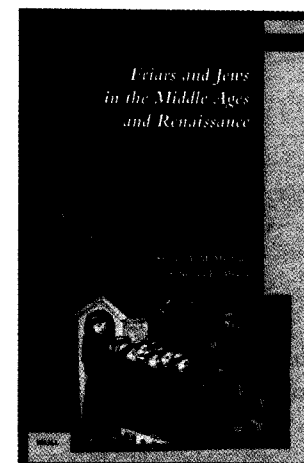
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**Discovering Our Hope for New Life.** Bernard Tickerhoof, TOR. Somewhere beneath the ground lies the seed that will sprout into new life. Somewhere within the Passion of Jesus lies the seed that will sprout into resurrection. This retreat will focus on the seed of hope that offers us transformation. At The Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston, PA. Contact Helen Budzik, OSF 610-558-6152 or email: fsc@osfphila.org.

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**Dancing with Disease.** Ann Schehr, MS, CRC. this retreat uses presentations, group discussion, music, movement, guided imagery, and mindful eating to focus on identifying patterns that feed the disease of compulsive eating. At The Franciscan Spiritual Center, Aston, PA. Contact Helen Budzik, OSF 610-558-6152 or email: fsc@osfphila.org.

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**Sisters' Retreat. June 3-9, 2005. Friday, 4:00 p.m.-Thursday, 1:00 p.m.**

Fr. Loman MacAodha, OFM. This year's retreat centers on Jesus Christ, the Risen One, our mediator in the presence of the Father. His spirit draws us into the ministry of forgiveness and peacemaking. We join in the struggle to bring God's blessing to a pilgrim and struggling people. At The Franciscan Center, 3010 N. Perry Avenue, Tampa, FL 33603-5345.(813) 229-2695. E-mail: francntr@tampabay.rr.com.

## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation of the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFI	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano

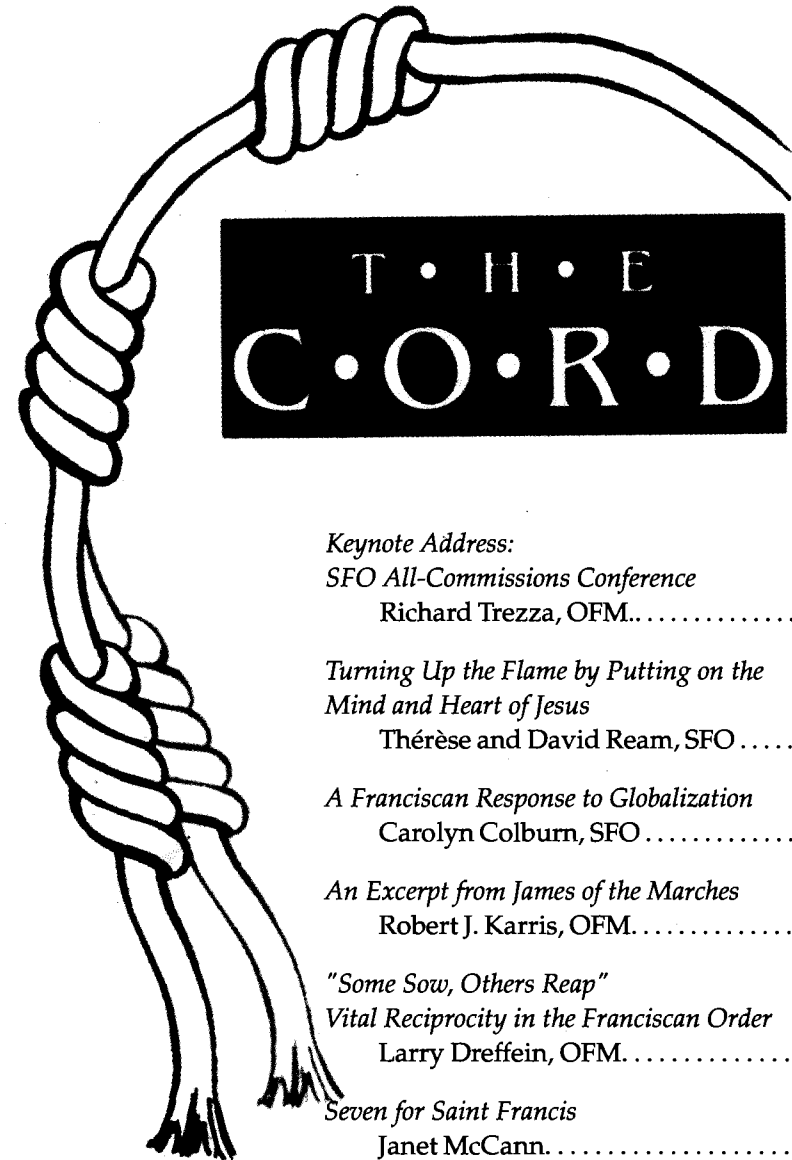
**A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE**

Goods of *fortune*, *nature*, and *grace* are gifts of God. Goods of *fortune* are the least gifts, gifts of *nature* the middle gifts, but gifts of *grace* are the best gifts. Among the gifts of nature are counted health and courage. Among the gifts of fortune are prosperity and quiet. . . .And since they are gifts of God, so too is the ability to enjoy them.

St. Bonaventure's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*  
Ch. 5, q. 17, IV

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

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

1. MSS should be submitted on disk (or typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, one side only, double spaced).
2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 14th 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.

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*The Cord*, 55.3 (2005)

## Editorial

Once again we offer an issue dedicated to the values of the Secular Franciscan Order. The first three pieces were prepared under the initiative of the SFO national leadership group. Other parts of the issue were chosen for their complementarity to SFO themes. It is one of the delights of my role as editor to be able to channel materials into the hands of our readers that not only fit a given theme but also enrich all Franciscans. Certainly the excerpt from James of the Marches will be a pleasant source for reflection, and Janet McCann's poem "Seven for St. Francis" should, I think, be another resource for embracing the human side of not only Francis's life, but our own as well.

By the time our readers receive this issue we will be a month past the death of John Paul II and under the leadership of a new shepherd of the flock. Admittedly, the depth and breadth of the media coverage from the time of the Holy Father's last illness through his funeral was amazing, touching, beyond extraordinary. Evangelization through mass media was accomplished (purposefully or not) in a way not seen before: real-time images from a time zone at least six hours different allowed us to focus on the lights in the papal apartment, on the faithful gathered in prayer, on world leaders assembled in homage to the integrity of a holy man. And, although it has not yet happened at the time of this writing, the same technology will allow us to participate in the moments when the election, presentation and installation of the new Bishop of Rome will become reality.

Certainly the world has seen and acknowledged the impact that one life lived in dedication to the Gospel can have. Our own desire to embrace that Gospel and to live our own journeys to the full cannot help but have been strengthened and stretched at this moment of Church history. Whether Secular Franciscan, Friar Minor, Poor Clare, or Third Order Regular Franciscan, we are called to the same intense love of God and each other as John Paul demonstrated in his living and his dying. In his own words: "... the final call will come the moment that the Lord will choose. I desire to follow Him and desire that all that is part of my earthly life shall prepare me for this moment. ... Like all else, this moment too I place into the hands of the Mother of my Master: *Totus tuus*. In those same maternal hands I place all those with whom my life and vocation are bound. Into these hands I leave above all the Church, and also my nation and all humanity."

May it be so. Amen. Alleluia.

*Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF*

## **Keynote Address: Secular Franciscan All-Commissions Conference**

Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM

One of the great things about being on the commissions is that you get to share your vocation with other people and you get to hear their take on the world, on the church, and on their faith, which is most uplifting. I'm on the Formation Commission and all of the members on the Formation Commission are wonderful people, as all the members on all your commissions. I have to single out one, however. I don't mean to embarrass Anne Mulqueen, but after one of our meetings Anne was urged by the Spirit to write a prayer—which I would like to use this morning as my morning prayer. Indeed, we probably will be reciting it throughout the conference. I'd ask you to turn to the inside cover of your program booklet. And I'd ask you all to stand as we place ourselves in the presence of God.

### **Opening Prayer**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Together, let us pray.

Eternal Father, source of all good, hear our one desire, that you set a blaze upon the earth that will not be contained until it accomplishes your holy and true will. Good St. Francis, pray for our peace and justice commissions. Help us regard others as you did the Sultan, and seek ways of unity, harmony, and respect, regardless of ideology. May God bless us all as we labor to give birth to a more fraternal world, where the lamb can lie down safely with the lion.

Holy St. Clare, pray for our formation commissions. Pray that we who gaze upon the face of Christ will be formed and transformed by His image into His likeness. May God bless us all as we seek to embody and impart the Good News in our daily lives.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of the Secular Franciscan Order, pray for our work commissions. Pray that we never forget that our ability to work is

a gift. May God bless us all as we seek to share in Christ's creation and redemption through the work of our hands.

St. Louis, patron of the Secular Franciscan Order, pray for our youth and young adult commission. You who fathered 11 children and raised them in God's ways, pray for us who work with the youth of today. May God bless us all as we walk with our future into a new day.

St. Margaret of Cortona, pray for our family commissions. You who bore the stigma of unwed motherhood, repented and lived an exemplary life, pray that families will thrive despite so many obstacles. May our families become places of peace, fidelity, and respect for life and be a blessing to society.

St. Bonaventure, pray for our ecology commissions. Pray that all of us who behold the imprint of God in creation will remember that all creation is interdependent and must be protected. May God bless us all as we respect and care for the work of the Creator's hands.

Almighty Father, enable our ministers and commissioners to reflect your light in a dark world and your warmth in a cold world. Mold them into the image of your son, Jesus the Christ, so that the world will know it is you who have sent them. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Radical Franciscanism**

There is a tremendous energy in this room. When all of us get together for anything like this, there is tremendous movement of the Spirit and tremendous sharing of all the things that the Spirit has enabled each and every one of us to do for the good of the Church, for the Order, and also for ourselves, as people on a spiritual journey. So I'm very happy to be here, and to absorb a lot of that energy this weekend with you.

I recently attended a workshop, a conference, given by my Province of the Most Holy Name, at our Siena College, on the issue of globalization; this was something I know very little about, but I learned a great deal about it during the conference. Our very own Carolyn Coburn also attended the meeting, and Carol Gentile, in her position as national minister, was invited. That experience colors the remarks that I am making this morning because I believe that in this rapidly changing new world that is being forged there is a tremendous urgency for us to be radical in our approach to Franciscanism and to give an adequate response to our brothers and sisters in the world so that we keep intact the values that are important to us as Christians and Franciscans.

Unfortunately, as you and I as a society, as a Church, as individuals, interface with the terrible phenomenon of terrorism we hear a lot about martyrdom on the part of the people who are terrorists. It's something like a martyrdom that you and I celebrate with the saints, but it is very different in an

important aspect. The martyrs we hear about in the terrorist camp are [said to be] made up of fanatical, fundamentalist followers, somewhat misguided followers of Islam, people responding to a call from God to give up their lives for a cause. And it is a martyrdom of sorts. I won't get into the ramifications of that religious gesture which of course claims their lives but also countless other lives in the process. Yet in all that craziness, there is sort of a veiled admiration on our part for the engagement of somebody's imagination and passion to the point of losing one's life for a cause, for a principle.

Whenever there is a martyr being celebrated in the Christian calendar, I always take that option to celebrate that saint's feast because I think it's very important for us to reflect on the energy, the passion and the intensity of the belief in Jesus and His Gospel that person had, which would inspire them to lose their lives for that cause. And I think it's very, very important, even though some people are embarrassed by our martyrs, because they feel that, [with] a little more practicality, they could have saved their lives: "If they were a little bit more sensitive to indigenous cultures and did not try to convert people, maybe they would have been alive for a longer time." Be that as it may, there was a passion for the Gospel which caused them to put their life on the line for a principle, a spiritual principle, and that is something to be admired. And that's what this keynote address is about.

It's about that urging, that passion, that spirit, which causes us to put ourselves on the line for the things that we know to be true and the things we've committed ourselves to believe in: this Franciscan thing that constantly needs to be identified and finessed every day of our life. Our martyrs also engaged in "fanatical" things, and I'm sure the Roman Emperors sitting in their stands in the different circuses, watching countless Christians give their lives for refusing to burn a little grain of incense to honor Roman gods, might consider them to be fanatical also. After all, the choice of having one's limbs ripped apart by some beast and being devoured by the same could be construed to be a bit insane, we agree.

But there's the challenge for us. Where is our nerve, that we have to risk all for the will of God (which is what Francis did) calling to mind that unique struggle between our will and the will of God? Where is the courage to be driven by that unknown? The will of God is something that we know, and yet it is something unknown, because we're constantly being called to something new day after day if we're serious about the process of conversion. And I really think that if we believe in the incredible, we can do the impossible.

It's our want of faith that holds us back at times. Look at St. Peter. When did he begin to sink as he made his way across the water to meet the Lord? Well, the Gospel gives us the reason. He took account of the winds. He took a mental survey as he put his foot onto the water, and all of a sudden, he remem-

bered that 99.44% of humanity cannot walk on the water. All of his incredulities and all of his problems were in the velocity of the wind and the tumult of the waves, and as soon as he remembered that, and took his eyes off Christ, he sank into the water. We know that Christ is our passion, Christ is our driving force. His agenda is our mandate, and I believe that only a radical Franciscan living out of the Gospel is going to really be the answer to what it is that we're being called to do.

## Spirit in Action

This talk concerns itself with spirit. You'll not hear much about the Holy Spirit although it is that same Holy Spirit who is responsible for our selfless response to the grace of God to do more, to become more. But this talk is about the passion we have for the culture that you and I drink in, the culture of Franciscanism that you and I imbibe, even without knowing it, just by being members of the Franciscan movement. And I'm not even speaking exclusively here about Secular Franciscanism, but Franciscanism in general in its most radical form.

At that globalization conference, we had a Sister of St. Joseph who came to speak to us about the Franciscan perspective on globalization, *a la* the theology of Duns Scotus. She was envious that the people in her audience consisted of our friars and many lay people, including many Secular Franciscans, who are our partners in ministry in all of our ministries in Holy Name Province) about whom she said, "Here I am, I had to go to school to learn this stuff. You [Franciscans] have already possessed this over and over again without even going to school." And it's true.

As I was reflecting on this with some other friars, I said, "You know, as she was speaking, I felt that I believed in what she said. I felt I was doing that, not as a pat on the back type of thing, but I was able to resonate with that." And the friars said, "Yes, we kind of like pick that up, don't we, just by being in the movement?" And that's something I think we've got to capitalize on because we have a completely different worldview of things, one that's going to help our sisters and brothers in this world.

We know we've become Franciscans not to become little Francises, but rather, to come to Jesus. Now Francis did that in his own life by wishing to follow the Gospel radically, [trying] to search out the singularity of the Gospel and the one thing that separates it from just another nice story about some super prophet. He went for the jugular, he went

To desire  
one thing alone -  
the Spirit of God  
at work  
within them.

9:32



for the *kerygma* [preaching the gospel of Christ in the manner of the early Church], the kernel of the Gospel, and there he was able to find the roots of Gospel living, which is what the word "radical" means in the first instance.

We as Franciscans, whether Secular or Third Order Regular, or First Order, or Second Order, endeavor to do the same thing with the grace of God. And we find those roots with one another's support, in trying to live this Franciscanism. The challenge is to embrace Francis's unmistakable preference for the poor, his association and collaboration with the poor and their needs and their uncomfortableness, almost to the point of [our] being uncomfortable when we are not around them. There are hands-on things that you and I must do about peace and justice in this world, no longer merely to pray for peace and justice, but to become peace and to become justice in our own little sphere of influence because if we can't do it with[in] our own little sphere of influence, we're not going to do it "out there."

We need to get going on that so that the Franciscan movement becomes that privileged place people can look at and say, "Wow, that's different. They live life different[ly], they found some sort of secret, not only to tolerate what's going on in the world, but to make sense out of it." It's got to start in your privileged places, in your fraternities, in your heart. And people will run to your fraternities. And they will join your fraternities but, most importantly, they will stay in your fraternities. If it's not happening in your fraternity, don't bash the politicians or the bishops, look into yourself and find out why you can't do it. And then ask how you could ever expect somebody out there to do it for an entire nation? I believe truly that this is the Franciscan moment for our world, and we are going to be part of forming a response to what is happening.

The message of Assisi needs to be shouted out once again, and the commissions that we celebrate during this conference are the doors through which this message will pass. We need the courage and the cooperation with God's grace to unlock those doors so that the spirit of each commission will be able to live and to breathe and to transform us from within. Instead of bemoaning the terrible conditions in our world, Franciscans will be able to offer to a myopic world a new vision of the cross and how to live with it, not just how to tolerate it, but how to embrace it. You know as well as I that the cross is not something that has happened, the crucifixion is something that is happening, and it can be found at any place and at any hour in the human race.

Francis's love affair with the passion of Christ was not a morbid sensationalism, steeped in a misguided false piety of his time, but the unmistakable recognition that the cross is an inescapable thing and should be even wished for if only for the life and hope that it affords to those who believe. It was a natural consequence then of this understanding and conviction that Francis should die branded with the stigmata.

The cross comes in different forms. We all know about the suffering that comes with sickness, the different crises which visit us during our lives, and it is a truly Franciscan response to be with people who suffer that way, to be able to let them know that the marks of their sicknesses are the very passport which will get them to heaven, to be one with Christ forever. To offer that glimmer of hope, to offer a new way to be about this world, but there's also the cross of accepting the challenges which come with change, with rapid change.

When I was a student of world history in high school, 1960 to 1964, I studied an evolution of humanity, political life, cultural life, socio-economic life, religious life, which took many, many, many years to evolve. All the textbooks at that time ended with the administration of Dwight Eisenhower, and, if you were lucky, there was a little something there about John Kennedy's election, but stopped there. I would imagine that that same history book has had to undergo I don't know how many revisions to keep up with the tremendous and dynamic changes taking place in our world. We could go on and on about, "Gee, the world is changing so fast. It's terrible, all these new things happening, we can't keep abreast." But we know that the rapid changes . . . are not just changes, they've been major shifts in the way that we live and the way that we think and the way that we worship; in the way that we do business, the way that we recognize ourselves as members in a shrinking world, in a global village, and, unfortunately, in our interaction with terrorism. But fear about these changes should not be an excuse for inactivity. We still need to answer these challenges and to be in this world with a passion for Christ and his Gospel like that Francis of Assisi had in his own day.

The commissions which this conference celebrates are the jumping off points to do the Gospel in our time. No one is going to hand you a recipe on how to be a Secular Franciscan. Your Rule doesn't even do that. It's very broad in its approach. No one is going to tell you how to meet these things head on, as nobody told Francis. Your inner voices, because of your spirituality, will speak to you, as Christ spoke to Francis from that cross, and your inner voices will encourage you to do things and take the creative initiative so that you can change your own life and those of your sisters and brothers around you. We know that Francis found his way and encouraged others to do the same with the grace of God.

He was not mealy-mouthed in his approach, but was radical, passionate, personal, and intimate. His was a response to the world that took even his Church into account, the Church which he loved, a Church which was in the throes of the aftermath of Lateran Council IV. He was aware of tremendous political shifts, alliances of different kingdoms, and of the human condition of his sisters and brothers. He embraced his world in a very gutsy, wrenching, response to things that he knew needed paying attention to and, with the grace of God, needed to be acted upon.

## What Is Ours To Do?

Most of us have a religious, visceral, response to injustice. Would that we be so infected to use that passion for the good! There are two classes of people in the world: those who are afraid to find God and those who are afraid to lose God. Some are afraid to find God, lest in finding Him they lose all their selfish desires, believing all the while, that if they possessed Him, they would have nothing else. Others are afraid to lose God, because in losing Him, they would lose all there is and find in return only their petty selves, which are so useless for giving true and lasting happiness.

Once Francis embraced God and the love God poured out, he embraced the world; yes, embraced the world that his God had created, a world which Francis of Assisi could so easily have complained about constantly. There was no Disneyland during the time of Francis, but you know he did not merely tolerate his condition, obsessing about life here below in the valley of tears, the human condition tainted by original sin. Instead, his life and convictions gave flesh to the ultimate and all-consuming graciousness of God because he saw evidences of his Lord in all creation.

It's the quintessential Franciscan gift to the world to shift people from a useless harboring of and obsession about sin (although it exists and we are sinners) to the much more salvific idea of the graciousness and goodness of God. This is a traditional Franciscan stance, one for which we should not apologize. It does not, of course, give us license to sin. Evil is a reality, but an obsession with it is not a Franciscan thing. The quintessential gift of Franciscanism is to be able to be in the world and to allow that shift to happen with our brothers and sisters.

A galloping globalization has taken place right underneath our noses. It begs for a radical living out of Franciscanism, the gift to the Church, which forever offers humanity the ultimate way of viewing things and people, of regarding one another as worthy of God's love. We do not do this, my sisters and brothers, without passion. We cannot do this without spirit, without the Spirit. Now, we've been on fire about this before. Just think back—on the day that you said yes to your vocation, on the day that you made your final commitment in the Order, for myself, the day I received the habit, the day I was ordained, the day I was finally professed. You know we wouldn't dream of approaching those life-changing ceremonies in a lukewarm fashion or in a way which told those attending those ceremonies that we were just jumping through the hoops to achieve our goal. It's all about Him, and that's what makes the spiritual life difficult—the constant struggle between our will and God's will. Fulton Sheen liked to say that there were no plains in the spiritual life: you were either going up or coming down at any one point.

This All-Commissions conference reminds us that the going forth is definitely worthwhile. Whatever discomfort or pain, the other nagging challenge, the constantly turning up the flame of our ready and selfless response to our gracious God, doing the will of God, will take up most of our efforts and a goodly part of our lives. It takes real spirit to see ourselves in proper relationship to God. The person who thinks only of self is the person who prays prayers of petition: "Give me this, I want that." The one who thinks of neighbor says prayers of intercession: "God, help so and so. Bring this person through this problem." But whoever thinks of loving and serving God in loving and serving others is a person who is involved in saying prayers of abandonment to God's will, which is the prayer of all the saints.

So, when will we touch this passion again? Where will we find it? It is there you know. Is it under stubbornness? Is it perhaps a prisoner of laziness? Is it being held captive by feelings of frustration or feelings of inability to make changes for the better? Without heat that passion will cool. The Franciscan movement and gift to the Church is ever-needed in all the seasons of our Church and world. We would be hypocrites to bear the name without the responsibility.

Membership has its privileges and so, brothers and sisters of penance, anyone worthy of the name Franciscan has divine privileges and earthly responsibilities. The new world order being forged now need not be wicked and self-serving. It need not widen the gap between rich and poor. It need not be anti-Christian or anti-spirit. It need not make us fearful, but it will take another Franciscan uprising to make it God-driven with something in it for everyone.

If globalization is to reshape our society, it will take the radical and passionate living out of Franciscan principles and a good deal of sacrificing to make it in God's image and according to divine design. We will have to make choices, my friends. We will have much to lose, a sense of the spiritual in our world, for one thing. Those who practice religion with a passion could be sidelined. Will we be ready for that preferential treatment? What will be our guiding principles? Those principles which have made our lives easy and care-free with little regard for the suffering around us in our own country or abroad? We cannot serve both God and mammon. We cannot save our life for both time here and for eternity. We cannot feast both here and hereafter. We cannot make the best of both worlds. Either we will have the feast on earth and the feast in heaven, or we will have the feast here and the fast in eternity.

There's real spirit in doing the commissions. It's unfortunate that as I make visitation after visitation, the idea of the commissions seems not to have caught on. I know, however, that each and every one of us actually does the commissions somehow in our own lives, whether we know it or not. I myself have comforted Seculars with that sentiment at many a gathering where the spiri-

Membership has its privileges and so, brothers and sisters of penance, anyone worthy of the name Franciscan has divine privileges and earthly responsibilities. The new world order being forged now need not be wicked and self-serving. It need not widen the gap between rich and poor. It need not be anti-Christian or anti-spirit. It need not make us fearful, but it will take another Franciscan uprising to make it God-driven with something in it for everyone.

tual burden of passionately doing the commissions seems an impossibility. But I don't think we can rest on that feel-good theory anymore, lest people begin to consider us to be spiritually challenged and tunnel-visioned in our approach to the spiritual life.

It's time we knew what we were doing and who we are, what we are about, living Secular Franciscan life on purpose, not by accident but by choice. We shouldn't be on automatic pilot but living fully aware of who we are and what we are doing. The potential Franciscan, Secular or Friar, will be that person who will admire the passion with which we pursue peace, justice, mercy and compassion; and who will be willing to leave mother, father, sister, brother, possessions to follow Christ and who can engender that spirit of passion in his followers.

Looking at Cimabue's representation of Francis, it is obvious that people were not following Francis because of his looks. It was because Francis knew that it was not enough merely to have an intellectual understanding of another person's difficulty. He needed to go further to feel it as his own. He reminds us it is not important to be constantly asking ourselves if we love our neighbor. What is important is to act out that love. We learn to walk by walking, to play by playing, to love by loving. If we do anybody we

hate a good turn, we find that we hate them less. If we do them an evil turn, we find that we hate them more. Doing kind acts to people makes us find all people lovable. And if love is not there, we put it there. And then we find everybody lovable.

That is spirit and passion to be courageous in giving Christ a home here on earth, to reveal His face to those who need to gaze upon it. Benet Fonck would write in formation manual that the Seculars are Christmas people, always re-birthing Christ and uncovering Him for all to see. This calls to mind the most tragic words ever written about Christ found in the prologue to John's Gospel, "He came among His own, and His own received Him not." Bethlehem had no room for Him when He was born. Nazareth had no room for Him when He lived, and Jerusalem had no room for Him when He died.

Little by little, Christ is being removed from us by those who think they know best about the destiny of humanity. The Franciscan ethos, on the contrary, seeks to fill every nook and cranny with the presence, love and mercy of Christ.

Let this All-Commissions Conference, then, be for each and every one of us a cause to renew our commitment to the Franciscan way of life. Let it renew in each of us the flame of the spirit in Baptism. Above all, may this conference make us holy. Yes, may a conference make us holy. Sanctity is not giving up the world, it is embracing the world. It is a continuation of that sublime transaction of the Incarnation in which we can hear Christ saying to us, "Give me your humanity. I give you my divinity. Give me your time, I will give you my eternity, give me your limitations, I will give you my power. You give me your slavery, and I will give you my freedom. You give me your death, I will give you life. You give me your nothingness, I will give you my all.

Let this conference then, my friends, find us with generous and open hearts to do more, to be more, to feel the heat of the flame previously ignited by Him who turns up that flame to give us all his warmth and vision.

Editor's note: The graphics on pp. 111 and 115 in this issue are taken from *S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum), no date, p. 116 (no artist identified) and p. 86. The latter image is found in the sacristy at the church of Santa Croce in Florence, Italy. Attributed to Domenico de Michelino.

## Turning Up the Flame By Putting on the Mind and Heart of Christ Jesus

Thérèse and Deacon Dave Ream, SFO

In light of the overall theme of this Conference, we have been asked to address that aspect of our human, Christian and Franciscan experience centered in the mind of the human person. According to Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, the mind is: 1. what one intends, wishes or wills; 2. that which thinks, perceives, feels, wills, etc. as the subject of consciousness and the seat of reason and of the intellect.

Yesterday we had the privilege of celebrating the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; today, we celebrate the memorial which honors the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In the ancient world, the "mind" and the "heart" were widely regarded as essentially interchangeable realities; in fact, the Sacred Scriptures make more references to the heart than to the mind: a "hardened heart" or "heart of stone" is the same thing as a "closed or narrow mind."

So, whose mind do we seek to penetrate, whose heart do we seek to imitate, if not the mind and heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ? In his Letter to the Philippians (2:5-8), Saint Paul gave us a beautiful Christological hymn which begins with these words: "Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus." This is the New Jerusalem Bible's translation of this verse. The same verse in the New Revised Standard Version reads: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." The New American Bible translation, on which our liturgical Lectionary is based, renders this passage as follows:

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

We recently saw a little girl wearing a t-shirt which had these words emblazoned across its front: "So Much Attitude-So Little Time!" What is an Attitude? According to Webster, an attitude may mean any or all of the following:

1. the posture, stance, pose or position of a person showing or meant to show a mental state, emotion, or mood;
2. the manner of acting, feeling, or thinking that shows one's disposition, opinion, frame of mind, outlook, point of view, perspective, etc.;
3. one's disposition, opinion, demeanor, etc.;
4. in aeronautics, the position of an aircraft in relation to a given point of reference, usually on the ground level.

We want to focus on this last understanding of attitude, the position of an object in relation to a given point of reference, usually on the ground level. In the context of our presentation this morning, we Franciscan women and men are the objects called continuously to position and reposition ourselves in relation to a given point of reference, the Rule of our Order, which truly can be understood as the ground, the foundation of our way of life.

Being Franciscan provides us with a particular frame of mind, a Gospel-oriented perspective on the whole of our lives. Every aspect of our life experience must be viewed through this set of Franciscan-tinted lenses. In the spirit of that hymn from Philippians, we are to empty ourselves of those attitudes, tendencies, dispositions, that are contrary to the Gospel so that we can become gradually, gradually, gradually ever more Christ-like and ever more faithful to his Gospel of life and love. Our Rule presents us with a set of characteristically Franciscan attitudes which are meant to inform and sustain a Gospel-oriented posture, stance, pose or position toward the Church and the world. For example, article #9 was read during the Morning Prayer we just offered together. It tells us that "Mary was open to the Lord's word and call." As openness was Mary's fundamental attitude toward God working in her life, so this same attitude of openness should mark our response to the invitations of God's grace working in our lives. This same article calls us to express our love for Mary "by imitating her complete self-giving and by praying earnestly and confidently." This summons suggests three attitudes: first, our willingness to imitate someone requires humility on our part; second, self-giving, or altruistic love, is itself an attitude which shapes our response to others; and third, earnest and confident prayer tells us not only what to do—to pray always—but how to do it—with sincerity and confidence. Prayerfulness itself is an attitude.

Our Rule is an inspirational document rather than a prescriptive one that presents us with Gospel-oriented and orienting attitudes and values. We can reflect upon all the articles of our Rule and make explicit the attitudes ex-

pressed in each one of them. In the interest of time this morning, we propose to take a quick look only at those articles directly related to our various Commissions.

We find in Article #7, **Formation**: "Let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the Gospel itself calls 'conversion.' Human frailty makes it necessary that this conversion be carried out daily." This radical interior change (conversion, metanoia) requires an attitude of humility. The supreme value for us is to be more Christ-like. In order to do this, we must have the humility to acknowledge our own shortcomings, weaknesses or maybe even sinfulness. It's plain to see that our formation must truly be a life-long process.

We find in Article #19, **Peace**: "Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon." Harmony is the fruit of a peace-making attitude in practice. Dialogue as a means to mutual understanding emerges from an attitude of profound respect and a belief that the other person has something worth listening to and that we have something worth saying. Respect allows us both to listen and to speak.

Article #15, **Justice**, we find: "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives." Our actions in the Church and in the world must reflect a sincere passion and conviction for justice issues. We Franciscans must be willing to be in the forefront in initiating reverence and respect for the legitimate rights of all people. It is not sufficient merely to support existing initiatives and projects. There is more to our individual and collective lives, such as being involved in different apostolates and being willing to commit our time, talent and treasure to build up both the Kingdom of God and this Earthly City to which we belong.

Article #16, **Work**, we find: "Let them esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption, and service of the human community." We are challenged to develop a positive attitude toward work. We cannot esteem work if we view it only as a burden and a drudgery. Can we see our work as an opportunity for us to be co-operators with God in the ongoing work of creation, redemption and sanctification? If so, we will find lasting value and meaning in our daily work. We will be living the attitude expressed in the Work Commission's bumper sticker which reads, TGIM - "Thank God It's Monday!"

In Article #17, **Family**, there is the following: "In their family they should cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity, and respect for life, striving to make of it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ." To paraphrase John

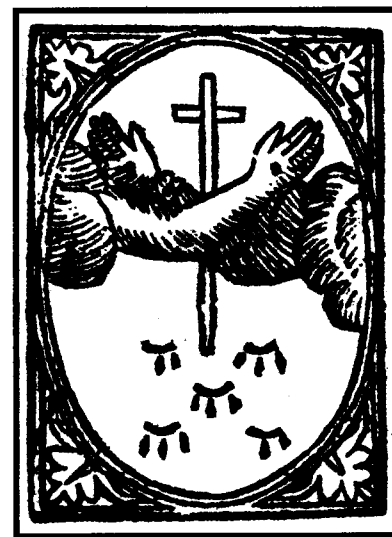
Donne, "No one is an island." Looking at us gathered here this morning, wouldn't it be fair to say: no Secular Franciscan Commission is an island; no Secular Franciscan Fraternity is an island; no individual Secular Franciscan is an island? The attitude of realizing and celebrating our interconnectedness is essential in developing our human, Christian and Franciscan relationships. To quote Saint Paul writing in his First Letter to the Corinthians, "As a body is one, though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (12:12).

In Article #18, **Ecology**, we find: "Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High,' and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship." The attitude underlying this article is one of respect for all of creation since all creation is a footprint of God and reflects God. Our Judeo-Christian and Franciscan tradition assures us that everything—absolutely everything—God created is good. As co-partners with God in the unfolding work of creation, we are responsible for our universe and must do all we can to help ensure that all of creation is respected and honored. Every creature is worthy to be called "sister" or "brother."

Lastly, in Article #24, **Youth**, we read: the council is called to organize meetings "with other Franciscan groups, especially with youth groups." We all are invited to develop our appreciation for the gifts, the vitality, the passionate commitments, of our Franciscan youth and young adults. We see the value in sharing our charism with our younger sisters and brothers, all the while, acknowledging that they have much to offer us. There is a mutuality of gifts shared between and among us.

As bearers of the Franciscan charism in the Church and in the world today, we have, in the words of that little girl's t-shirt, "So Much Attitude—So Little Time!" The very theme of this All-Commissions' Conference, "Turning up the flame" (the fire of doing the business of the Gospel) is the attitude to seek to live the challenges of our Rule.

In their April 5th letter to the Secular Franciscan Order commemorating the silver jubilee of our Rule, the Ministers of the Franciscan Family Conference reminded us that we have been called "to be witnesses to communion, solidarity, hope and peace, to be men and women capable of 'courageous choices' in order



to give to the world a radiant face that can only be constructed by beginning again from Christ." Our face is radiant only to the extent that it reflects the light of Christ and the fire of God's Holy Spirit.

Our way of seeing the world and of being present to it, with it and in it somehow has to be contagious. We must pass on to others the gift, that set of attitudes, that has been given to us. We want this fire to spread. We cannot keep the flame going unless it is passed on to others. Our Gospel-oriented values are meant to ignite others with a spark from the fire so that they can add to the flame. Then the fire will spread and consume our very lives. Our vocation is not primarily for ourselves, but for the sake of the Church and the world. It is imperative that we strive to incorporate these Gospel-oriented attitudes within ourselves individually, and then perhaps with our local fraternity, and then maybe even within our region.

What one Gospel-centered attitude do I need to develop in order to live more fully my Franciscan vocation of putting on the mind and heart of Christ Jesus?

This presentation was given at the National Secular Franciscan All-Commissions' Conference last June.

*Being Franciscan provides us with a particular frame of mind, a Gospel-oriented perspective on the whole of our lives. Every aspect of our life experience must be viewed through this set of Franciscan-tinted lenses. In the spirit of that hymn from Philipians, we are to empty ourselves of those attitudes, tendencies, dispositions, that are contrary to the Gospel so that we can become gradually, gradually, gradually ever more Christ-like and ever more faithful to his Gospel of life and love.*

## A Franciscan Response to Globalization

Carolyn Colburn, SFO

In their Chapter of 2002, Holy Name Province of Franciscan Friars called for an all-Province gathering to probe and deepen their understanding of globalization. That process brought 435 friars and partners in ministry to Siena College, Loudonville, New York, on June 9–12, 2004. Before the Globalization Assembly occurred, goals and outcomes had been formulated:

- A good understanding of the current form of globalization and the factors and institutions that are advancing it
- A clear and direct moral reflection upon the current form of globalization from a Franciscan spiritual foundation
- Analysis and action on issues related to Holy Name Province Franciscan Ministries
- Concrete suggestions for local ministries and individuals to follow in addressing globalization so that people do not leave with a sense that it is so vast they can do nothing
- Steps to take in preparation for Chapter 2005

The Assembly began on the evening of Wednesday, June 9, with an opening prayer and welcoming session. This was followed by individual stories of persons who have been affected by the forces of globalization. Unfortunately, thunderstorms over Albany delayed my plane for four hours in Chicago, and I missed the opening session.

### What Is Globalization?

The theme for Thursday, June 10, was "Seeing—What is Globalization?" The first keynote presentation was by Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love. Dr. Love teaches courses in globalization, terrorism, homeland security, sovereignty, and ethics at both the Pentagon and Catholic University. She described globalization as it exists today and made suggestions for how we can respond to the forces shaping it.



She defined globalization as the rise of private power due to the spread of open societies with open economies, technology, and infrastructures. Then she stated three myths about globalization. The first myth is that it has little to do with me. This is a myth because globalization is very personal for all of us. What we eat, what we wear, even the air we breathe is affected by the forces shaping globalization. She asked that when we take our clothes off at night we look at the labels, take note of the different names of countries, and think of the human hands that made our clothes. Do the same with the food we eat. Think of the hands that harvested it and of the countries from which the workers come. Then we should ask ourselves how we are in relationship with those hands.

The second myth is that globalization is something new. It is not new. The difference now is in the speed and reach of the forces. To use her words, globalization today is "quicker, thicker, deeper, and cheaper" than it was in the past.

The third myth is that globalization is bad, and the Catholic Church is against it. This is definitely not true. Globalization has made it possible for individuals and countries to be in closer relationship with one another. The infrastructure of globalization can bring about positive change.

The current backlash against globalization is because the benefits are not equally distributed. There is no underpinning of rules based on shared social objectives. A fairer globalization could be a solution to poverty in some of the least developed countries. This is not happening because governmental responses and legal responses cannot keep up with the pace of globalization. The rules are being made by the private power of corporations, which has increased the wealth of the affluent countries and deepened the poverty of the poor countries.

There are jurisdictional gaps because the problems extend further than the authority of institutions. There are participation gaps because the people affected by globalization are excluded from the meetings that set the rules in places like the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. There are ethical gaps because the organizations setting the rules have no values except market values. Their rulings are often at odds with the common good. There are legitimacy gaps because the institutions that manage and regulate globalization are not perceived by the society as representative of the members of the society. These gaps are being filled by private power.

Our job is to shine the light on this and to educate people to understand that change is possible. We have a great deal to offer. Catholic social teaching is an alternative vision that is expressed in the common language of faith. Corporations see the world as a market. We see the world as the body of Christ. We have the responsibility to speak for those that have no voice. We must participate in advocacy. We must speak up every day about what is happening.

## Conversations

The Thursday afternoon sessions were called General Topic Conversations. Seventeen conversation topics were listed. Each group was held twice. Therefore every person was able to choose two groups to attend. For my first group, I chose "How to be a peacemaker in the time of war." The group moderator was Ms. Jean Stokam of Pax Christi USA. She began by telling us about A Peoples' Peace Initiative: Articulating the Challenges of Peace in the 21st Century.

Pax Christi USA is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the bishops' peace pastoral "The Challenge of Peace," by inviting Catholic organizations and communities to join in developing a grassroots process that would lead to the writing and publication of a "people's peace letter." The hope of Pax Christi is that this process will contribute to the *sensus fidelium* of the Catholic Church in the United States regarding the challenges of peace in the 21st century. A complete description of the initiative along with participating organizations and steps taken and contemplated is available on the Pax Christi website, <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/>. After the presentation, the conversation was about the difficulty of getting pastors to preach about the position of John Paul II on the Iraq war.

For my second group, I chose "Employment in the Global World." The conversation was to be about how employment is changing in the United States and the world because of the trends of globalization, and what can be done to assure the dignity of all workers. The group moderators were Dr. Richard Shirey and Dr. James Booker. Both men are professors of economics at Catholic colleges.

The session began with Dr. Shirey going over the basic principles of Catholic social teaching. Then he asked us to imagine what our economy would be like if these principles were put in place. What would employment be like in a world in which all six billion people were treated with the human dignity to which they are entitled? Then we were asked to think about the world as it is. The way we allocate a resource such as labor is a reflection of our priorities. More than one-third of the world's workers earn wages that leave them in poverty. One billion people live on one dollar a day or less. Fifty percent of the world's labor force is in the informal segment of the economy. They sell on the streets or work without set wages or any labor protections.

Because of the length of the presentation, the conversation part of the session was very brief. It centered



on the demise of labor unions in the United States. There was agreement that Americans do not wish to identify as members of the "working class," since most of them expect that they or their children will be business managers or owners some day. It was suggested that we should inform others of the plight of the working poor in this country, of the increasing number of people who now belong to this group, and of the almost impossibility of upward mobility for these people or their children.

## Judging Globalization

The theme for this day was "Judging Globalization." The keynote speaker was Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ingham, CSJ. Dr. Ingham serves as Associate Academic Vice President and teaches at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. She is recognized as a brilliant scholar of Franciscan thinking with particular emphasis on Franciscan philosopher John Duns Scotus.

Dr. Ingham spoke of a Franciscan alternative to the forces shaping globalization based on the Franciscan intellectual tradition. She presented five dominant values of today's globalization. They are the values of the neo-liberal economic agenda. For each value she showed how it is manifested at the present time in the forces shaping globalization. Then for each value she presented a Franciscan alternative:

1. The market as a "type of religion." This value is manifested in a blind faith in the power of market forces. Market forces are concerned with the amount of products and the profit that they generate. There is the belief that the end justifies the means so long as the outcome is increased profit.
2. The second value concerns the use of power in exchanges between people. The rules that guide the use of power have to do with control and manipulation. The maximum impact of power is felt in exchanges between the strong and the weak.
3. The third value has to do with the means used to obtain the desired outcomes in exchanges between persons. Outcomes are considered to be driven by rational thinking. They are utilitarian: useful, practical. One means used is competition in which there are clear winners and losers. The outcome of competition is financial loss or gain.
4. A fourth value has to do with goods and resources. It asks the question, "Who are the intended beneficiaries?" The beneficiaries are the private individuals who are the owners. The outcome is successful when they experience an increase in personal goods.

5. A fifth value has to do with the market forces themselves. They are impersonal. They evolve naturally as individuals experience profit and loss and then adjust their behavior to reflect this experience. The owners are the ones who change course. The majority of the workers are passive participants in this process.

Following this, Dr. Ingham gave a Franciscan alternative for each of the values she had just described.

1. For the market as a type of religion, she presented the person as the summit of creation. Instead of concern for the product and for profit she suggested concern for the well being of individuals. Using the symbol of a lamp, she said that light must shine forth from each individual. This is the light that will shine on the understanding of market forces as preeminent.
2. In a Franciscan alternative, power is replaced by mutuality. It is a process of give and take, always including respect for the other. The Franciscan world view is centered on God's graciousness, not on sinful relationships. Each of us must ask ourselves, "What is the quality of my power relationships?"
3. The desired outcomes in the Franciscan alternative are two—an ordered love and an affection for justice. The objective good does not have to be useful or beneficial to me. It is good if it is beneficial to those in need.
4. The intended beneficiaries in the Franciscan view are the many, not the few. Material goods are gifts of God. They are for the many, each receiving his just share.
5. The forces driving globalization should not be impersonal market values. Those must be replaced by individual personal values. To use her words, "I as an individual must cultivate the conscious intention to act in accordance with my values, to the extent that I am able, within the circles of life where I live, work, play, and pray."

Franciscans today can offer a new world view with the person at its center. Each of us must ask ourselves, "What do I believe?" and then ask ourselves, "What are the implications of what I believe?" We must be informed. We must be able to speak intelligently about globalization. We must be thoughtful consumers. We must not be "a deaf hearer of the Gospel." A Franciscan is in right relationship with God, with self, with others, and with all of God's creatures and creation. Franciscans are less inclined to think about themselves and more inclined to feel tenderness and compassion for others. We make loving



choices even when the choice costs us something. We hold others accountable for their action, but how we do it is important. Do we impose our values, or do we propose our values to others? The most transforming act is an act of presence—to be there for the other person. Always we speak truth to power. We are authentic people who stay in the light. In the presence of authentic people, others become authentic. The text in the box below is from a handout placed on the tables by Dr. Ingham.

### **The Challenges of Franciscan Life and Ministry in a Globalized World**

As best I can, I will:

1. strive to recognize the dignity of every person as a unique “portrait of Christ”;
2. strive to receive every person with respect;
3. have the intention and make every effort to do good and to be loving;
4. seek to actively participate in working to create and establish relationships in which
  - people, not products, are given priority and consideration;
  - power is exercised respectfully and mutually;
  - the common good is given due and honest consideration; and
  - I assume ownership and responsibility for how well I am living, loving, relating and serving in imitation of Christ after the example of Francis and Clare.

By Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ingham, CSJ

### **Franciscan Advocacy and Action**

At the Friday afternoon session there were seventeen General Topic Conversation groups. Each topic was presented twice. For my first conversation group I chose “Advocacy in the Globalized World.” The moderator was Father Joseph Rozansky, OFM. The majority of the people in the group were involved in advocacy for the rights of the indigenous people in Mexico. The conversation was about how the Franciscan message about the plight of these people under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could be

brought to the attention of the laity. It was agreed that testimonials were very important and useful. It is important that the friars working with the indigenous people of Mexico write up their experiences for distribution to the Provinces. The information should not be politicized. Any program of the friars that can be replicated should be described to all. Franciscan pastors should be included in the effort. They are the ones that can bring the information to the parishioners.

For my second conversation group I attended Franciscan Spirituality in the Web of Global Relations. The moderator was Br. Edward Coughlin, OFM. The presentation took the entire time, so there was not an opportunity for conversation. According to Brother Edward, theology is concerned with the coming together of theology, prayer, and practical Christianity. Franciscan spirituality is characterized by the values and behaviors that have their foundation in the religious experience of Francis and Clare of Assisi, and the movement begun by them. The Franciscan spiritual tradition is consistent in its focus on the poor and suffering Christ. The Franciscan spirit offers the world a way of peace and a model for human life based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. First is the encounter with Franciscan values, which shakes the self-world relationship. This can cause anxiety because our sense of identity is threatened. Next is true change or conversion. The result of conversion is a new consciousness of one’s position in the world, which leads to action.

### **Moving Forward to Change the World**

The theme of the Saturday morning session was “Action—Moving Forward to Change the World.” The original plan presented in the program was to have the two keynote speakers and the connector, Fr. Francisco O’Conaire, OFM, engage in a public conversation regarding how they saw the assembly progress and commenting on the suggestions for further action. Because of the enthusiasm of the participants, it was decided to change the original plan and give participants an opportunity to speak to the entire group. A microphone was set up in the center aisle and soon there was a long line to speak. The Partners in Ministry were eager to compliment the Province on the assembly and to tell what is happening in their ministries.

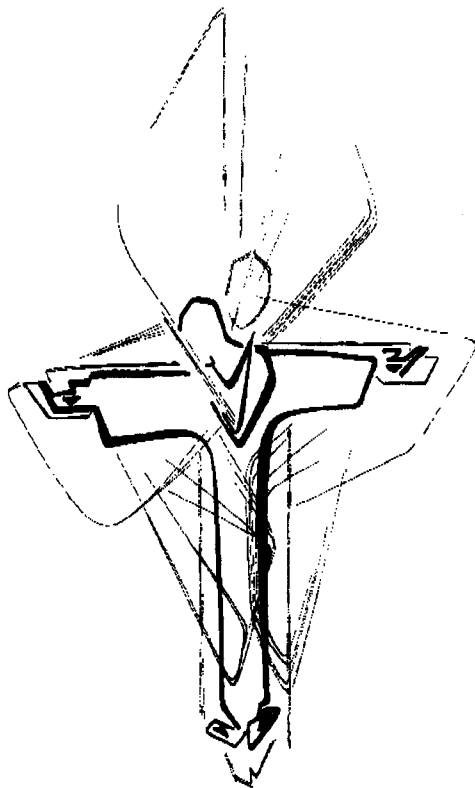
For their contribution to the session, the keynoters and the connector prepared a handout that was distributed to the participants. They commented that the energy unleashed in the days of the assembly was a sign of the Spirit moving all to the cusp of a new day in the life of Holy Name Province. Under the heading of An Initial Response, the keynoters and connector said that they felt empowered, not paralyzed, because our tradition has much of value to offer. Our response rests on the spirituality that grounds the Franciscan tradition. That includes listening to those harmed by and benefiting from global-

ization. We build skills for dialogue about differences; move beyond charity to work for justice and social transformation; and nurture the virtues of solidarity. We will try to live what we profess to believe, keeping our centers of gravity outside of ourselves—institutionally and personally.

Under the heading “Where We Will Go From Here?” the keynoters and connector said that some steps are clear, but many will require ongoing discussion and discernment as this analysis and understanding is integrated into Holy Name Province ministries and into institutional and personal responses to globalization. This assembly will impact on preaching and teaching and lead to advocacy and other forms of action for systemic change. It will encourage education and reflection on Franciscan values, Catholic social teaching, and globalization in parishes, educational institutions, and formation programs. There was support for many action ideas: parish twinning, purchasing fair trade products, work for corporate accountability, immigration initiatives, and sustainable living. All are committed to taking next steps on these proposals and to others that came from ministerial groups, topical conversations, workshops, and other sharing opportunities of the assembly.

### My Comments

This was the most interesting and informative Franciscan gathering I have ever attended. I appreciate the invitation of Holy Name Province and the opportunity afforded by the Executive Council of the national Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the United States to attend. I met many Secular Franciscans from fraternities in the region of Holy Name Province because Secular Franciscans are part of the Holy Name Province Partners in Ministry Program. Many of the Seculars I met are active in peace and justice work, but a surprising number knew very little about the work of the Regional and National Peace and Justice Commissions.



## An Excerpt from James of the Marches

St. James of the Marches, a Franciscan priest and preacher, died in 1476. There are 99 Sunday Sermons.

The third sign that divine love is present occurs when someone gladly hears about and openly sings the praises of a friend. Matthew 22:28 says: “From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The person who is from God hears the words of God.” Listen to Magdalene, who loved much and always had the word Jesus on her lips. John 11:21 reads: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” John 20:15 has: “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Likewise, John 20:15 states: “If you have taken him away, tell me.” Moreover, John 20:18 reads: “I have seen the Lord, and he told me.”

O Magdalene, how ardently did you love Jesus in your heart! And therefore, you ardently spoke of Jesus with your lips and loved to hear about him. Chrysostom comments: It is the practice of lovers not to hide their love behind silence, but to frequently tell others about it so that by their eagerness to tell of their love everyone might enjoy its comforting warmth. They cannot contain the flames of their love in their breasts. Thus, when everyone else left the tomb, Magdalene did not, since the chain of her love held her enchained with Christ. And so according to Gregory: Christ first appeared to her, since she loved him more than all the others. Thus, when Martha said: “The Master is here and calls you,” she immediately rose up and came to Jesus. Thus Christ said: “My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eternal life.” And so Magdalene sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his words. Luke 10:39. Likewise, Luke 2:19: “Mary stored up all these words.” John 14:21: “The person who loves me listens to my words.”

Translation by Robert J. Karris, OFM

Taken from Sermon 75 in *S. Iacobus de Marchia, Sermones Dominicales*. Volume III. Introduzione testo e note di Renato Lioi, OFM. Falconara: Biblioteca Franciscana, 1978, p. 71.

## **"Some Sow, Others Reap" Vital Reciprocity of the Franciscan Order**

Larry Dreffein, OFM

Francis, in the course of his growth, conversion process and travels met many individuals. His spirit and inspiration touched many of them and the group of lesser brothers grew quickly. His example and his words inspired many people of his day to emulate and follow his way of life.

### **Francis and the Penitents**

The effect of the preaching of Francis and his brothers was described by Celano:

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.

Many people, well-born and lowly, cleric and lay, driven by divine inspiration, began to come to Saint Francis, for they desired to serve under his constant training and leadership. All of these the holy one of God, like a fertile stream of heavenly grace, watered with showers of gifts and he adorned the field of their hearts with the flowers of perfection (1Cel. 37).<sup>1</sup>

The point that I would like to make with this reflection is that already there is a connection between Francis and those with whom he and the brothers came into contact. There is a relationship that developed. Inspired by the life and preaching of this simple man of Assisi, others in their own state of life were touched, felt a call and wanted to live in a similar way. Thus the Third Order, Secular Franciscans, were called to live the Christian ideal in their homes and in their world.

The Legend of the Three Companions states, "Similarly, both married men and women given in marriage, unable to separate because of the law of matrimony, committed themselves to more severe penance in their own homes on the wholesome advice of the brothers" (L3C 60).<sup>2</sup> There is once again, insight into this reciprocal, life-giving connection. In many ways it was the simple sharing of ideas, reflections of the gospel and mutual gatherings, or possibly having listened to a preached lesson of the friar(s) that led these men and women to put the questions before the lesser brother.

One Franciscan scholar writes: "The unexpected increase of the number of urban penitents is attributed, as we know, to St. Francis of Assisi who himself lived as a brother of penance before founding his religious order."<sup>3</sup> Further Raffaele Pazzelli, states that:

Without forcing the issue at all, we can say that the best Franciscan sources clearly indicate that the penitential movement had a rapid increase in numbers from the very beginning of the itinerant preaching period of Francis and his brothers, and that the new penitents expressed the desire to be associated with him forever, under his guidance.

Once he and his first companions had begun their itinerant penitential preaching, Francis could certainly not forget or neglect the penitents. The unexpected growth of the movement and his guidance was primarily due to his and his brothers' preaching and therefore demanded his involvement.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of his travels, St. Francis met a merchant in the town of Poggiobonsi, whose name was Luchesio (Lucian). Luchesio and his wife Bona Donna, were generous to the poor, gave lodging to the pilgrims and helped widows and orphans. They were apparently part of one of the penitential movements of the time, though this is not certain. Having been befriended by St. Francis, he gave them a norm of life which could be considered a forerunner of the Rule. After this, Luchesio devoted all his time to works of charity, especially care of the sick in hospitals. A number of people of the same spirit gathered around Luchesio. These would be the first "Brothers and Sisters of Penance" as the Secular Franciscans were then called. St. Francis gave them a rule of life. They sought to imitate, in the world, the ways of St. Francis and his brothers.

At this point, a discussion of the details concerning Francis's writing of the Rule of Life that has been lost or of the Letter to all the Faithful is unnecessary. The research on this has been done by others. What is our focus is this constant connection with the Orders of the Franciscan Family, because the Poor Ladies, were a part of this connection, too.

When there were no specifically established institutions that were labeled "Franciscan," what was it that inspired and challenged the faithful to make the Gospel alive in their day, in their situation.

Men and women experienced contrition when they began to grasp the depth of God's love for them and their own failure to respond to it; such remorse would lead to a decision to change one's life. As a prominent Franciscan preacher, Bonaventure of Iseo (c.1247) put it: "affective love" (contrition) must lead to "effective love" (making peace with God and with one's neighbor). In this way, Franciscan ministry appealed to the urban value of freedom; the preacher tried to make the listeners realize that they were responsible actors in their own salvation with control over their own futures.<sup>5</sup>

These women and men had a vision and this thrust them into the history of the Church. There was the recognition of a need and a response to this need.

In Ingrid Peterson's *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study*, she writes that "The evidence about Clare indicates that her vision was firm while Francis struggled to give birth to his Order."<sup>6</sup> From where did this vision come? I think the roots start with her upbringing in the home of Ortulana, Clare's mother. I am not going to go through the details that Peterson presents about Ortulana; suffice it to say that she was a faith-filled woman, who imparted her faith and principles to her daughter Clare. This strength, allowed Clare to run off to join Francis and the brothers, have her hair cut and begin living the life which attracted other Poor Ladies.

Ortulana's responsibility was to raise a family which would adhere to the faith-filled principles that she presented. That she succeeded seems obvious, for as Peterson writes: "Ortulana was root and stem of the Poor Ladies."<sup>7</sup> Ortulana raised her daughters to be women of principles, probably strong-willed as well. The fact is these girls grew up and began to live on their own yet in community capably supporting each other.

This sense of vital reciprocity can be understood in the same way. A message is given. Grace is gained. Gifts grow and the message moves out. Yes, there is need for a "touching base," sharing stories, renewing and rebuilding always in respect with each other. That the brothers were sent out two by two was not just Scriptural but psychologically and emotionally supportive. If one was having a bad day, the other was there to get them through it. A shared joy on the success of their reception or encouragement on their rejection—their "perfect joy." Whatever happened they were there for each other.

One of the key words in the stories about the friars is *when*. "When the brothers got together. . . ." This speaks of time apart, albeit, two by two in the early days, yet the coming together was important. In the early days of wan-

dering the world and spreading the message by word and deed, it was good for the brothers to come together and share their stories with each other. The cultural differences, the languages they learned, the experiences that they had. A case in point is the story of Alexander of Hales, a Parisian scholar, once accompanied by an uneducated brother. The story states that as Alexander was preaching to the Poor Ladies at San Damiano:

Although the Italian farm-hand could not match the Englishman in study, in one thing they were both equal: in a great fervor of soul that in Alexander showed itself in a delicate and polite language, while in Giles it gushed forth in straight-from-the-shoulder remarks and popular proverbs.

While the English Brother spoke, Giles would sit in a corner of the church, his legs crossed, and his tonsured head resting on his knees. One might have thought he was sleeping, but he was listening and meditating. The honeyed words of Alexander of Hales had a sweetness that filled him with joy. In spite of this he feared that the Ladies on the other side of the grille were not getting very much consolation at all, so he slowly stood up and interrupted:

"Stop talking, Master, because I want to speak!" With clumsy gestures he shouted out with reference to humility:

"The way to go up is to go down!"

In his harsh country voice he asked:

"How could we possibly carry on our back a heavy millstone that would keep your head always bent down?"

Then he said:

"When you're in a fight and you want to win, lose; because the way to win is to lose."

Remembering his former position as a farm-hand, he said;

"This world is a great farm where he who has the largest field has the most work. . . ."

Alexander of Hales humbly stopped his sermon in order to listen to and to allow these words of the country Brother.<sup>8</sup>

The Brother had an insight here: "If you want to go up, you must go down." Humility is the key to our life. Recognizing that others have insight and wisdom helps us practice humility.

If we look at the early development of those who sought to follow the Gospel way proclaimed by Francis and the friars, the impact on the laity was powerful. Yet, as we see these lay people strive to live out the message in their lives what is clear is that there was a mutuality. St. Louis, the King of France, had been influenced by St. Bonaventure. Bonaventure, as a professor at the

University of Paris, used his influence to instruct and encourage the future saint, Louis, in his dealings with his world. Louis tried to influence and reconcile the eastern and western parties of the Church. Here we have two noted individuals in dialogue striving to "rebuild the Church."

Another example to be considered is St. Elizabeth of Hungary. She was known for her humility and efforts on behalf of the poor. Maybe part of that effort came from the difficulties that she faced in her reign. When Elizabeth's husband Ludwig IV died, the royal family members decided enough was enough with this foreigner and they exiled her. She was exiled from the country that she and her husband ruled. She was exiled because she was not "one of us" and she was "squandering our royal treasury." Yet, by popular demand, when the Crusaders returned and heard of her fate, they reinstated her as queen. The few facts known of her life indicate that she had a Franciscan friar as her spiritual director. Again, we see the "reaping and sowing." The friar offered insight to Elizabeth and she took the insight and lived it out in her life.

Another example is John Vianney, the Curé of Ars. Most of us know about his educational struggles to become ordained and that he became known as a great confessor. But his first connection with the Franciscan life of penance was his mother, a Secular Franciscan. With his mother's example, it is not surprising that he was able to endure long hours in the confessional and periods of fasting. John's early life prepared him for this.

John was conscripted in the French army but was considered a deserter. Somehow he lost his connection to his regime. He stayed where he was and cared for the sick and needy. Perhaps the Franciscan call to peace directed this course in his life.

One of the SFO Provincials, while preaching on the feast of John Vianney, told this story about John's life. It went something like this:

When John Vianney wanted to follow through on his vocation, he went to the seminary and asked for admission so that he might study for the priesthood. The priest who answered the door, knew of John's inaptness with his studies and told him: "John, you are an ass. There is no way you will make it through the course of studies here at the seminary."

John responded to the priest's remarks: "You know that David slew Goliath with the jaw of an ass. Just think what God can do with a total ass!"

The fact is that now we see what God was able to do with a person humble and willing to serve. Long hours of readily offering mercy and compassion and reconciliation. The town he was sent to serve made a turn around because of his presence. "One sows, another reaps."

Pius X, known as the Eucharistic Pope, was a Secular Franciscan by choice. His mother before him was a Secular Franciscan. Pius's devotion to the Eucharist and his desire to have the Divine Presence available to more in order that they might be strengthened and blessed by the Presence of Christ the Lord may have been rooted in his Franciscan life. Our Franciscan devotion to the Eucharist is nothing new. Respect for the Eucharist was present from the very beginning. In the writings of St. Francis, we read:

All those who saw the Lord Jesus according to the humanity, therefore, and did not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that He is the true Son of God were condemned. Now in the same way, all those who see the sacrament sanctified by the words of the Lord upon the altar at the hands of the priest in the form of bread and wine, and who do not see and believe according to the Spirit and the Divinity that it is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are condemned. [This] is affirmed by the Most High Himself Who says: This is my Body and the Blood of my new covenant [which will be shed for many] (Mark 14:22-24); and Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life (John 6:55). It is the Spirit of the Lord, therefore, That lives in Its faithful, That receives the Body and Blood of the Lord. All others who do not share in this same Spirit and presume to receive Him eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Therefore: children, how long will you be hard of heart? Why do you not know the truth and believe in the Son of God? Behold, each day He humbles Himself as when He came from the royal throne into the Virgin's womb; each day He Himself comes to us, appearing humbly; each day He comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of a priest.

As he reveals Himself to the holy apostles in true flesh, so He reveals Himself to us now in sacred bread. And as they saw only His flesh by an insight of their flesh, yet believed that He was God as they contemplated Him with their spiritual eyes, let us, as we see bread and wine with our bodily eyes, see and firmly believe that they are His most holy Body and Blood living and true. And in this way the Lord is always with His faithful, as He himself says: Behold I am with you until the end of the age (Mt 28:20).<sup>9</sup>

This reflection started with the words "vital reciprocity." Sometimes our "vision" is limited when we speak of this. Perhaps what most SFO fraternity members are thinking is that the friar or sister will be there for us. This has not always been the case throughout history. Ideally it is wonderful when there is a dynamic, inspirational and, God-be-praised, charismatic Franciscan giving

assistance. The lives and preaching of the early Franciscans touched the hearts of people. The example lingered and lasted. That example is what saw the brothers and sisters through the "dry" times. Some went specifically to hear the friar preachers, whether on mission or in their own town church. That even happens today.

In the recent publication of reflections about the recently-beatified Mother Teresa of Calcutta, we can see she had the spirit of the Gospel message as did Francis and Clare. The question, then, is how we live this in our life.

Let's look at some reflections that Mother Teresa offered to her sisters and the world, describing who Jesus is to her.

*Jesus is the Word – to be spoken.*

*Jesus is the Truth – to be told.*

*Jesus is the Light – to be lit.*

*Jesus is the Life – to be lived.*

*Jesus is the Love – to be loved.*

*Jesus is the Joy – to be shared.*

*Jesus is the Peace – to be given.*

*Jesus is the Bread of Life – to be eaten.*

*Jesus is the Hungry – to be fed.*

*Jesus is the Thirsty – to be satiated.*

*Jesus is the Naked – to be clothed.*

*Jesus is the Homeless – to be taken in.*

*Jesus is the Sick – to be healed.*

*Jesus is the Lonely – to be loved.*

*Jesus is the Unwanted – to be wanted.*

*Jesus is the Leper – to wash His wounds.*

*Jesus is the Beggar – to give Him a smile.*

*Jesus is the Drunkard – to listen to Him.*

*Jesus is the Mentally Ill – to protect Him.*

*Jesus is the Little One – to embrace Him.*

*Jesus is the Blind – to lead Him.*

*Jesus is the Dumb – to speak to Him*

*Jesus is the Crippled – to walk with Him.*

*Jesus is the Drug Addict – to befriend Him.*

*Jesus is the Prostitute – to remove her from danger and befriend her.*

*Jesus is the Prisoner – to be visited.*

*Jesus is the Old – to be served.<sup>10</sup>*

In reading these words, we can see that Mother Teresa, and Francis, "got it." They got the message. In the process of reading scriptures, we begin in the Book of Genesis with the words: "In the beginning God created them male

and female he created them, in his own image and likeness he created them" (Gen 1:27). The Bible begins with the words that humanity is reflecting the divine in this life.

Moving along in salvation history, we read in the Book of Isaiah "The Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel," (Isa 7: 14). Matthew, in his writing on the words of Isaiah, states: "a name which means 'God is with us' (Mt 1:23). God is in our midst. With Matthew's revelation that God is with us, there can be little doubt why at the Last Judgment, we will be asked: "I was hungry, and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink . . . I assure you, as often as you did for one of my least brothers (or sisters), you did it for me" (Mt 25:31-46).

In the Book of Revelation, we read, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . I heard a loud voice from the throne cry out: 'This is God's dwelling among men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them. He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away'" (Rev 21: 1-4).

In the beginning, God created a paradise which Man and Woman were invited to share. They missed the message then. They were excluded and we have been striving to return to this "vision" ever since.

This reflection also began with the words, "one sows, another reaps." Our Spiritual Assistants must have a vision of the Kingdom. In *Franciscans in Urban Ministry* Beverly A. Carroll speaks of the friars (Roy Gasnick, OFM, James E. Goode, OFM, Francis Gorman, OFM, Neil J. O'Connell, OFM, and Ben Taylor, OFM) who contributed to the thrust for a united and racial diversity and equality in the Kingdom. Their tales and names live on. This is vital reciprocity. The name and vision of Phillip Marquard, OFM, touches the hearts and minds of many in his tireless efforts for the hungry, homeless, abandoned and marginalized. This is vital reciprocity. The person of Solanus Casey, OFM Cap, lives on in the legacy that he has left us with his writings and the example of the simple, humble life of a friar who had vision to embrace all. The message, the vision and the challenge lives on and nourishes those who come after. None of these individuals were seeking their own glory, only striving to recognize Jesus in our midst.

Sometimes the absence of a Spiritual Assistant in an SFO fraternity causes pain and at times lack of focus. We all need to be mindful of the "vision," "the Kingdom of God is at hand, in your midst" (Lk 17:21). St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans states: "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking, but of justice, peace and the joy that is given by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). Yes, a Spiritual Assistant, to offer further insight to the fraternity in their living situation is a blessing. Yet to do that well, the individual must be a person of

vision, living in hope and faithful in love, tirelessly striving to read the signs and messages of the time. Those are qualities of a good spiritual leader for the community.

Francis was an inspiration for his time, as was Clare, directed by Ortulana. Agnes was encouraged by Clare. Those in contact with Agnes shared the vision, the vision of the Gospel message. All of us have them to fall back on. We need to read, reflect and reestablish ourselves with the Saints who had vision. We need to embrace that vision and move forward in our time, in our place and space. The response is fundamental conversion. Yet each geographical area may have certain specifics that are different. Let us follow the vision left us by Jesus the Lord, let us follow the message give us by God. "In his own image he created them, male and female." Vital reciprocity means mutually learning and growing from and with each other. It reaches beyond our day and time. There is hope for the future and faithfulness to the past for our day.

There are saints in our midst. When we humbly follow in their example, we are enlivening this mutuality. Vital reciprocity is not merely a legalistic observance. It is a sharing, a faith, a vision that is rooted in Gospel living. It is our call as Franciscans. Yes there is established order. However, we are all called to holiness. Holiness begins with a humble stance before the Creator and recognizing the holy in all. Francis, Clare and our present day Mother Teresa of Calcutta did that. "If you did it for on of the least . . . you did it to me."

We have taken a broad "vision" of the meaning of vital reciprocity to stretch the imagination. Can we have visions of a "new heaven and a new earth?" We are the creators of this. "God dwelling in His people." Have there been moments that God "visited" us and we missed it? Any activity or attitude that inhibits our loving others, no matter who they are, inhibits our life and the Gospel message.

Vital reciprocity recognizes that one sows; another reaps. Sometimes you are able to see the fruits of your labor. At other times, we must trust that somehow God's glory will be manifested in how we all have chosen to live out our Gospel call. We need each other for this ongoing dialogue. So, as we look to the shortage of First Order Spiritual Assistants for our Secular Franciscan fraternities, let us not forget that we have a wealth of individuals who have given us example and challenge us to creatively respond to the needs of our day.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Thomas of Celano, The Life of St. Francis, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. I (New York: New City Press, 1999), 216. All later references from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* will be identified as FAED.

<sup>2</sup>The Legend of Three Companions, FAED II, 103.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in *St Francis and the Third Order*, Raffaele Pazzelli, TOR, trans. Aidan Mullaney, TOR (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 102. Original source: G.G. Meersseman, *I Disciplinati e Penitenti nel Duecento* (Perugia, 1962), 46, note 1.

<sup>4</sup>Pazzelli, 102-104.

<sup>5</sup>Cited by Dominic Monti, OFM, "Franciscan Life and Urban Life: A Tense Relationship" in *Franciscans in Urban Ministry* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), 22. See note 46 on that page for information about Bonaventure of Iseo.

<sup>6</sup>Ingrid Peterson, *Clare of Assisi: A Biographical Study* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>7</sup>Peterson, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Piero Bargellini, *The Little Flowers of Saint Clare*, trans. Edmund O'Gorman, OFM Conv. (Padua: Messaggero Editions, 1997), 96-97.

<sup>9</sup>Admonition 1: 8-22; See FAED I, 128.

<sup>10</sup>Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *My Life for the Poor*, ed. José Luis Gonzalez-Balado and Janet N. Playfoot (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1985), 106-107.



Seven  
For Saint Francis

Janet McCann

Trying to understand what it meant  
to give it up, pile it on a table,  
a chair, to say no to it.  
To say, I am who am not, nothing between  
me and the wind, the earth.

ENVY

he seems to be capering in the dawn light  
building a circle of figures in wet snow

just snow on snow, no coal for eyes  
no sticks for arms, just white protrusions leaning

ghosts of persons never to be born  
vague bodies gesturing for help

the snow-statues he makes of wife and children  
tells himself they have to be clothes, fed

imagining ice flesh covered with fine linen  
frozen gullets warmed with good thick soup

is enough to stop his wanting them,  
to turn his back on them, to let them go

back into the landscape, lumps of snow  
melting beside the stony path.

GLUTTONY

having eaten "a little chicken" in illness  
he made me lead him through the streets clucking,  
flapping his arms, asking for mockery

*I pretend to be one of the Lesser Brothers  
and here I have sinned, wallowed in gluttony,  
I ate a chicken, laugh at me, throw mud*

*that I may return cleansed to the sparse turnips  
and rough crusts given me as alms,  
I am a sinner, mock, throw dirt in clumps*

and sticks, but no one laughed  
not even the lout who always snaps  
willow wands at the dogs, they stepped aside

and let us pass, a few leaned out to touch him.  
his small, white body wasted by illness,  
he could have been a chicken, flapping his arms.

GREED

how you could give up  
everything, everything

just like dying. Of course  
and the new birth naked

but not to want anything  
or if you did, to deny it

deny your heart's  
your body's dream, body

thrown into snow to slake  
desire, to refuse it

brother body a donkey  
beaten into silence



obedience. But we who  
want you want things

too, ice cream and good  
friendships at least, even

walking together in the  
long penance parade

in the rich mild light  
of this Italian town where

you were, are, every atom  
scattered golden dust

#### LUST

he threw himself into snowbanks  
to cool the heat of his lust,  
snow melting to trickle  
of muddy water, cold

penetrating into the heart of  
desire, panting, last falling flakes  
kissing the planes of his face  
as his mind rose finally to God

nearly breathless drawing cold  
into his chest like stars  
he felt the exhalation of desire  
no longer part of him

before adjusting his dark  
damp, heavy habit to leap  
happy as a child  
in the sparkling air.

#### SLOTH

Sleeping on ground, rock for pillow  
and still the first pre-dawn cry

awakens him from a dream troubled by angels,  
brother body does not want to move,  
rock soft to exhausted head, arms  
grasping at rough blanket, body

wants only to be left alone, only to be  
unbruised and disordered, curled  
against the first beginnings of light,

locked into darkness. But the man  
stretches, kneels to pray in the cold.  
His cold, blue statue penetrates my dream

as he kneels at the edge of the crevice  
of the mountain, as my hand reaches  
to touch the plane of his cheek

from the happy abandon of quilts and warmth  
and silence, wanting only to stay here  
in this clutched sleep, light blazing through slats.

#### PRIDE

Five inches shorter than me, you tell me to kneel.  
I kneel. Here in the woods  
I kneel in the mud, my hands folded, I do not want  
to be proud, it is pride that keeps us from offering  
ourselves, whatever we are.

And I admit, Francis, I have nothing  
to be proud of. Nothing, no thing of mine  
will stand to time. Nor did I dwindle  
in His service, body growing thin,  
outlines sharper as the shadow grew.

And you, then, proud only in being of Him,  
his life your life. Pride never  
to be thought of as good, as they say in  
He takes pride in his work, or She  
has too much pride to accept charity,

You who broke the bowl you were molding  
because you started to like it, its shapeliness  
began to please you, the way the curves  
came alive under your steady fingers,  
so that you thought of it and not of God.

#### ANGER

I need you here most. St. Francis,  
you who chased after a brother told in anger  
to preach naked, preaching with him, together

in your skivvies, moving souls  
despite the gooseflesh on your shivering limbs  
teaching yourself humility from anger

Now my eyes are aflame with it,  
I think of your torment when they cauterized your eyes  
with burning iron      and I am ashamed

but not humble   not yet humble   I tell myself  
I have to pray at most  
that my enemies be shown the truth

I may not ask, Why do they prosper  
I may not ask, Why do their flocks increase  
I may not say, But here I am, faithful

Older sister who never left the fold  
And I may never pray, Hey, Lord, just this once  
And never, ever, even in dream, hope

to see them whirled away in windy light  
a field swept clean of them

*Pax et bonum*

*The Cord*, 55.3 (2005)

## Book Reviews

*The Passionate Troubadour: A Medieval Novel About Francis of Assisi*. Edward Hays. Ave Maria Press, 2004. 640 pp.

"Troubadours" is the name given to lyric poets, strolling minstrels, of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who were attached to courts of Provence and northern Italy. Francis of Assisi, from his teenage years, was strongly attracted to imitate them. Edward Hays has called Francis a "passionate troubadour." Hays emphasizes that Francis was naturally inclined toward expressing strong emotion with passion. The author gives the reader a picture of a real person developing his personhood through the various experiences of his daily life. *The Passionate Troubadour* is offered to the reader as a novel about, rather than a biography of, Francis of Assisi. Acquainted with the historical record of the life of Francis, Hays uses his imagination to present characters and events that brought about the finished product that we honor as a saint. Some historical personages who influenced Francis were Bishop Guido of Assisi, Cardinal Ugolino of the papal court, Pope Innocent III, Clare Scifi (Offreduccio) of Assisi, and Sultan Al-Kamul. The author's imagination created Emeliano Giacosa, a boyhood friend of Francis, Padre Antonio, a Benedictine monk, Claude of Lyons, a lute maker, Samuel Jacob, a Jewish banker, and Ali Hasan, a Sufi Muslim.

In his youth, Francis had various ideals he wanted to realize in his life, from becoming a knight to being a traveling minstrel, a merchant, a beggar. His attempts at becoming a knight were severely tested when his fist try led to his being captured and imprisoned in Perugia. His long recovery from a serious illness contracted while he was in prison dulled his yearning for a while. After a second attempt at becoming a knight ended with his abandoning his goal, Francis returned to Assisi to become the laughing stock of his hometown. He continued going about as a minstrel and strongly resisted his father's desire that he work in his father's shop as a merchant. After a period of intense prayer and solitude, Francis divested himself of his belongings and became a beggar. Convinced that God was calling him to "repair my church," he began physically to rebuild a couple of chapels until he realized that he was called by God to do more.

As a traveling minstrel proclaiming God's love, Francis came in contact with people of various religious beliefs and practices. The diversity of these experiences broadened and strengthened Francis's appreciation of his own religious beliefs. His energy and joy-filled exuberance led many to want to fol-

low his way of life. Eventually, the number of his followers brought about the need for a Rule of Life. Papal approval for his way of life offset critics who found his emphasis on a life of Gospel poverty and the openness to non-ordained followers to smack of heresy. Poverty and simplicity of life characterized Francis's way of life. Francis had an open heart and an open mind to various ways of seeking God and serving God. His freedom of spirit and discomfort with the legalist rigorism of some in the Church led to his being misunderstood and criticized. Yet, he maintained his drive to love God with all his heart and soul. Francis's perseverance in his calling and his ardent love of Christ Crucified culminated in his receiving the gift of the stigmata, the wounds of Christ on his body, two years before his death. This reviewer's appreciation of *The Passionate Troubadour* leads him to recommend this book to all lovers of St. Francis and to all who seek to do the will of God in their daily life. Francis listened to the Spirit of God and strove to follow the Spirit wherever the Spirit led him. All of us are called to respond to the Spirit Who calls all to holiness.

Dan Hurley, OFM  
Holy Peace Friary at Mt. Irenaeus  
W. Clarksville, NY



## Books Received

### *Loving the Church: Scriptural Meditations for the Papal Household.*

Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap. Translated by Gilberto Cavazos-Gonzalez, OFM and Amanda Quantz. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2003). Reflections on the Letter to the Ephesians prepared by the preacher to the papal household raise the questions: "Do we love the Church? Do we understand its nature? Do we weep over its sins or merely criticize? Are we building up or tearing down?"

### *Instruments of Christ: Reflections on the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi.*

Albert Haase, OFM. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004). Haase reflects on each phrase of the Peace Prayer and explores six seeds to sow if Easter Peace is to blossom in the world.

### *The Catholic Challenge: Six Keys to a Deeper Spiritual Life.*

Therese Cirner. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). Cirner, a clinical counselor, offers practical help for those longing for more of God.

### *White Water, Bears, Dry Flies and Other Ways God Speaks to Guys.*

Randall Cirner. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). Cirner shows that ordinary events are moments of encounter with God.

### *Intercession: A Guide to Effective Prayer.*

by Sister Ann Shields, SGL. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 1988). This practical guide to revolutionizing a person's prayer life is written by an internationally known evangelist and host of a daily inspirational radio program, "Food for the Journey."

### *Pathways of Trust: 101 Shortcuts to Holiness.*

John H. Hampsch, CMF. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). Hampsch, a popular conference speaker and retreat leader, shows how to trade worries for confident trust in God.

### *Catholic & Christian: An Explanation of Commonly Misunderstood Catholic Beliefs.*

Alan Schreck. 20th anniversary edition. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). This popular seller provides answers to questions about commonly misunderstood Catholic teachings and practices.

### *Spirituality of Sport: Balancing Body and Soul.*

Susan Saint Sing. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004). Sing explores the mind-body-soul connection that is at the heart of all sport, play, dance and competition.

### *Catholic Traditions: Treasures New & Old.*

Joanne Turpin. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004). Untangling threads of traditions so pre-Vatican and post-Vatican Council Catholics can find and cherish a common heritage.

### *John Paul II: A Life of Grace.*

Renzo Allegri. Translated by Marsha Daigle-Williamson. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2005). Allegri focuses on John Paul's personality as well as the events of his life.

### *Until the Trumpet Sounds: Seeking Holiness Now.*

Zachary Grant, OFM Cap. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005). This book is for those who are serious about their relationship with God . . . about becoming holy.

More>

### *Life with Mother Teresa.*

Sebastian Vazhakala, MC, (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). In the story of the founding of the Contemplative and the Lay Missionaries, Fr. Sebastian provides fresh insight into Mother Teresa through unedited letters, photos and anecdotes.

### *What Does the Bible Say About the End Times?: A Catholic View.*

William Kurz, SJ. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). Kurz leads the reader to a deeper understanding of God's intent in creating humanity, his persistent efforts to rescue us from our sin, and Jesus' final return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

### *The Journey Within: Prayer as a Path to God.*

Kathryn J. Hermes, FSP. (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004). Hermes offers tips to help overcome experiences of personal defeat to find that God is not simply with us—but is with us as one who serves us, heals us and restores us.

### *How Much is Enough?: Hungering for God in an Affluent Culture.*

Arthur Simon. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 2003). Possessions may capture the hearts, but they cannot nourish the soul. Simon's book points us away from captivity to things toward fulfillment in following Christ.

### *Francis of Assisi: Writer and Spiritual Master.*

Thaddée Matura, OFM. Translated by Paul Lachance, OFM. (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005). The author describes this book as "a kind of simple summary . . ." but prominent Franciscan scholars describe it as rich, prayerful, important, admirable, a synthesis, a small treasure.

### *201 Inspirational Stories of the Eucharist.*

Compiled by Sister Patricia Proctor, OSC. (Spokane, WA: Franciscan Monastery of Saint Clare, 2004). A collection of stories which are both moving and powerful.

## About Our Contributors

**Carolyn Colburn, SFO**, was professed as a Secular Franciscan at St. Francis Fraternity in San Francisco in 1991. At the present time, she is a member of Our Lady of Angels Fraternity in Burlingame, California in Blessed Junipero Serra Region. Carolyn has an A.B. degree in Psychology and a M.A. in Education from the University of California, Berkeley. Before retiring she worked in the field of elementary education as a teacher and director of student teachers. Since profession in the SFO she has been a Fraternity Minister, Fraternity Peace and Justice Commissioner, and Regional Commissioner for Peace and Justice for Blessed Junipero Serra Region. In addition to serving as National Peace and Justice Commission Chair, she works in prison ministry at the San Mateo County Juvenile Detention Facility.

**Jaime Bernardo, SFO**, is a member of St. Mary of the Angels Fraternity in Rockville, MD. He is active in his Pastoral Council at St. Catherine Labouré Church in Wheaton, MD, and in many SFO projects. He holds a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Santo Thomas in Manila, Philippines. The image on p. 131 in this issue is taken from a calendar published for the SFO.

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**Robert J. Karris, OFM** is a friar of Sacred Heart Province. A New Testament scholar, Fr. Karris is on the research faculty of the Franciscan Institute. A well-known author, having completed last year a three-volume translation of St. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, and co-authored the *Commentary of Ecclesiaste*, he is currently working on a translation of the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* by St. Bonaventure.

**Thérèse and Deacon David Ream, S.F.O.** Professed in 1988 into St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, Duncansville, PA, Thérèse and Dave are currently members of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Quincy, IL. They served as Co-Chairs of the National Formation Commission from 1996 until 2002. Both earned Master's degrees in Education and in Pastoral Ministry from St.

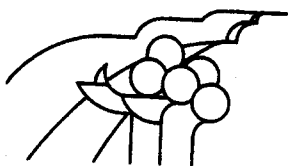
Francis University, Loretto, PA. Thérèse is a Curriculum Consultant, having obtained her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Penn State in 1995. Since 2001 she has been the Coordinator of the Institute for Contemporary Franciscan Life at St. Francis University, Loretto, PA. Dave is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a doctorate in Counseling Psychology also from Penn State in 1995. He was ordained a Deacon for the Diocese of Jefferson City, MO, in 1999. They are both involved in full-time ecclesial ministry, serving their local parish in Kirksville, MO and their Diocese in a variety of capacities. Additionally, Dave currently serves as the Spiritual Assistant of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Fraternity, Quincy, IL.

**Fr. Richard Trezza, OFM** is a friar of Holy Name Province, New York. He currently serves as Provincial Spiritual Assistant for the SFO for his province and Parochial Vicar at Holy Name Parish in New York City. He has ministered to the SFO since 1968, and is presently the Spiritual Assistant for the National Commission chairs and also Spiritual Assistant to the National Formation Commission. His SFO ministry also extends to that of Regional Spiritual Assistant to Our Lady of the Angels Region. He is also a chaplain for the Genesis Program—a middle school for gifted children sponsored by the Diocese of Brooklyn, NY. Father joined the Franciscans in 1966; he has graduate degrees in Music, Education, and Theology.

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presented by Kathleen Warren, OSF Franciscan Scholar, Author

**Dates:** June 12-18, 2005

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**Dates:** July 8-12, 2005

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Author of *St. Francis and the Song of Brotherhood and Sisterhood*  
and *The Disciple and the Master*

Eric Doyle was a man of vision. It was a vision of Christ seen through the eyes of St. Francis of Assisi, which vision brought a unity and a dignity to all creation, as well as a fraternal connection with Christ, the first brother of all. This same vision led Eric to his fascination with Teilhard de Chardin on the one hand and his interest for "mother earth" and ecology on the other.

In 1974 Eric's dream to return to Canterbury, the place where the Franciscan story began in 1224, was fulfilled.

Eric alerted us to the wealth of the spiritual life, prayer, devotion, philosophy and theology that saturate our Franciscan heritage.

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On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Eric Doyle's death, Josef Raischl, SFO and André Cirino, OFM present a collection of his extensive writings. This volume of more than 600 pages includes articles on Franciscan Spirituality, St. Bonaventure's and Bl. John Duns Scotus' theology, Teilhard de Chardin, various theological and spiritual themes such as the theology of religious life or the future of the papacy.



Throughout the text, the editors wove biographical notes, photos and memories of people who knew Eric. Two of his recorded talks on CD accompany the text. A complete bibliography closes the collection.

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## On the Franciscan Circuit Coming Events

### Sisters' Retreat. June 3-9, 2005. Friday, 4:00 p.m.-Thursday, 1:00 p.m.

Fr. Loman MacAodha, OFM. This year's retreat centers on Jesus Christ, the Risen One, our mediator in the presence of the Father. His spirit draws us into the ministry of forgiveness and peacemaking. We join in the struggle to bring God's blessing to a pilgrim and struggling people. At The Franciscan Center, 3010 N. Perry Avenue, Tampa, FL 33603-5345.(813) 229-2695. E-mail: francnt@tampabay.rr.com.

### Seven Day Directed Retreat. June 20-26, 2005. Monday-Sunday. Direc-

tors to be announced. An individually-directed retreat provides time for prayer, silence, and solitude. Daily meetings with the director focus on the individual's experience of God and prayer, as well as discerning the movement of the Spirit in one's life. At the St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, PA. For information, contact the office at 610-867-8890 or email: peace@enter.net.

### Directed Retreat. June 26-July 3, 2005. Sunday-Sunday. With Sr. Carol

Czyzewski, FSSJ, Dr. Carolyn Nickerson, and Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, TOR. This individually-directed retreat offers time for solitude, prayer, and spiritual guidance. Each retreatant meets with a spiritual director once each day to discuss their experience of God and prayer. The Eucharist will be celebrated daily. For information, contact the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center, 3605 McRoberts Rd., Pittsburgh, PA; 412-885-7247 or email FSLCCOM@aol.com.

### Directed Retreat. July 31-August 6, 2005. Sunday-Saturday. With Fr. Rod

Damico, Sr. Yvonne Fischer and Sr. Paulette Schroeder. At St. Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin, OH. Registration requested by July 10th. For information, contact: 419-443-1485 or email: retreats@stfrancisspiritualitycenter.org.

### Workshop/Retreat. August 11-14, 2005. Thursday-Sunday. Journeying

Into the Early Documents of Francis of Assisi. Marla Lang, FSPA and Corrina Thomas, FSPA. Addresses the context of Franciscanism today which continues to be influenced by the interaction of Eastern and Western philosophies. At The Portiuncula Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact Mary Ann Hamilton at 815-464-3880 or Corinna Thomas at 815-469-4883; or email: portc4p@aol.com.

## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation o the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacapone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFI	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano



# A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE

Boldly take hold of the mirror of poverty, the pattern of humility, the shield of endurance, the insignia of obedience. Then, enkindled by the fire of divine love, give your heart totally to the one who on the cross offered himself to God the Father for us. . . [and] you will become the aroma of Christ. . . .

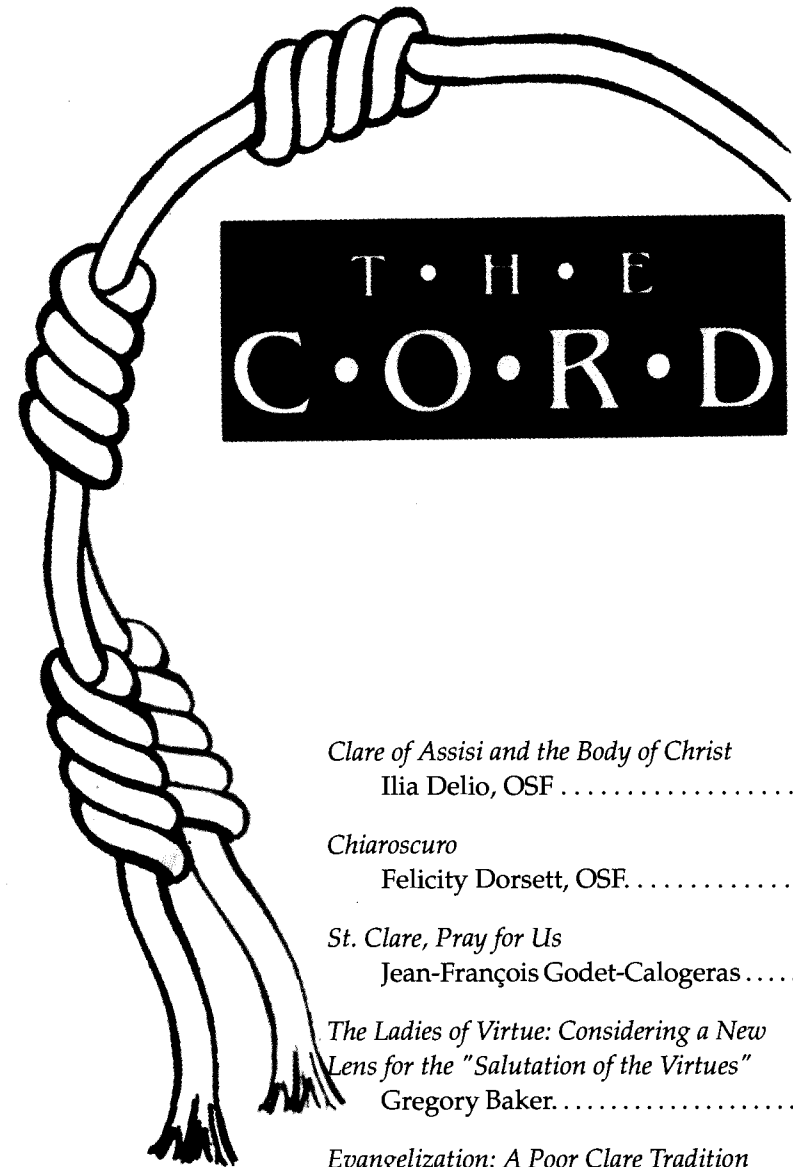
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**THE CORD**  
**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS: Address all manuscripts to Editor, *The Cord*, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778. (Email: rmckelvi@sbu.edu)

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*, 14th 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).

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*The Cord*, 55.4 (2005)

**Editorial**

And so it goes. We arrive once again at the "Clare issue" point of the year. Truth to tell, this is always one of my favorite issues, because it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to bring forward to our readers the Lady Clare and her tradition. What would the Franciscan movement have been without her? What would it be today without the intercession and example of our Sisters of the Second Order?

Years ago, when I was a student here, my entry into Franciscan coursework encountered a couple of uneven patches, and my plaintive cry (joined with classmates' cries) was "Where are the women in our history?" It is my privilege now to help our readers find some answers to that question.

We open this issue with the work of a contemporary theologian looking at the value of contemplation and Clare's transforming understanding of "our humanity in God, with its strengths and weaknesses. . . ." Ilia Delio combines her knowledge of theology, mysticism, and Franciscan life, bringing them all into play in her article, giving us a rich resource for our own journey. The piece by Jean-François Godet-Calogeras provides insight into what it means to be a "saint" and compares the thirteenth century experiences of Clare with our own "planetary age" and contemporary issues of violence, work, health care, and care of the earth.

And, in the wonderful way that life works, two of our offerings were produced by students here at the Institute. Gregory Baker's work connecting the Salutation of the Virtues and the Poor Ladies at San Damiano was written as a class assignment for none other than Jean-François; the cycle of teacher encouraging student and seeing the fruit of their labor (teacher's and student's) in print is always one we are happy to support. And, again, Felicity Dorsett graces us with one of her poetic reflections which seems, in its description of one historical moment, to foreshadow the text that follows it. (Deciding how to set the layout of a given issue of *The Cord* is one of my most delightful responsibilities. See how many echoes of each other there are in these two items!)

Lastly, we offer examples of real history in which the faith and witness of Clare communities demonstrate the enduring legacy of Franciscan dedication to Gospel values. It is a blessing for me to be able to present this work by the late Cyprian Lynch.

May Clare and her sisters enliven our journey into endless light and peace, and may we be open, always, to the surprises of prayers answered and gifts of the Spirit granted!

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## Clare of Assisi and The Body of Christ

Ilia Delio, OSF

### The Power of the Eucharist

Every year on June 22<sup>nd</sup> the town of Assisi celebrates the *Festa del Voto* where the mayor of Assisi thanks Saint Clare for saving the city from the invasion of the Saracens. It is a beautiful ceremony of remembrance and thanksgiving to one who offered her life, like Christ, so others might be saved from harm. At the Process of Canonization of Clare, the ninth witness, Sr. Francesca, described Clare's heroic act of defense in the following way:

When the Saracens entered the cloister of the said monastery, the Lady made them bring her to the entrance of the refectory and bring a small box where there was the Blessed Sacrament of our Lord Jesus Christ. Throwing herself prostrate on the ground in prayer, she begged with tears, saying among other things: "Lord, look upon these servants of yours, because I cannot protect them." Then the witness heard a voice of wonderful sweetness: "I will always defend you!" The Lady then prayed for the city saying: "Lord, please defend the city as well!" The same voice resounded and said: "The city will endure many dangers, but it will be defended." Then the Lady turned to the sisters and told them: "Do not be afraid, because I am a hostage for you so that you will not suffer any harm now nor any other time as long as you wish to obey God's commandments." Then the Saracens left in such a way that they did not do any harm or damage.<sup>1</sup>

This testimony is important not only for the holiness of Clare's life but for bearing witness to the type of life she led, a Eucharistic life. It is significant that, after the Body of Christ was brought to Clare, she prostrated herself in prayer and declared herself a hostage so that the sisters would not be harmed.<sup>2</sup> Like Christ, Clare was willing to lay down her life for the lives of her sisters. This significant event in Clare's life speaks to us not only of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, but what it meant for her to be a member of this Body. I wonder if terrorists came to our door today and threatened to attack us would

we hold up the Eucharist as the power of protection or prostrate ourselves in prayer or declare ourselves hostages for the sake of our brothers and sisters? Or would we retaliate in self-defense and kill if necessary? What kind of spirituality impels one to offer up one's life for the sake of others rather than to defend oneself against the enemy?

In her letters to Agnes of Prague, Clare describes a rich spirituality that centers on the body of the crucified Christ. She defines a relationship of mutuality with the poor, crucified Spouse in such a way that Agnes is to become what she loves. Clare sees the beauty of the Incarnation in the suffering of Christ because it is here that God's total gift of love is given [to us] freely and unconditionally. For Clare, the cross is not the sign of guilt and punishment but the mirror of our humanity and the place of our transformation in God. She directs Agnes to become like her Spouse, crucified in love, willing to spend her life in love for the sake of the Body of Christ, the Church. Clare draws a link between Christian spirituality, Eucharist and participation in the Church. To live in Christ is to "put on Christ" in such a way that one's life becomes a new life of Christ which enables the Church to grow in love and holiness. Her unique path to God offers insights that may help us today realize the importance of our Christian vocation as members of Christ's Body which lives in the heart of the world.

### Relationship with God

Clare of Assisi was a strong, independent woman who desired to live a radical Gospel life, following the example of Francis of Assisi (TestCl 5). In her Form of Life Clare begins by describing herself as "an unworthy servant of Christ and the little plant (*la piantecella*) of the most blessed Francis" (RCI 1:3, TestCl 37). There is little doubt that Clare was deeply impressed by the life of Francis who she described as the "true lover and imitator" of Christ (TestCl 5). In Francis, Clare saw the life of Christ renewed and made visible and this spoke to her of a particular way of imitating Christ, not so much by following his example but by enabling the life of Christ to be renewed in the believer. Although Clare was influenced by Francis's *imitatio Christi* she did not mimic him but rather developed a spirituality of imitation that was more clearly defined, Christ-centered and goal-oriented than what Francis described in his own writings. Although Clare and her sisters lived under the Benedictine Rule for almost forty years, her spirituality was directed toward Gospel living and participation in the life of the Church, that is, the Body of Christ. As one who could not fully engage in mendicant life because of ecclesiastical restrictions, I believe Clare reflected on the essence of evangelical life more deeply and worked out a more clearly defined path to God than what we find in the writings of Francis.

In her letters to Agnes, she directs Agnes to become the mother, sister and Spouse of Christ first through a life of poverty and humility and then through contemplation and transformation. For Clare, contemplation is key to living a Eucharistic life. She directs Agnes to a life of contemplation by asking Agnes to discover her true image in the cross, since the cross is where we come to know God and ourselves in God. A life of poverty and humility, following the example of the crucified Christ, can lead one, like Agnes, to take hold of the treasure within the human heart (3 LAg 7), the Word of God, in whom we are created. She writes:

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!  
Place your soul in the 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. (3 LAg 12-13)

The idea of contemplation as gazing upon the Crucified is unique to Clare. Contemplation begins with the gaze on Christ crucified and is the penetrating gaze that accepts the disclosure of God in the fragile human flesh of the other, that is, the crucified Christ. This encounter is also self-revelatory since the God who comes to us is the ground of our being as well. To accept God in the other, therefore, is to accept the ground of our identity. Clare describes the image of the crucified Christ as a "mirror" and she advises Agnes to "place your mind before the mirror of eternity."<sup>3</sup> For Clare, Christ is the mirror in which God reveals himself to us and we are revealed to ourselves as we begin to see the truth of who we are—our identity—in the mirror of the cross. The more we contemplate Christ [by gazing upon the Crucified], the more we discover our identity. The gaze, therefore, is both a looking at and receptivity to the appearance of God's self-giving love in the concrete figure of the crucified Christ. In its receptivity the gaze is self-reflective in that the God who is revealed in the crucified Christ is the image in which we are created and thus the basis of our identity.<sup>4</sup> Contemplation is creative since it transforms the one who gazes in the mirror into a reflection of the image itself. That is, the more we contemplate Christ, the more we discover and come to resemble the image of God. This image of God, brought to light in the one who gazes into the mirror of Christ, is expressed as a new "birth" of Christ in the believer.

## Contemplation and Identity

Although Clare sought a unity with God through contemplation, the goal of relationship with God was imitation (cf. 2 LAg 20). The gaze on the crucified Spouse is to lead to imitation of the Spouse. We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become. Imitation is not a literal mimicking of

Christ; rather, it means becoming the image of the beloved, an image disclosed through transformation. In her third letter Clare writes, "transform your entire being into the image of the Godhead itself through contemplation!"<sup>5</sup> For Clare, the path from contemplation to imitation includes self-identity. Although she does not explicitly describe identity in her directives to Agnes, an examination of letters two and four *in tandem* suggests that she links self-identity with *imitatio Christi* which is the purpose of transformation.

Clare describes the energy of relationship with God as love and she sees contemplation as a deepening of love whereby Agnes is to "love Him totally who gave Himself totally for [her] love."<sup>6</sup> The progression of prayer that leads to contemplation begins with the gaze on the crucified Christ and continues to penetrate the depths of this reality until the margins of poverty and humility give way to the heart of charity which is hidden in the suffering heart of Christ. As a deepening of love, contemplation is a continuous action, an ongoing transformation, since nothing is more liberating and active than love. This love not only enables one like Agnes to see more clearly and deeply into the depths of the Spouse's love for her, but to feel<sup>7</sup> and taste the hidden sweetness of God.<sup>8</sup> To place oneself in the mirror of the cross, therefore, is to expose oneself to the joys and sorrows of being human, the joy of God's all-embracing love and the sorrow of seeing the Spouse "despised, struck, and scourged."<sup>9</sup> In the mirror of the cross we are to place our entire being—heart, mind, and soul—and to "transform our whole being into the image of the Godhead itself through contemplation."<sup>10</sup> But what does it mean to transform our whole being into the image of the Godhead itself who appears amidst the sufferings of the cross?

Clare seems to grapple with the fact that the human person has the capacity for God but is thwarted in this capacity because of sin or brokenness. "Is it not clear," she writes, "that the soul of the faithful person . . . is greater than heaven itself?"<sup>11</sup> This capacity for God she indicates can only be realized by following Christ in poverty and humility.<sup>12</sup> Pride, she writes, leads to self-deception: "How many kings and queens of this world let themselves be deceived! For even though their pride may reach the skies and their heads through the clouds, in the end they are as forgotten as a dung-heap!"<sup>13</sup> Poverty and humility in Clare's view make room for love, and love is that indwelling of the Spirit that allows us to search the depths of the crucified Spouse who reveals the face of God through the suffering of the cross. To penetrate the truth of this reality, one must first penetrate the truth of one's own being with its fragile tendencies and weaknesses. Contemplation for Clare is the means for discovering the truly human without disguise.<sup>14</sup> The mirror of the Crucified tells us how we are most like God in this world through suffering, poverty, and humility, and what we do to God in this world—crucify him. In this mirror, therefore, we see the greatness of the human capacity to love and the sorrow of human sinfulness. If contemplation is a penetrating truth of reality, it must

first lead one to the truth of one's self in God. The cross, therefore, indicates to us the true image of ourselves, and the image we need to gaze upon within ourselves—our own poverty, humility and suffering. Poverty, humility and charity are the “footprints of Christ” according to Clare and we are called to find these footprints within the depths of our own person, for these footprints reflect the image of God.

The relationship between contemplation and identity is described more explicitly [although briefly] in Clare's fourth letter to Agnes where she advises Agnes to “look upon that mirror each day . . . and continually *study your face* within it, so that you may adorn yourself *within and without* with beautiful robes.”<sup>15</sup> The relationship between contemplation and the human face is an interesting one. The idea of the “face” not only connotes uniqueness and distinction, that which makes a person what s/he is, but it connotes form or expression since the face is what one sees. The face discloses the person in a particular way and therefore reflects one's personal identity or self-expression.<sup>16</sup>

If contemplation is to study one's face in the mirror of the cross then contemplation is the way the self achieves its true form as image of God. To study one's face in the cross is to ask, what am I? In this respect, the self is not a substance separate from God but is created precisely in relationship to God. In Clare's view, identity is uncovering the treasure within, the image of God in which we are created and by which we are in relationship with God. Identity, therefore, is the creation of the self as image of God, creation itself being relationship with God. In Clare's words, it is finding “the incomparable treasure hidden in the field and in the heart of the human.”<sup>17</sup> Prayer that leads to contemplation of the crucified Spouse leads to an ongoing creation of self whereby the emergence of who we are in the mirror of the Crucified is expressed in what we become [our “face”] and in the virtues we acquire both “within and without.” As we come to be who we are called to be in relation to God (self-identity), God shows himself to the universe through his constant and continual creation of the self. The self that comes to be through a union with God in love is the self in which God is reflected, that is, the image of God. For Clare, this is imitation of Christ, the crucified Spouse. The enfleshment of God in one's life through contemplation and transformation is the renewal of Christ in the world.

While Clare's path entails a truthful relationship with God, it also involves a truthful relationship with one's neighbor for her spiritual path takes place in the context of community. In this respect, *gazing upon* the mirror of the Crucified is not an exclusive human-divine relationship, that is, a vertical relationship with a transcendent God. Rather, the divine is enfleshed in the other-immanent—so that to follow Christ is to follow the one who follows Christ, and to see oneself in the mirror of the Crucified is to see oneself in the

face of one's suffering sisters or brothers. Clare's path is essentially Pauline (1 Cor 11: “imitate me as I imitate Christ”) and she directs Agnes to the fullness of being through relationship with a God who is enfleshed in fragile humanity, that is, the humanity of community.<sup>18</sup> For Clare, prayer without community cannot lead to the fullness of one's self-identity, since it is in community that the mirror of one's identity is reflected in the other, the neighbor who we are called to love. Love transforms because it unites, and it is in loving our neighbor through compassion that we become more ourselves, and in becoming more ourselves, we become Christ. Contemplation leads to imitation through self-identity when we come to the truth of who we are in relation to God and to our neighbor in whom God lives. The more we allow ourselves to be transformed by the Spirit of love, the more we become ourselves, and the more we become ourselves, the more we are like God. Each of us is created in a unique way to express the love of God in the world and to show the face of God to the world. The integral relationship between self-identity and *imitatio Christi* through contemplation is a path of transformation by which love draws forth the image in which we are created, an image which is made beautiful through the cross of suffering and love.

Although the centrality of the cross in Clare's spirituality is undeniably present, hers is not a spirituality of sin and guilt; rather it is one of freedom and transformation. The cross is the mirror of truth, where we come to see ourselves in our capacity to love and in our brokenness. An honest acceptance of who we are with our strengths and weaknesses is liberating in Clare's view. Dwelling in the mirror of the crucified Christ is to lead to that place of unencumbered freedom, a freedom that is born of the joy of the Spirit (4 LAg 4) and of union with the Spouse (4 LAg 10). Clare advises Agnes to “study her face in the mirror each day” (4 LAg 14) so that she may be “adorned with beautiful robes within and without” (v. 16), becoming transformed in union with the one she loves. Clare does not use the language of transformation *per se* because to be adorned within and without is to “put on Christ” or to “represent Christ,” that is, transformation *is* imitation. The relationship of the mirror and self-identity which Clare describes in her Fourth Letter corresponds to the method of gazing upon the Crucified which she describes in her second letter. A consistent gaze on the crucified Spouse ultimately leads to imitation (cf. 2 LAg 20) for when we cling to the crucified Spouse with all our heart we become an image of this Spouse in our own lives. What Clare indicates is that transformation/imitation of Christ cannot take place apart from self-identity or acceptance of one's self in relation to God.

Clare's way of prayer is a spiral that goes to the depth of the human person's capacity for God and the capacity of God's love for the human person. Her understanding of contemplation complements that of Francis who described

contemplation as “seeing with the eyes of the Spirit.” In his Admonition One Francis writes: “As they saw only his flesh by means of their bodily sight, yet believed him to be God as they contemplated him with the eyes of faith, so as we see bread and wine with our bodily eyes, we too are to see and firmly believe them to be his most holy body and blood living and true.”<sup>19</sup> Contemplation is a penetrating gaze that gets to the truth of reality where the presence of the living God is revealed.<sup>20</sup> The key to contemplation is the Spirit of the Lord. One must have the Spirit of the Lord (who joins one to Christ)<sup>21</sup> to see into the depths of things.<sup>22</sup> This too is Clare’s idea. One who is joined to Christ has the spirit of Christ and thus imitates Christ through the very expression of one’s face. It is the Spirit that conforms one to Christ and enables one to see into the depths of things. The gift of the Spirit is the fruit of poverty by which one is free enough to accept the embrace of God’s love in the embrace of the crucified Christ.

The link between contemplation and ongoing transformation in Christ means that as one comes to a deeper truth of oneself in relation to God so too one is filled with the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that allows one to see with the heart and to contemplate the other by a penetrating gaze. In light of this relationship Clare writes: “Therefore that mirror suspended on the wood of the cross, urged those who passed by to consider, saying: ‘All you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like my suffering!’” (Lam 1:12).<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to see another person’s suffering if we have not come to terms with our own suffering. We cannot see clearly the truth of the other if we have not first seen clearly the truth of ourselves. The relationship between “seeing” and “becoming” is governed by love since love shapes what we become. As one sees the sufferings of Christ in the other, so one is to love: “From this moment, then, O Queen of our heavenly King, let yourself be inflamed more strongly with the fervor of charity!”<sup>24</sup> What Clare suggests is that contemplation is not a preliminary step to transformation/imitation but rather one must strive to be transformed in Christ in order to contemplate the truth (depths) of Christ. The mutual relationship between contemplation and transformation governed by self-identity involves self-acceptance and self-awareness or, we might say, accepting the poverty of our human condition. Contemplation deepens as we continue to be transformed in Christ by coming to the truth of our identity. When we come to the truth of our humanity in God, with its strengths and weaknesses, we then come to reflect the face of God.

## The Mysticism of Motherhood

There is no doubt that Clare’s direction to Agnes, to become an image of Christ, was quite bold for her time, since the idea that women could image God was a source of contention in the Middle Ages. Clare, however, was not

concerned about gender issues but about Christian life and participation in the Church. We might say, in her view, everyone who follows Christ is called to “put on” Christ (cf. Gal). As Delir Brunelli points out, “Clare’s contemplation has, in its own fiber, the dimension of witness, commitment, and the proclamation of the Gospel. Whoever is transformed in the mirror of Christ, by this fact alone, radiates and manifests his image.”<sup>25</sup> Contemplation, therefore, is related to witness and the one who contemplates Christ bears witness to the risen Lord.

It is within this matrix of contemplation and transformation that Clare’s mysticism of motherhood unfolds because to bear witness to Christ is to allow the life of Christ to shine through in the life of the believer. Clare suggests that to pursue this path of mysticism, Agnes should “cling to his most sweet mother who gave birth to a Son whom the heavens could not contain” (3 LAg 18). The soul of a faithful person, like Mary, Clare indicates, is “greater than heaven itself, since the heavens and the rest of creation cannot contain their Creator and only the faithful soul is his dwelling place and throne” (3 LAg 21-22). Clare highlights the capacity of the human soul to bear God because the one who is joined to Christ by the Spirit is one in whom the Trinity dwells (3 LAg 3). Poverty and humility make possible this indwelling of God in such a way that one, like Agnes, can come to possess the One “by whom you and all things are held together” (3 LAg 26). Clare’s language of intimacy is telling: to “cling,” “possess,” and “embrace” is to come to such a union with Christ that the life of Christ is virtually inextricable from the life of the believer. She writes: “As the glorious Virgin of virgins carried (Him) materially, so you, too, by following in her footprints, especially those of poverty and humility, can, without any doubt, always carry him spiritually in your chaste and virginal body” (3 LAg 24-26) “holding Him” and “possessing Him.” Who can possess God unless one is so intimately united with God that God’s life becomes our life and our life is God’s life? Clare speaks of clinging to God within the context of the sacred banquet (4 LAg 9), indicating that the one who possesses God is so united to God as to be one with God. The union is such that there is really only one life, the life of God enfleshed in the believer. For Clare, this is to become, like Mary, a new *Theotokos* or God-bearer. Her mysticism of motherhood means that the one who “bears God” gives witness to Christ because God has taken on flesh anew in the life of the faithful person. In a spiritual way, we might say, Christ is born anew.

## The Body of Christ, Life of the Church

Clare’s mysticism of motherhood, as the goal of prayer, is bringing Christ to birth. It is a union in love with God that conceives the Word, carries the Word, gives birth to the Word and then is mirrored in the Word. This “mys-

ticism of motherhood," as the imitation of Christ, becomes a reality in the life of the believer when the soul can cry out of the Word delivered of her/him: "This is my Body." We are called to become what we conceive within us in the same way that we are called to become what we love. While Clare's mysticism of motherhood is "bringing Christ to life for the life of the world,"<sup>26</sup> it is at the same time, a participation in the life of the Church. Although Clare's connections are implicit in her letters to Agnes, one can draw a parallel between her mysticism of motherhood, "birthing" Christ, and the Church as the Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ becomes the Body of the believer, the body of the believer becomes the life of the Church. When one is inflamed like Christ crucified with the fervor of charity (4 LAg 27), then one is willing to offer one's life, like Clare, for the sake of the Gospel. One then becomes, like the Beloved, cruciform in love. Thus, one who gives birth to Christ becomes a new Body of Christ which expresses itself in the fervor of compassionate love, and it is this love which strengthens the life of the Church. Clare asked Agnes to pursue this path toward the mystical birth of Christ because only in this way could she help rebuild the Church by strengthening the Body of Christ. Clare writes: "I consider you a co-worker of God Himself and a support of the weak members of His ineffable Body" (3 LAg 8). This is remarkable insight from a woman who lived most of her life separated from the world. Clare realized that to live a Eucharistic life is to become the Body of Christ in one's own life and thus to become a vital participant in the one Body of Christ, the Church.

Clare's spiritual path calls for active love and only one who has entered into union with the crucified Spouse can become like the Spouse, crucified in love. The Church, in Clare's view, lives and grows when its members are active lovers not passive listeners. Church membership is not an affiliation but a participation in the life of Christ. Only one who is on the path to God, who contemplates God and is transformed in God, is truly a member of the Church. In such a person the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, is not only central to the life of faith but the Body of Christ becomes the body of the believer and therefore the life of the Church.

Gospel life is focused on being a "person in relationship" and a sharing among persons of the experience of Christ.<sup>27</sup> It is bound up with the body of Christ and the bodies of all those who follow Christ. In his book *Swimming in the Sun* Albert Haase writes, "We are the body of Christ on earth and every-day, in some way, we are challenged to become the bread that is broken for the hungry of the world."<sup>28</sup> Eucharist is being bread broken and eaten for a hungry world. It is the food that gives the strength to make every stranger beloved. Miroslav Volf writes:

We would most profoundly misunderstand the Eucharist if we thought of it only as a sacrament of God's embrace of which we are the fortu-

nate beneficiaries. Inscribed in the very heart of God's grace is the rule that we can be its recipients only if we do not resist being made into its agents. What happens to us must be done by us.<sup>29</sup>

To be the body of Christ is a flesh and blood reality. "Christ has no body now but yours," Teresa of Avila once claimed, "no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which must look out Christ's compassion on the world." Clare contributes to this idea by indicating that where God dwells in the life of the believer, the Church lives because Christ lives. It is the Spirit that gives life and Clare knew that to possess the Spirit is to possess Christ, and to possess Christ is to possess the heart of the world (cf. 3 LAg 7). No greater joy or riches can money buy (cf. 3 LAg 27-28) nor can the Church have any greater power than the living witness of Christ. For Clare, Christian life is the life of Christ and when that life is renewed through prayer and a deepening of love in union with God, the Church becomes more fully the Body of Christ. This Body is life for the world and we are invited into this sacred banquet of life.

### Is the Eucharist Our Life Today?

In light of Clare's understanding of the spiritual life as a Eucharistic life and the life of the Church, it is worthwhile to consider the place of the Eucharist in Christian life today. While daily Mass is common for those in religious life and Sunday Mass a requirement for Catholic life, one wonders why the Eucharist has not made a difference in the lives of Christians and in the world. Have we become so "immune" to receiving the Eucharist that we have lost sight of its meaning, that this Body and Blood of Christ becomes mixed with our body and blood? That by receiving the Eucharist, the Body of Christ becomes our body, his life becomes our life? Or has receiving the Eucharist become such a rote practice that we are unconscious of the life of Christ within us? If the Church is dying today, maybe it is because Christian life is dying. We have made the life of Christ juridical and extrinsic to the life of faith, instead of intrinsic to the life of the believer.

Clare indicates that Christian life, living in the body of Christ, demands a whole-hearted response, truthfulness of one's self, an ability to let go and let God, an ability to suffer well and to love through suffering. When we engage in this spiritual path in union with the crucified Christ then we are on the way to bringing Christ to birth in our lives. For a woman who lived in the solitude of San Damiano, Clare showed remarkable insight with regard to renewal of the Gospel life and the life of the Church. She reminds us that Christian life is living fully in the Body of Christ just as Christ is to live in the heart of the faithful soul. Where Christ is alive in the heart of the believer, the Church is alive in the heart of the world.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Process of Canonization, Ninth Witness, in *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1993), 165.

<sup>2</sup>See also Process of Canonization, Third Witness, 150.

<sup>3</sup>Clare of Assisi, The Third Letter to Agnes of Prague (*Ecrits*, 103). Engl. trans. in Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 45. For a more detailed examination of Clare and mirror spirituality, see Regis J. Armstrong, "Clare of Assisi: The Mirror Mystic," *The Cord* (July-August, 1985): 195-202.

<sup>4</sup>See Ilia Delio, "Clare of Assisi: Beauty and Transformation," *Studies in Spirituality* 12 (2002): 75.

<sup>5</sup>3Lag 12-13 (*Ecrits*, 103). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 45.

<sup>6</sup>3Lag 15 (*Ecrits*, 104): "*illum totaliter diligas, qui se totum pro tua dilectione donavit.*" Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 46.

<sup>7</sup>3Lag 14 (*Ecrits*, 103). Clare writes: "So that you too may feel what his friends feel as they taste the hidden sweetness of God."

<sup>8</sup>3Lag 14.

<sup>9</sup>2Lag 20 (*Ecrits*, 96). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 42. Clare writes: "Your Spouse . . . was despised, struck, scourged untold times throughout his entire body, and then died amidst the sufferings of the cross."

<sup>10</sup>3Lag 12-13 (*Ecrits*, 102). "*Pone mentem tuam in speculo aeternitatis, pone animam tuam in splendore gloriae, pone cor tuum in figura divinae substantiae et transforma te ipsam totam per contemplationem in imagine divinitatis ipsius.*"

<sup>11</sup>3Lag 21 (*Ecrits*, 104). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 46.

<sup>12</sup>3Lag 25 (*Ecrits*, 106). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 46.

<sup>13</sup>3Lag 27-28 (*Ecrits*, 106). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 47. Francis of Assisi had similar admonitions to his followers. See, for example, Admonition 7 in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellman, and William J. Short, Vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 132. This volume is hereafter abbreviated as *FA:ED* followed by volume and page number.

<sup>14</sup>Michael Blastic describes this phenomenological type of contemplation as distinctive of both Francis and Clare's path of contemplation. See Michael W. Blastic, "Contemplation and Compassion: A Franciscan Ministerial Spirituality," in *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism*, vol. 7, ed. Kenneth Himes, Anthony Carrozzo, and Vincent Cushing (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), 165.

<sup>15</sup>Clare of Assisi, The Fourth Letter to Agnes of Prague 14-16 (*Ecrits*, 112-14). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 50. See also Delio, "Beauty and Transformation," 75.

<sup>16</sup>The postmodern philosopher Emmanuel Levinas claims that the face of the genuine other should release us from all desire for totality and open us to a true sense of the infinite because inscribed in the face of the other is the trace of a transcendence. One cannot grasp the other in knowledge, for the other is infinite and overflows in the totality of comprehension and of being. See Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 148; Robyn Horner, *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida and the Limits of Phenomenology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 64-66.

<sup>17</sup>3Lag 7 (*Ecrits*, 102). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 45. Clare writes: "I see that by humility, the virtue of faith, and the strong arms of poverty, you have taken hold of that incomparable treasure hidden in the field of the world and of the human heart."

<sup>18</sup>For a discussion on the following of Christ in the context of community for Clare see Ilia Delio, "Mirrors and Footprints: Metaphors of Relationship in Clare of Assisi's Writings," *Studies in Spirituality* 10 (2000): 167-81.

<sup>19</sup>Francis of Assisi, Admonition 1: 20, in *FA:ED* 1, 129.

<sup>20</sup>See for example Francis's Letter to the Entire Order 27-28 (*FA:ED* 1, 118) where he writes: "Look at the humility of God and pour out your hearts before Him. . . . Hold back nothing of yourselves for yourselves, that he who gives himself totally to you may receive you totally!"

<sup>21</sup>Again, Francis gave primacy to the Spirit of the Lord as the one who makes life in Christ possible. In his Letter to the Faithful he writes: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ." See his "Later Admonition and Exhortation" 51 in *FA:ED* 1, 49.

<sup>22</sup>The notion of penetrating vision is distinctive of Franciscan contemplation. Bonaventure used the term "contuitio" to describe this penetrating vision, which sees a thing in itself and in its relation to God. For a definition of contuitio see Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought and Writings* (New York: New City Press, 2001), 199.

<sup>23</sup>4Lag 25 (*Ecrits*, 114). Engl. trans. Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 51.

<sup>24</sup>4Lag 27 (*Ecrits*, 116). Engl. trans., Armstrong, *Early Documents*, 51.

<sup>25</sup>Delir Brunelli, "Contemplation in the Following of Jesus Christ: The Experience of Clare of Assisi," *The Cord* 52.4 (2002): 167.

<sup>26</sup>Brunelli, 167.

<sup>27</sup>Chinnici, "Evangelical and Apostolic Tensions," 7.

<sup>28</sup>Albert Haase, *Swimming in the Sun: Discovering the Lord's Prayer with Francis of Assisi and Thomas Merton* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1993), 144.

<sup>29</sup>Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 129.





**chiaroscuro**

Clare clasping pyx  
face whey-white with illness, stress  
pale hands gleaming against rough wool  
dark surf of Saracens  
cresting over convent walls

Clare's prayer piercing  
din of approaching fray  
Spirit-wind breathing calm  
storm surge receding  
harmless

Clare still clasping pyx  
face clear alight  
hands trembling, clinging  
relief and thanks  
now flood her sisters' eyes

staggering, almost dancing  
they patter on dry feet  
bear brightness inside  
tambourine—or armor—  
jingling faintly in the distance

**Felicity Dorsett, OSF**

**Saint Clare, Pray For Us**

Jean François Godet-Calogeras

It has been a long tradition in Christianity to declare some persons saints. The word "saint" comes from the Latin and means somebody or something that has been sanctioned, established as sacred, inviolable, and venerable. The American Heritage Dictionary describes a saint as "a person considered holy and worthy of public veneration, especially one who has been canonized."

The way Christianity made some people saints after their death has varied through centuries. In the early times, a man or a woman would be recognized as a saint by the Church as soon as he or she would have been acclaimed such by the people: *vox populi, vox Dei*, God speaks through the voice of the people. After that acclamation, the Church would register the saint in the catalogue, the canon, of saints. Later, canonization became more "serious." The hierarchy of the Church did not trust the *vox populi*, the voice of the people, anymore. Canonization became the result of a real process in which steps were legally defined. Saints were then proclaimed by papal bull.

It would be somewhat naïve or presumptuous to pretend that pure intent has always directed canonizations. After all, canonization is still a human action accompanied by human prejudices. Consider that from the tenth to the nineteenth century, only thirteen percent of all canonized saints were women. In the twentieth century the percentage "soared" to twenty-five. Fortunately God is not confined by our canon.

A saint is somebody who has passed away after a good life, somebody who brought one's life to a good end, and who is now living with God. After celebrating such a beatitude, blessing and happiness, people who needed help began to commend themselves to their local saint, or to their patron saint, for protection or for a particular favor. Some specific requests even found their specific saint. Everybody used to know that Saint Anthony was to be invoked to find lost things again (make sure to address the right Anthony though). And if you wanted to have fine weather on a special occasion, you had to bring eggs to the nearest Poor Clare monastery: Saint Clare would take care of the sun.

I do not intend to be iconoclastic, but I turn to saints in a different way. When I pray to God, I pray to get light and to see clearly, to understand, to

discern, to get spirit and courage, to live according to justice, to love rather than to hate: "Set your heart on God's world first, and on God's saving justice, and all the other things will be given you as well" (Mt 6:33). When I turn to God's saints, should it be different? What else do the saints have to offer us than a human life focusing on God and God's justice? When I say, "Saint X., pray for us," I mean "Saint X., show me, teach me something of God's world." If the saints can do something for us, I think it is to invite us, by the example of their own lives, to do something ourselves.

We are now getting ready to celebrate the first Franciscan woman, Saint Clare of Assisi. What are we going to ask her? What does she have to offer? If we agree to release our stereotypical images of Clare—even and first of all the one of the nun living in strict enclosure, silence and contemplation—if we agree to honestly read and study her documents without prejudice, we may benefit from a wonderful and abundant treasure, most useful in today's trials and challenges. Evidently, Clare did not write treatises on violence, human rights, racism, sexism, economy, social work, health, education; she did not write treatises at all. But she lived the realities of her daily life according the Gospel. In doing so, she brought the spirit of God to everything she touched, to everybody she met. So, again, what help do we need? How can Clare touch us today? I offer a partial litany of possibilities:

- With today's technology, we live in a planetary age. Modern transportation allows us to travel whenever and wherever we want, and mostly fast. Means of communication put the globe at our fingertips, and within hearing and sight. Clare lived eight hundred years ago, in a little city of Central Italy she probably never left for more than a few miles, in a time when the world was much smaller, and travel and communication were problematic and hazardous. (Yet she can be considered as the patron saint of communication, not because she would have prefigured television, but because she really communicated with other people, and has been a means of communication for people around her.)

Nevertheless, Assisi was not very different from today's world. It even looks like our world in miniature, without the technology, of course, but with basically the same characteristics and the same problems. The new communal order of the city, like our First World, was based on property and oriented to profit. That would govern all the aspects of life, and actually generate a whole train of plagues, often dramatic.

What Clare, with Francis and the early brothers and sisters, confronted was exclusion. A world based on possession and accumulation of things—sadly called "goods"—draws an immediate separation between the happy few who have part of the cake, and the unfortunate many who do not. Following the footsteps of Jesus and his teaching in the Gospel, the early Franciscans disagreed, peacefully and strongly, and left Assisi and its ex-

clusive system. They chose to live outside of it, close to all the people that, for one or another reason, had found themselves outcast. Not only that, they recognized the commune of Assisi as a fake, since it was not accessible to every human being. Clare, Francis and the others made an effort to build a community based on people, the quality of their relationship, and their needs. Eight hundred years later, we can still learn from Clare when, in her Form of Life, she describes the "community" and the "common good."

- Our world is violent. Only the strong are the survivors. And even for these, tomorrow is uncertain. There is a tremendous lack of tenderness. In our Assisi, as in Clare's, what rules the relationship between people is quite distant from love. The other is a threat to my belongings, eventually to my own life. I have to be threatening myself, or at least deterring. And what plays between individuals, also plays between groups, corporations, nations. Clare decided to be a sister to everybody. The Franciscan movement is brother-and-sister-hood. People really come first. The base of the interpersonal relationship is love, concretely expressed in the documents as motherly care. When what happens to another human being happens to a sister or a brother, how can you not be concerned? And when you have sisters and brothers, of what do you have to be afraid? We can still learn a lot from Clare when she promotes the unity of spirit and the love in action that is called charity.

The main reason why our world lacks tenderness is probably because in a patriarchal society, the feminine part of the human being is dominated by the masculine. Do we still believe that the feminine was created by the devil against the human created by God? If God created the human being masculine and feminine, how do we dare to lessen half of the creature and end in domination, disrespect and even oppression toward women? Clare opened the Franciscan movement, when it still was a movement of men, to the feminine and to the full participation of the women. According to her own testimony, it took a while for Francis to recognize that it was good, but, thank God, he did.

- Even now, we in the United States still do not have a health care system accessible to all. Health care is still a privilege. The Franciscan movement was inclusive. Not only was it open, but it started from the minorities. Everybody is priceless to God; every human being became precious to Clare, young or old, healthy or sick. And health was a serious problem in the thirteenth century. Both Clare and Francis experienced illness. We can still learn from the way they dealt with it. For health care was not approached as another business, but as an experience of solidarity; again, the focus was on the human being, and healing was more important than curing.

- One of the most hideous things I heard some time ago on a local radio station was an advertisement for some education program. I do not remember what kind of education, because I remained shocked by the reason proposed for getting an education: the need to be competitive in a time when there are more people for fewer jobs! In that context, the Franciscan notion of work as a grace sounds very poetic! But in a time when work was hard and manual labor poorly regarded by Assisians, the Franciscan movement developed a positive practice in which everyone could express their talents and skills in mutual service. Instead of competition, they preferred collaboration, and unemployment did not seem to have been a problem.

- One of our major concerns today is the excess of stress. Many of us in the First World are under a lot of pressure most of the time. We don't have enough time. So we run against time, we compete with time, we try to save time to do what we need to do. And the bottom line of all of that is that time is money. More time, more money. Or more money in less time. Whatever! The result is an extraordinary stress. We run all the time. We are always ahead of the time. We try to do many things at the same time. And we end up exhausted. And if, instead of being money, time were God? I mean, if it were in time, in seizing the moment, that we could reach and savor God? Mmm, within her few writings, Clare has much to tell us about that. We have time, because time is given to us, twenty-four hours a day. We cannot save it, nor can we get more than what is given. But it all depends on what we do with it.

- One further reflection! Neither Clare nor Francis use words like environment, or ecology. They did not have to face the increasing problems of pollution and deterioration we face today. Those are modern problems we've created. However, if our early sisters and brothers did not have to address them, they can still help with the solution. The respect they paid to each human creature, they extended to all of creation, and the reasons why they did so should inspire us today. It is not inconsequential that Clare insists that the community should not have more vegetable garden than needed. What we do to our sister, Mother Earth, affects our home.

I am going to put an end to this litany (which is far from being exhaustive). I am convinced that Clare has a lot to tell us – as do Francis and the first brothers and sisters – regarding our life today. But maybe we need to realize first that she led a real life, with real problems among real people. Or maybe I'm a dreamer in a time when everybody is getting used to a nightmare. If so, then, more than ever, Saint Clare, pray for us.

## The Ladies of Virtue: Considering a New Lens for the “Salutation of the Virtues”

Gregory Baker

### Introduction

St. Francis of Assisi's “Salutation of the Virtues”<sup>1</sup> would seem to be a document worthy of serious research and discussion. It is one of only four documents that are present in each of the four major manuscript collections<sup>2</sup> of Francis's writings. *SalVirt* is always the conclusion of the series of documents proceeding from “Admonitions” to “Letter to the Faithful” to “Letter to the Entire Order,” and concluding with *SalVirt*. This poetic document appears to present a concise list of essential virtues for the penitential Franciscan life.

Yet, though there has been some attention devoted for reflecting on the document for spiritual edification,<sup>3</sup> there has been astonishingly little work done to recover the historical circumstances surrounding the document and the *Sitz im Leben* which can better tie this document to this life of Francis and the lives, motivations, struggles and intentions of the early brothers and Poor Sisters. A short article by Leonard Lehmann<sup>4</sup> had been the only attempt to deal wholly with this document until the very recent publication of J. Hoeberichts' book *Paradise Restored: The Social Ethics of Francis of Assisi: A Commentary on His “Salutation of the Virtues.”*<sup>5</sup> I trust that Hoeberichts' work will not only spark renewed interest in *SalVirt*, but will also spur further research. Because of the breadth of literature concerning virtues and vices in the time of Francis, we easily run the risk of reading *SalVirt* as merely another document in the virtue tradition prevalent in Francis's time. Though in appearance *SalVirt* is just another concise list of virtues, a deeper look invites us to consider how Francis confounds the virtue tradition in the same way his life confounded many aspects of the world of his time.

I will first look at Francis's treatment of virtue in other writings, particularly Admonition 27, to gain a sense of Francis's use and development of virtues. This development suggests *SalVirt* as arising in the context of a particu-

lar situation from the later years of Francis's life. I will then engage the "book-ends" of *SalVirt*—simplicity and obedience. I will consider the brothers' struggle to maintain the heart of the movement and the bonds of simplicity, wisdom and obedience that form the foundation of the movement. Lastly, I will show where we might best understand *SalVirt* in the context of the ladies who exemplified simplicity, wisdom, obedience, poverty, charity, and humility in the most tangible form Francis had encountered—Clare and the Poor Sisters.<sup>6</sup>

## Francis's Development of Virtue

The virtues are found in Francis's writings within three particular contexts—of the personal struggle against sin and the vices, of a model of preaching for the brothers, and of the communal struggle to preserve the integrity of the movement against the vices of the society of the time.

Perhaps the earliest mention of virtues by Francis can be found in the Early Rule XXII, verse five, where Francis juxtaposes the virtues and vices with Jesus' parable of the sower. "And let us hate our body with its vices and sins." In verse ten he adds: "Let us be careful that we are not earth along the wayside, or that which is rocky or full of thorns, in keeping with what the Lord says in the Gospel: *The word of God is a seed.*"<sup>8</sup> Francis is certainly aware of how easily we stray from the life of penance, and is convinced that the virtuous, fruit-bearing life is not arrived at arbitrarily, but rather in a life grounded in particular virtues. Yet even in this so-called Admonition to the Brothers<sup>7</sup> there is a prophetic element with respect to the rocky grounds that await the brothers. Leonard Lehmann cites this verse from the Early Rule in his article on *SalVirt*, and in it he finds justification to consider *SalVirt* in the category of *laudi*, a song of praise influenced in its style by the courtly and knightly Latin rhythmical prose.<sup>9</sup> Under Lehmann's focus on such a genre, we find *SalVirt* more fitting for personal edification—as keys to what one soul may do to find holiness.

The virtue tradition of morality had been well-articulated by Augustine, who considered virtues as those dispositions which could form one into a faithful disciple of Christ, particularly in light of the Beatitudes and Paul's gifts of the Holy Spirit. Often the next historical reference after Augustine to Christian ethics, particularly virtue, is to Thomas Aquinas, who rooted ethics much more systematically in law and rationality. Historians have given little consideration that the Franciscans may have developed or modified the tradition on virtues. For example, in his comprehensive "return to the sources" of the history of Christian ethics (with heightened focus on the virtue tradition), Servais Pinckaers skips right from Augustine in the Patristic period to Thomas Aquinas in high Scholasticism.<sup>10</sup> If Francis did not affect the course of the virtue tradition in Christian thought, at the very least he has provided us with a historical

moment when virtue was lived and spoken about in refreshing ways. At the very least the Franciscan tradition certainly ought not to join theologians in passing over *SalVirt* uncritically.

We can look to the Later Rule IX to see that preaching on virtues and vices has become a developing model of how to fit a good summary of the penitential life into a succinct sermon. Francis tells the brothers to keep their language "well-considered and chaste . . . announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his word brief."<sup>11</sup> We see here that virtues are not only an appropriate way to preach the Gospel, but are also offered in light of a *critique* of developments in the preaching style of the learned brothers. They were focusing too much on words and too much on their academic learning, which only distracted from the seed of the word of God. Why else would Francis instruct on how to preach on virtues unless there was a growing dispute among the brothers who preached? Francis offers a model of a succinct sermon with a unique message in Admonitions 27 (Virtue Puts Vice to Flight).

Any consideration of *SalVirt* is lacking that does not at least consider the extensive treatment of virtues, and the model of a brief sermon on virtues which we find in Admonitions 27:

<sup>1</sup>Where there is charity and wisdom,  
there is neither fear nor ignorance.

<sup>2</sup>Where there is patience and humility,  
there is neither anger nor disturbance.

<sup>3</sup>Where there is poverty with joy,  
there is neither greed nor avarice.

<sup>4</sup>Where there is rest and meditation,  
there is neither anxiety nor restlessness.

<sup>5</sup>Where there is fear of the Lord to guard an entrance,  
there the enemy cannot have a place to enter.

<sup>6</sup>Where there is a heart full of mercy and discernment,  
there is neither excess nor hardness of heart.<sup>12</sup>

Though this would appear to be another brief sermon of the Franciscan life, its peculiarity has sparked some interesting historical study. Whereas the first three verses represent standard foundations and standard language of the Franciscan life, the last three verses are full of language that only appears once in Francis's writings.<sup>13</sup> André Jansen has proposed that we can read the last three verses of this admonition against the background of the likely encounter between Francis and the Eastern spirituality of the Hesychasts at the monastery of Camaldoli, where Francis learned about a new kind of mysticism and meditation that touched him deeply.<sup>14</sup> Jansen concludes from Admonition 27:

As love and wisdom, God is thus ultimately rest and quiet for the human person. When this happens, there is in the human person no more place for restless and sly ignorance or for agonizing fears. Where God rests, there the human person finds rest and quiet too.<sup>15</sup>

Not only does Jansen's conclusion lend interest for further study of how Admonition 27 may have had a very direct impact on the writing of *SalVirt*, but it also serves to solidify the notion that Francis feels free to use the Admonition genre to express ideas that are new, or even subversive, to the virtue and *laudi* traditions. Or we could say, as has Hoeberichts, that Francis had his own virtue "agenda" when composing his lists of virtues.<sup>16</sup>

Hoeberichts has opened the path for a much deeper recovery of the meaning of *SalVirt*. He finds that "the Salutation of the Virtues should be seen as a reflection *a posteriori*, in retrospect, on a life experience which had matured in the course of many years rather than as an *a priori* formulated and therefore theoretical program."<sup>17</sup> Hoeberichts then makes the case that this undated document should be considered to have occurred later in Francis's life, during the time when there arose a crisis among the learned brothers in the order.<sup>18</sup> He also finds connection to Francis's experience with the Muslims<sup>19</sup> (about which Hoeberichts himself has devoted much original research) to favor a later date.

Hoeberichts has done significant work to surmise, and to give a compelling case, that there arose among the brothers a crisis of obedience and a crisis of separating simplicity from wisdom. Hoeberichts compares *SalVirt* with the story of *True Joy*, in which a brother at the door sends Francis away, calling him simple and illiterate. Through the *Sitz im Leben* of this sort of brother we find opportunity to read *SalVirt* in an entirely different light.<sup>20</sup> Thus Hoeberichts sees in the long verse 14 on obedience not a conclusion to *SalVirt* but rather an urgent addition that arose from a crisis among the learned brothers.<sup>21</sup> At the heart of the crisis stood the growing notion within the brotherhood: "Several brothers could not see how these virtues, and particularly simplicity, could be combined with wisdom. In fact, they thought that simplicity went contrary to, and was incompatible with wisdom."<sup>22</sup> Thus, we find in verse 14 a detailed anthropology, reminding us that a human life itself comes from God and that human wisdom is ultimately in placing one's life at the service of the entire world. The competition and false sense of worth that can become attached with academic learning is put in its proper place by Francis, who sees that the Gospel is only being preached when a group of people embody a life that points not to their own merit or learning, but beyond themselves to the Spirit of God. Within this model we find the virtues as something to preserve a movement—virtues are for communal (not individual) edification. To make the most sense of this model, I propose we look to Clare and the sisters and their model of virtue, which might lend deeper meaning to *SalVirt*.

## The Poor Sisters as Virtue Embodied

The Salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary is found as a sort of introduction to *SalVirt* in the Portiuncula and Avignon manuscript collections. It makes two things clear. First, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the model of the virtuous life for the church. Second, the virtues are "poured into the hearts of the faithful" so that they may be faithful to God. This notion of virtues being poured into the heart echoes the traditional notion that the virtues are "infused" by the Holy Spirit. These virtues come from the Spirit, not from the heart or mind of humans, and do not necessarily make the person more successful or more holy—they make them more faithful. What we move towards in this life, for Francis, is being more faithful. In The Cantic of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano Francis shows that he connects this faithful sort of life with the Poor Sisters of San Damiano. He tells them "Live always in the truth, that you may die in obedience."<sup>23</sup> These sisters will "sell this fatigue [of their life of truth and obedience] at a very high price and each one will be crowned queen in heaven with the Virgin Mary."<sup>24</sup> Some have interpreted verse three, which says that the "life of the Spirit" is better than the life "without," implies that "Francis encourages the Poor Ladies to pay attention to the life of the Spirit within rather than that of external work."<sup>25</sup> I suggest that this interpretation might not give credit to the life of work the Poor Sisters lived so faithfully in the early years before enclosure was imposed upon them.<sup>26</sup> Could we consider that this life "without," from which Francis discourages the Ladies, might be the life of preaching and scholarly wisdom? Perhaps Francis wants to discourage the sisters from seeking such a life not because they are women, but because he sees them as a beacon for the faithful communal living that the brothers had struggled so much to maintain. From this presumption let us move to look at the simplicity and obedience we find espoused in Clare's Letters to Agnes to find what might be the most profound model of virtue in the Franciscan tradition. In Clare, wisdom and simplicity kiss.



In her Fourth Letter to Agnes, Clare speaks of the flowers and garments of virtue, which are poverty, humility and obedience.<sup>27</sup> Flowers, we must remember, grow from plants, which grow from seeds. In the

"little plant's" Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges she speaks of "walking courageously" the path of virtue with the sisters.<sup>28</sup> Clare also says in this letter that the sisters are to carry each other's burden of charity.<sup>29</sup> The Poor Sisters, who are not permitted to preach (with words) and are thus not prone to the same crisis of wisdom versus simplicity, offer a unique picture of Franciscan life. Their life of obedience, we will see, is connected intimately with poverty, humility and charity. For the Poor Sisters the soil of the virtuous life is community; the seeds were found in their mutual disposition toward one another—charity and obedience.<sup>30</sup> And in this life the Spirit could do the work to grow a new way of living in stark contrast to the world around them. What we find here is that Francis's notion of the virtues as intimately connected (*SalVirt* 5-7) is not an abstract, theoretical connection but the very practical connection of a life that is correctly grounded and rooted.

As the philosopher Wittgenstein said, all meaning is wrapped up in language and we only really discover the meaning of our words through use over time. For Francis, the depth of meaning of virtue slowly unfolded. Over time Francis found that it was the brotherhood itself that could go astray. His mature realizations saw that virtues and vices were structural. Together people could live a life of phenomenal virtue. Together people could lead one another astray and support one another in phenomenal vices. I propose that we could read verses six through seven in a different light. Perhaps in referring to possessing or not possessing virtues, Francis is speaking about the community. Though one member of community cannot perfectly possess all of the virtues, a community of people can. We can find this reaffirmed in Brother Anthony's "Mirror of Perfection," in which Francis says "a good Lesser Brother" is one who would possess the life and qualities of the following holy brothers: the "faith and love of poverty" of Brother Bernard, the "simplicity and purity" of Brother Leo, and so forth.<sup>31</sup> Each particular brother who is listed excels in particular virtues. The sum of these individuals becomes the communal whole of the virtuous life. And how is virtuous community actualized? Through obedience. When each one in community has become "subject and submissive to all men," then that person is open to the virtues of the other.

The Poor Ladies lived a faithful life in unity with one another. This is because of a mature understanding of obedience, or better, a simple wisdom of obedience. This is an obedience that recognizes the Spirit at work in another person, and reverences that Spirit in the other over the will of the self. In such a life the virtues of all are able to flourish. Consider what Clare says in her Testament:

I also beg that [sister] who will be in an office of the sisters to strive to exceed the others more by her virtues and holy life than by her office, so that, stimulated by her example, they obey her not so much because of her office as because of love.<sup>32</sup>

Here we find a model of leadership without power, authority without domination and relationship without pretense. The Poor Sisters, under Clare's balanced and Spirit-led guidance, worked out a way of obedience that was founded upon a commitment to relationship with one another that took precedence over self-will. These sisters were to have "charity, humility and unity toward one another."<sup>33</sup> In this horizontal sense of the virtuous life the Poor Sisters could live in mutual obedience, simplicity and poverty. They understood turning to God through turning to one another. Thus they could be filled with the Spirit yet remain always open for new movements of the Spirit. They had a wonderfully practical wisdom.

We must imagine now if such a community, when confronted with a stranger at night (i.e., the story of True Joy), would turn that person away harshly. Indeed, though the Sisters had rules against taking men into their dwellings (for good reasons), they would in the very least react with a sense of compassion and prayerful concern, not the haughty, condescending taunting of a people with no room for a stranger (and no room for the Spirit). I have focused on the frame of the list of virtues found in *SalVirt* verses nine through fourteen—the opening of Simplicity: "Pure holy Simplicity confounds all *the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the body*"<sup>34</sup> and the closing of Obedience—"Holy Obedience confounds every corporal and carnal wish."<sup>35</sup> Francis offers a reminder that we must keep space open for the Spirit so that we may act virtuously when the opportunity to live the Gospel presents itself. As Jansen says, "For them the virtues were in the first place powers of God, which therefore have their origin in God."<sup>36</sup> Virtues, when correctly lived in community, become the powers of the Spirit of God to transform the fabric of society. David Flood makes the crucial intuition that *SalVirt*:

is to the movement what the Song of Brother Sun is to Francis's life. Whereas in the Song Francis shows how far he has come as a man, in the Salutation he tells how the movement works within history. It undoes the evil which has come upon humankind through its social agreements and systems. It does so by coaxing people out of their prisons, which then crumble, and not by forcing them out and then razing their prisons. (The contemporary words for the process are non-violence and liberation).<sup>37</sup>

In confounding<sup>38</sup> the wisdom of this world, the virtues are those powers to begin humbly and charitably building a new world.

## Conclusion

If one takes *SalVirt* at face value, this seems to be a document that nicely summarizes the Franciscan life and typifies how Francis might articulate a

model of a brief sermon on virtues and vices within the genre of courtly love. Yet if one surmises that *SalVirt* arose from the particular crisis of the learned brothers and their desire to assert their individual learning over and above the unity and mutual obedience of the brotherhood, then we have grounds to read *SalVirt* through a new lens. Admittedly, I offer the Poor Sisters as a fitting lens through which to read *SalVirt* out of a hunch and a speculation. Yet this speculation is founded on what we know of the development of the brotherhood as well as what we know of the integrity and exceptional unity of the life of the Poor Sisters in their early years. If one reads the document for its structure—framed between how simplicity confounds wisdom and how obedience requires submitting the entire person (including one's learning and status) to the entire world—then the virtues become the seeds of preservation for a prophetic movement. These are not seeds to protect individual holiness as much as they are to maintain the integrity of a movement whose way of life can confound the ways of a world that wants to exalt the individual over the community, the mind over the heart. In the Poor Sisters we find a living model of the "ladies" who were able to live the virtues in such a way as to possess all of them. These virtues were possessed not by individual achievement, but by the correct understanding of one's place in community. This is the community that is truly open to the breath of the Spirit. The self, after all, is only a gift of the Spirit. As Francis says, one should be subject and submissive to all "insofar as it *has been given to them from above* by the Lord."<sup>40</sup> Such a disposition only makes sense in the community in which this gift of the self can be nurtured to create a larger entity: a movement that is of the Spirit, so strong in its virtues that it truly puts the vices of the world to flight, prophetically calling those who experience it towards the building of a more charitable and just world.<sup>41</sup> *SalVirt* is praxis-founded on a lived experience and not on a theoretical framework. This is the praxis of maintaining room for the Spirit as community changes.

I will conclude with one consideration for ministry in today's world. In a recent presentation to Catholic ministry leaders in the United States, Ronald Rolheiser said:

Faith and faith communities work well where poverty, naiveté, innocence, and helplessness exist. The Kingdom of God doesn't work nearly as well within affluent, sophisticated, and self-reliant societies. The task for us, then, however difficult, is to become post-affluent, post-sophisticated, post-critical, and post-self-reliant. We need to live willingly those qualities of poverty, innocence, and powerlessness that preceded our current status.<sup>42</sup>

Francis knew well the tensions involved with trying to keep rooted a people becoming learned and self-reliant. We might do well to spend a good deal of

time with the Salutation of the Virtues to consider how a faith community remains rooted as its people change. If a community wants to sustain room for the Spirit there must be a deep praxis of simplicity and obedience within that community. There must be the wisdom of the Poor Sisters.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hereafter *SalVirt*.

<sup>2</sup>The manuscript collections of Assisi 338, the Portiuncula, Avignon and the Lower Lands of Northern Italy.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Lehmann, OFM Cap, "The Salutation of the Virtues," Paul Barret, OFM, trans., *Greyfriars Review* 11. 3 (1997): 229-41.

<sup>4</sup>Lehmann's article is one of the only scholarly articles written on *SalVirt* prior to Hoerberichts, situates the document within the preaching genre and considers it to be in line with the courtly love tradition of presented virtues that was prevalent in Francis's time. Yet Lehmann is more concerned with an interpretation of the lists of individual virtues and vices presented in *SalVirt*.

<sup>5</sup>J. Hoerberichts, *Paradise Restored: The Social Ethics of Francis of Assisi: A Commentary on His "Salutation of the Virtues"* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup>Margaret Carney, *The First Franciscan Woman* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1993), 38. Francis (and very likely others among Francis's early fraternity) was awed by the lifestyle of the Poor Sisters.

<sup>7</sup>The inserted title for Early Rule, Chapter 22.

<sup>8</sup>Early Rule 22:5 in *Francis of Assisi Early Documents*, Vol. 1, *The Saint*, Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv, and William J. Short, OFM, eds. (New York, London and Manila: New City Press, 1999). All quotations from Francis's writings in this volume hereafter cited as FA:ED I.

<sup>9</sup>Lehmann, 230.

<sup>10</sup>Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, OP (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995). Interestingly, Pinckaers introduces his discussion of Aquinas (see pp. 216-17) with a discussion of the notion of trying to ground morality too heavily in reason, which is, in many ways, the very same struggle which I will be arguing framed Francis's unique presentations of virtues which were written more than half a century before Aquinas.

<sup>11</sup>Later Rule IX: 3 in FA:ED I.

<sup>12</sup>FA:ED I, 136-37. Thorough explications (for personal edification more than for scholarly background) can be found in Damien Isabell, OFM, "The 'Virtues' in Admonition XVII of the Writings of Francis of Assisi and Their Usefulness in Spiritual Direction," *The Cord* 38.1 (1988): 35-57, and Cajetan Esser, OFM, "Meditations on the Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi," M. Belone Apel, OSF, trans., *Greyfriars Review* Vol. 6 Supplement (1992): 159-68. Robert J. Karris, OFM gives an interesting historical treatment of the various virtue traditions with which Francis's list seems to align in *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1999).

<sup>13</sup>FA:ED I, 137, footnote a: "Whereas the first three verses contain words and themes frequently present in Francis's writings, e.g. charity, patience, humility, poverty and joy, the following three verses are filled with hapaxlogomena, words which are used only once, e.g., meditation, restlessness, *superfluitas* (excess) and *induratio* (hardness of heart)."

<sup>14</sup>André Jansen, "Words of Salvation of Saint Francis: A Commentary on Admonition 27," *Franciscan Digest*, IV.2 (1994): 1-24. Jansen gives sound documentation for Francis having visited Camaldoni in "Traduction, sens et structure de la 27 admonition v. 4-6," *Franziskanische Studien*, 64 (1982): 111-27.



<sup>15</sup>Jansen, 22.

<sup>16</sup>Hoeberichts, 44.

<sup>17</sup>Hoeberichts, 16.

<sup>18</sup>Hoeberichts, 25.

<sup>19</sup>Hoeberichts, 248. Hoeberichts spent many years living in predominantly Muslim Pakistan where he began to understand Francis's writings (particularly the sixteenth chapter of the Early Rule) in a new light.

<sup>20</sup>Hoeberichts, 22-24.

<sup>21</sup>Hoeberichts, 27.

<sup>22</sup>Hoeberichts, 49.

<sup>23</sup>The Canticle of Exhortation for the Ladies of San Damiano (CantExh), verse 2.

<sup>24</sup>CantExh, verse 6.

<sup>25</sup>FA:ED I, 115, footnote c.

<sup>26</sup>For a much more scholarly explanation see J.-F. Godet, "A New Look at Clare's Gospel Plan of Life," *Greyfriars Review* 12 Supplement (1998): 1-80. The founding community at San Damiano was by no means a cloister. The women worked, had interaction with community, and lived Francis's vision in a radical way.

<sup>27</sup>Fourth Letter to Agnes, verses 17-18. All quotations from Clare's writings come from *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, Regis Armstrong, OFM Cap, ed. and trans (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988).

<sup>28</sup>Letter to Ermentrude of Bruges, 3.

<sup>30</sup>LEr 17.

<sup>31</sup>Hoeberichts, 23: "Hence according to Francis, the practice of the virtues is not in the first place meant to promote the virtuous life or the moral excellence of the individual brother, but to help the brothers with all God's strength and virtues to disentangle themselves and their movement from the hold that the spirit of the world has on their society and to devote themselves fully to the realization of their vision of a new world."

<sup>32</sup>Brother Anthony, "Mirror of Perfection" no. 85: "First, How He Described the Perfect Brother" in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2, *The Prophet*, Regis Armstrong, OFM, Cap, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, OFM Conv, and William J. Short, OFM, eds., (New York, London and Manila: New City Press, 2000), 333.

<sup>33</sup>Clare's Testament, 61-62.

<sup>34</sup>Clare's Testament, 59.

<sup>35</sup>SalVirt, 9.

<sup>36</sup>SalVirt, 14.

<sup>37</sup>Jansen, "Words of Salvation," 21.

<sup>38</sup>David Flood, OFM, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement* (Quezon City, Philippines: The Franciscan Institute of Asia, 1989), 170.

<sup>39</sup>For an interesting discussion of the verb "confound," see Flood, 169-70.

<sup>40</sup>SalVirt, 14.

<sup>41</sup>Hoeberichts makes the case in his conclusion that the values of *SalVirt* are the antithesis of today's values of globalism.

<sup>42</sup>Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, "Creating an Evangelizing Spirituality: Beyond Ecclesial and Theological Maintenance: The Search for a New Missiology Within a Secularized Culture" in *Ministry Through the Lens of Evangelization: Major Presentation from the North American Institute for Catholic Evangelization* (Washington, DC: Secretariat for Evangelization, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), 108.

*The Poor ladies lived a faithful life in unity with one another. This is because of a mature understanding of obedience, or better, a simple wisdom of obedience. [Theirs] is an obedience that recognizes the Spirit at work in another person, and reverences that Spirit in the other over the will of the self. In such a life the virtues of all are able to flourish.*

G. Baker



## Evangelization: A Poor Clare Tradition

Cyprian Lynch, OFM<sup>+</sup>

This article is an excerpt from a publication that was in the process of preparation under the direction of the late Cyprian Lynch, OFM. We feel it is fitting to include in *The Cord* at this time. We have adapted some of the style of headings and other designs as found in the manuscript that was being prepared.

### AGNES OF BOHEMIA: BOUNTEOUS MERCY FOR THE AFFLICTED

SOPHIE, A NOBLE LADY WHO WAS married to a soldier of Prague named Conrad, lived near the entrance of the convent where God's handmaid Agnes resided. This Sophie was, for many years, devoted to that virgin of Christ, and it happened that after giving birth she remained so seriously ill that, for several days, she took neither food nor drink and looked more dead than alive. But one day, being barely conscious, she said: "Oh, if only my mistress Agnes would send me from her own hand an apple to eat!" Conrad, confident that his wife would regain her health through the merits of that beloved virgin, went to her in tears and begged her to intercede with God for his wife and send her an apple, for he said that if she did so his spouse would recover.

Agnes, who always extended bounteous mercy to the afflicted, felt such pity for the grieving soldier that she went immediately to the monastery orchard. Although neither she nor the sisters who accompanied her could see any fruit on the tree she approached, when she made the sign of the cross over it and invoked the Most Blessed Trinity, she could see three apples on one of its little branches. These she picked and sent quickly to Sophie with the message: "You may confidently eat these apples which God has miraculously provided, because by them he will restore health to both your body and soul." Conrad brought the salutary antidote back to his wife, rejoicing, and, invoking the name of Christ, confidently touched them to her mouth. Sensing the power of God communicated by the apples, she slowly opened her eyes, took them in her hands, and began avidly to devour them as if she had never been ill. So it

was that Sophie's health was restored through the power of the holy cross and Agnes's merits.

After Conrad's death several years later, Sophie served God as a chaste widow, becoming by her works of mercy a mother to all the poor and enjoying, as the virgin of God predicted, even greater mental vigor . . . .

This virgin of Christ Agnes clearly demonstrated by her actions the charity she felt toward her neighbor. When her strength was failing because of her severe mortifications, the pope and her superiors bade her partake of the necessities of life more unsparingly. She reluctantly agreed, but distributed the things sent to relieve her own weakness to the sick and infirm sisters whom she frequently visited in person, showing solicitous care for all their needs. She tenderly drew them to her maternal bosom as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

She was kind and generous toward all in need, but very strict and sparing toward herself. She went hungry in order to feed others but, when fasting made her pale, she was most displeased if anyone praised her. Both before and after she became a religious she was compassionate toward all who had recourse to her and assisted them with human and divine remedies. She set prisoners and fugitives free, liberated criminals under sentence of death, reconciled those at enmity, and assisted to the best of her ability all who had recourse to her. The Almighty filled her heart with piety and poured grace upon her lips so that she rejoiced with those who rejoiced and wept with those who wept. Even if she herself were overcome with sorrow, burdened with misfortune, or depressed by adversity, she would comfort with soothing words of consolation all who mourned. Always zealous for the salvation of her neighbor, she never passed over the faults of her sisters in silence but, if she had to rebuke a sister needing correction, she did so with great charity and maturity, acting more severely with those she loved more. But after admonishing the sister, she would exhort her to mend her ways. Then she would fall down at her feet and say: "Forgive me, my dear sister, if I have caused you any sadness."

*Trans. FR. JOSEPH D. DOINO, O.F.M.*

### THE SEARCH FOR HEAVENLY GOODS

BLESSED AGNES OF BOHEMIA, although she lived in a period far removed from ours, still remains a shining example of the Christian faith and heroic charity which invites us to reflection and imitation.

We can well say of her life and spirituality the words from the First Letter of Peter: "To pray better, keep a calm and sober mind." That is what the chief of the Apostles wrote to the Christians of his day, and he added: "Above all, never let your love for each other grow insincere. . . . Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling" (1 Pt 4, 7-9). This was precisely St. Agnes's

plan of life: from her earliest years she directed her life to the search for heavenly goods. Having rejected several marriage proposals, she dedicated herself totally to God, so that in her life he "might be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 4, 11).

Having come to know the spiritual experience of Clare of Assisi from the Friars Minor who had arrived in Prague, she wanted to follow her example of Franciscan poverty. With her own inherited wealth she founded the hospital of St. Francis at Prague and a monastery for the "Poor Sisters" or "Damianites," which she herself entered on Pentecost day 1234, professing the solemn vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

The letters that St. Clare of Assisi sent her, exhorting her to continue on the journey she had undertaken, are famous. Thus arose a spiritual friendship which lasted almost 20 years, although the two saints never met one another.

"Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling." This was the norm to which St. Agnes constantly directed her activity, always accepting with total confidence the events which Providence permitted, in the certainty that everything passes away, but that truth remains forever!

This is the teaching that the new saint gives to her dear compatriots and to everyone. Human history is in continual movement; times change with the various generations and with scientific discoveries; new technologies, as well as new problems, appear upon the horizon of mankind, always journeying on; but the truth of Christ, which enlightens, saves and lasts, even amid changing events. Everything that happens on earth is willed or permitted by the Most High so that men and women may thirst or long for truth, tend toward it, seek it and reach it!

"Each one of you has received a special grace. . . . Put yourself at the service of others," St. Peter also wrote, concluding: "Whoever has an office should fulfill it with the energy received from God, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 4, 10-11). In her long life, afflicted also by illness and suffering, St. Agnes indeed energetically fulfilled her service of charity for the love of God, contemplating as in a mirror Jesus Christ, as St. Clare suggested to her: "Indeed, blessed poverty, holy humility and inexpressible charity are reflected in that mirror" (4LAG 18).

And so, Agnes of Bohemia, whom today we have the joy of invoking as "saint," although she lived in times very distant from ours, played a noteworthy role in the civil and cultural development of her nation and is our contemporary because of her Christian faith and charity; she is an example of courage and spiritual help for the young people who generously consecrate themselves to the religious life; she is an ideal of sanctity for all those who follow Christ; she is a stimulus of charity practiced toward everyone with total dedication, overcoming every barrier of race, nation or mentality; she is the heavenly pro-

tectress of our difficult daily journey. To her we can therefore turn with great trust and hope.

## SECOND ORDER PROTOMARTYRS (1259-1291)

*"Since one and the same spirit has led the brothers and the Poor Ladies out of the world, our relationship with the Friars Minor should be especially sisterly and close." The parallel geographic expansion of the First and Second Orders is but one evidence that such a relationship existed from the very beginning of the Franciscan Family. The founding of a friary anywhere in Europe was almost always followed by the establishment of a Poor Clare monastery at the same place. This was also true of friaries located at the fringes of Europe where incursion by hostile armies was an ever-present threat, with the result that, by the end of the thirteenth century, a number of Second Order houses were located adjacent to territories under Tartar or Moslem control. It is therefore not surprising that by 1300 more than 150 Clares in Poland, Spain and the Near East had achieved the goal their foundress desired but never attained: "martyrdom for the love of the Lord" (PC 6, 6). Little is known of the 60 Clares massacred by marauding Tartars at Zawiercie north of Cracow in 1259. The same is true of the unknown number put to death at Antioch in 1268, and the 20 killed at Jaén in southern Spain in the course of Moorish attacks between 1298 and 1407. We do, however, possess the following brief accounts of the martyrdom of the nuns killed at Tripoli in 1289, and at Acre at 1291.*

## MARTYRDOM BY STRATAGEM

AT TRIPOLI, MARAUDERS BROKE into monasteries of nuns, seized everything they could lay hands on and killed or violated the handmaids of God who resided therein. After her capture, the superior of one of these monasteries, a woman of considerable beauty and charm, but even more distinguished by her faith, was assigned as booty to a man named Admirandus. Because of her beauty and in hope of converting her to his own way of life, this non-believer determined to make this spouse of Christ his bride. When her would-be lover multiplied his kisses and embraces, this prudent virgin pondered the brevity and inconstancy of carnal love. Then, to divert his attention and escape to her true Spouse by the road of martyrdom, she sweetly addressed Admirandus as follows: "If you are to be my beloved husband, it is my wish that you be protected against the threat of death. Now, I will teach you the words of a powerful song I know and, no matter what danger threatens you, if you repeat them you will be spared." Eager to be instructed in her art, the unsuspecting man assented to this proposal. Then Luceta—that was the virgin's name—said: "To test the power

of this song, try to slash my neck with your sword while I chant its sacred words." Admirandus was horrified by this proposal and refused to assent to it. But Luceta said, "If you love me you can do this without harming me and will have proof of the truth of my teaching." Impelled by the tenderness of his love and not wanting to offend her, he consented to accede to her request. When she bent her head and softly began to recite the *Ave Maria* he struck her neck with his sword, cutting off her head; her body then fell to the ground. Thus did Luceta, a daughter of light, become a minister of the heavenly lights and a sharer in the brilliance of the eternal light to which she had dedicated herself.

*Trans. SR. BARTHOLOMEW McDONALD, O.S.F.*

## WITNESSES TO FAITH AND CHASTITY

AFTER CAPTURING THE CITY OF ACRE on May 19, 1291, the Saracens slew or took captive more than 30,000 men and women. The Sisters of St. Clare had a monastery there at the time, and when its zealous abbess learned that the Saracens had entered the city, she was afraid they would violate the sisters' chastity. She therefore called them all together in chapter room to give them salutary advice and to dispose them for martyrdom in advance, lest they be deluded by the infidels. "My daughters and sisters," she said, "let us look with contempt on this miserable life so that, strong in faith, we may offer ourselves with spotless hearts and bodies to our Spouse, the Lord Jesus Christ and gain eternal life at the price of our blood. Now do what you see me do." Then this intrepid lady mutilated her nose with a small knife so that her whole face became covered with blood. Animated by a like love for their faith and chastity, the other sisters cut their faces in various ways. With countenances stained with their virginal blood, they presented a horrifying sight. When the Saracens entered the monastery with unsheathed swords, thirsting for Christian blood, the holy virgins ran to meet them, but the faces those hungry dogs then beheld were repulsive rather than beautiful. Amazed but horrified, the Saracens then put all the sisters to the sword.

The friars, who also had a house in that city, were all killed in the same manner.

*Trans. FR. CANISIUS CONNORS, O.F.M.†*

## WORSHIP AND WITNESS UNDER FIRE (1287-1994)

*Over the centuries, communities of Poor Clares have not infrequently been victims of war or objects of persecution. Their valiant efforts to remain faithful to their vocation of worship and witness in such difficult circumstances, while at the same time promoting reconciliation and lending support and assistance to the lay people who shared their fate, show them to have been remarkably*

*heroic women. Surely the Lord has remained faithful to the promise he made to Clare when she confronted the Moors at the gates of San Damiano: "I will always defend you" (LegCl 22).*

## PYENIN, POLAND 1287

IN 1287, WHEN POLAND WAS INVADED by a formidable army of Tartars, Bl. Cunegunda and 70 of her nuns were obliged to leave their monastery in Sandeck. To escape the ferocity of these infidels, they took refuge at Pyenin in a fortress situated at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. When the hordes of barbarians who were ravaging the country besieged the castle where these terror-stricken handmaids of the Lord had retreated, they cast themselves at the feet of their mother and implored her to save them. Cunegunda reassured them and bade them have confidence in Jesus, their divine Spouse. Then she betook herself to prayer and God renewed in her behalf the prodigy formerly wrought at St. Damian's at the prayer of Clare. The Tartars, checked by an unseen power, were seized with panic; the army disappeared and fled, and the spouses of Jesus Christ were saved.

## NUREMBERG, GERMANY 1524

EACH DAY WE RECEIVED NEW THREATS, so that we grew disheartened, and each night feared it would be the last night in the convent, for each day we heard deplorable, terrible things: how the peasants destroyed so many monasteries and drove the inmates of the convents away in misery from all they had . . . .

Since we were thus in grievous fear and distress, and daily expected greater misfortune, and bowed and dodged, so that we could scarce hold divine services or ring the bells in the choir; for when anything was heard from us, cursing and abuse resounded and shouting in the church was directed at us; stones were thrown into our choir and the windows broken in the church. Shameful songs were sung in the cemetery, and we were threatened that, if we but rang for matins one more night, they would do something terrible to us. But we risked it continuously, trusting in the grace of God, and let no night pass without ringing the bell or praying matins.

## GRAVELINES, FRANCE 1644-1653

IN 1644, THE VENERABLE ABBESS desired to found another house to relieve the crowded state of the convent at Gravelines. The town of Rouen seemed the most suitable for her purpose; but, unhappily, France was then at war with Spain and the abbess found her work suddenly stopped. The town of Gravelines was besieged by the French and the nuns and their pupils found the peace they

had enjoyed for 17 years disturbed during the 43 days of the siege. The French general-in-chief visited the convent and the thanksgiving for the taking of the town by the French was sung in the convent chapel, the parish church being almost destroyed during the bombardments. . . .

In 1653, Gravelines was again beleaguered and, after a siege which lasted 69 days, was again taken over by the Spaniards. The convent met with a terrible catastrophe. The powder magazine of the fortress caught fire and the explosion caused great damage to the town and the fortifications. The convent, only separated from the fortress by the Place Royale, was much injured, but none of the nuns or pupils were hurt, though they were much terrified by the sad event, and some had to leave the ruined convent for a time to recover from the shock and until the dilapidated buildings were restored. Scarcely were these works finished when war once again broke out between Spain and France. Gravelines was once again attacked, and the poor nuns suffered great anxiety and fear for many days.

### **LYONS, FRANCE 1794**

IN 1794 ALL THE SISTERS WERE ARRESTED AND SENTENCED to the guillotine. On the very day they were to be executed, they were set free because of the fall of Robespierre. They were very disappointed not to die as martyrs. They had vowed to say a daily prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary that they might stay together which was always made possible. And so it happened, even while they were in prison. It was only in 1806 that they could resume their traditional way of life in a new place where a convent was built for them.

### **COLUMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA 1863**

ON JULY 11, 1863, DURING THE ADMINISTRATION of the infamous President Cipriano de Mosquera, the few existing monasteries in the country suffered secularization. Our monastery became a barracks and prison. News of this caused the death of our abbess. When the twenty-four sisters in the convent were removed, they were sheltered in groups in the homes of their relatives where, with great fervor, they tried to live community life and observe the regulations with great fervor.

### **JERUSALEM, ISRAEL 1927-1967**

IN 1927, AN EARTHQUAKE DID considerable damage to the property. Then in 1948, during the Jewish War of Independence, the community again experienced very difficult days, enduring machine gun fire and incendiary attack. When calm returned, the monastery awoke to find itself in Israeli territory

. . . During the Six Days War of 1967, bullets and mortar shells again rained down on the monastery garden, leveled the trees and did particular damage to the convent roof. However, the Poor Clares remained steadfast at their post of prayer and were careful to participate in the fast for peace requested by the religious authorities.

### **MADRID, SPAIN 1936**

ON JULY 20, 1936, THE SISTERS WERE FORCED to flee from their home as militiamen began to invade it, destroy both the church and convent, burn habits and desecrate the holy images. The sisters were able to take refuge for the night in the stairway of an old run-down hotel, with no food, water or light. The next morning they were found, harshly interrogated and threatened with death. But God was good! They were taken to the mayor, a good Christian man, who provided for them to be taken to the homes of families and friends. Eventually, in 1939, they were able to return to their monastery, but it was so devastated that it had to be rebuilt.

### **BURMA 1941**

WHEN WORLD WAR II BROKE OUT IN 1941, our sisters were forced to leave Burma. Forbidden to take any luggage, they fastened their breviaries to their tunics, put on all their habits, one over the other, and covered themselves with their mantles, thus becoming movable shelves. Alarmed at their huge figures, the crew only reluctantly allowed the sisters to board the plane. Bombs fell to the ground seconds after the plane took flight.

### **BEIRUT, LEBANON 1974-1990**

OUR COMMUNITY HAS LIVED THROUGH 16 years of war; that is half of its life! On the material level we have endured all the vicissitudes of war in union with the people. But our poverty has been even more strongly felt due to bombing raids, with the resulting anxiety, fear, nervous tension and periods of continual upheaval, forcing us to adjust our timetable and the Hours of the Office to the various dangers and the lack of electricity and water. There was the added danger of going out shopping in the midst of gunfire and the blowing up of cars. We often have to leave our cells and pass sleepless nights in the dormitory shelter, praying the rosary during the worst of the bombardments. It is a real form of poverty for years on end to ask oneself on going to bed, "Will we still be alive in the morning? Will the monastery still be here?" On the other hand, this poverty has made us keenly aware of God's Providence. . . . Our hopes and dreams are to heal the wounds caused by the wars between Christians and Moslems, and build up respect for equal rights between the two

communities, so that Christians may give the Muslim people a credible witness to Christ.

## NORTH VIETNAM 1976–1979

OUR EXPERIENCE OF SOCIALISM CONSISTED mainly in two things: manual labor and participation in the social activities of the people. It was not easy for us to harmonize our life of prayer with these activities, but we accepted positively the unusual circumstance offered to us by divine Providence. . . . We had to attend frequently the meetings of the people and the indoctrination sessions in the village. From time to time we were called on to do public works such as hydraulics, repairing roads, building schools and working on state farms. During the years 1978–79, our monastery became a cooperative for the production of brooms, sedge floor rugs and bamboo articles. We had the joy of working together with a Buddhist nun. . . . We hope that the presence of our monastery, as well as other Christian and Buddhist monasteries, can be a sign reminding people of their thirst for peace and interiority, and inviting them to deepen the meaning of their existence.

## BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND 1990

IN TROUBLED BELFAST OF TODAY, WE BELIEVE we have a special mission: to pray, to live our lives for peace, reconciliation and justice, to witness to the love and goodness of God, to mediate his love and compassion to the afflicted people who come to us and write to us. . . . There have been days and nights during these troubled times that we will never forget. For instance, the nights when there seemed to be no end to shooting, with snipers everywhere, and we used to come down to midnight office in the dark for fear of attracting unwanted attention. . . . On Bloody Friday, twenty bombs exploded in the city within an hour, some of them quite close to us. As doors and windows rattled again and again, we wondered if we would be the next target. There are many other



such occasions that we remember, but despite all the darkness and pain we are happy to be here with our afflicted people.

## ZAGREB, CROATIA 1994

ALL OUR CROATIAN PEOPLE HAVE lived the last several months in mortal danger. . . . Now there are about 170 churches destroyed, about 300,000 people exiled from their homes, and about 2,000 have died as victims. . . . In some towns and villages of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the horrible war continues. At our monastery, many exiles beg food and bedding. When we receive something from good persons of foreign countries, there are hundreds of people in need of it. In the outside rooms of our monastery some exiles are staying, and several sisters of our community are serving them. We are happy that, through the goodness of others, our community can help our poor people. Please, we humbly ask you, help us in this situation as much as you can. There are a hundred thousand people who have nothing.

## About Our Contributors

**Gregory Baker** is a graduate student at St. Bonaventure University working toward an MA in Theology. He serves the Diocese of Erie, PA in Youth and Young Adult Ministry. He and his wife, Jennifer, live in Erie, PA. This is his second appearance in *The Cord*.

**Ilia Delio, OSF** is associate professor of ecclesial history and Director of the Franciscan Center at Washington Theological Union. A well-known writer and presenter, Ilia is a frequent contributor to *The Cord*. Her most recent book is *Franciscan Prayer*, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press.

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**Cyprian Lynch, OFM**, was a member of the teaching faculty of the Franciscan Institute until illness forced his retirement a few years ago. His last major project was research on the tradition of evangelization in the Franciscan story.

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FRIARS AND JEWS IN  
THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE**

Edited by Steven J. McMichael and Susan Myers

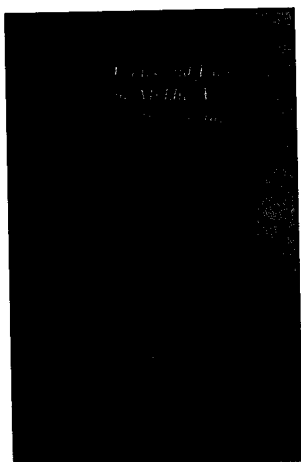
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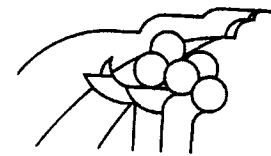
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**Workshop/Retreat. August 11-14, 2005. Thursday-Sunday. Journeying Into the Early Documents of Francis of Assisi.** Marla Lang, FSPA and Corrina Thomas, FSPA. Addresses the context of Franciscanism today which continues to be influenced by the interaction of Eastern and Western philosophies. At The Portiuncula Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. For information, contact Mary Ann Hamilton at 815-464-3880 or Corinna Thomas at 815-469-4883; or email: [portc4p@aol.com](mailto:portc4p@aol.com).

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## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint. Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Cantic of the Creatures
CtExh	The Cantic of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation o the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OF	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacapone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFI	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano

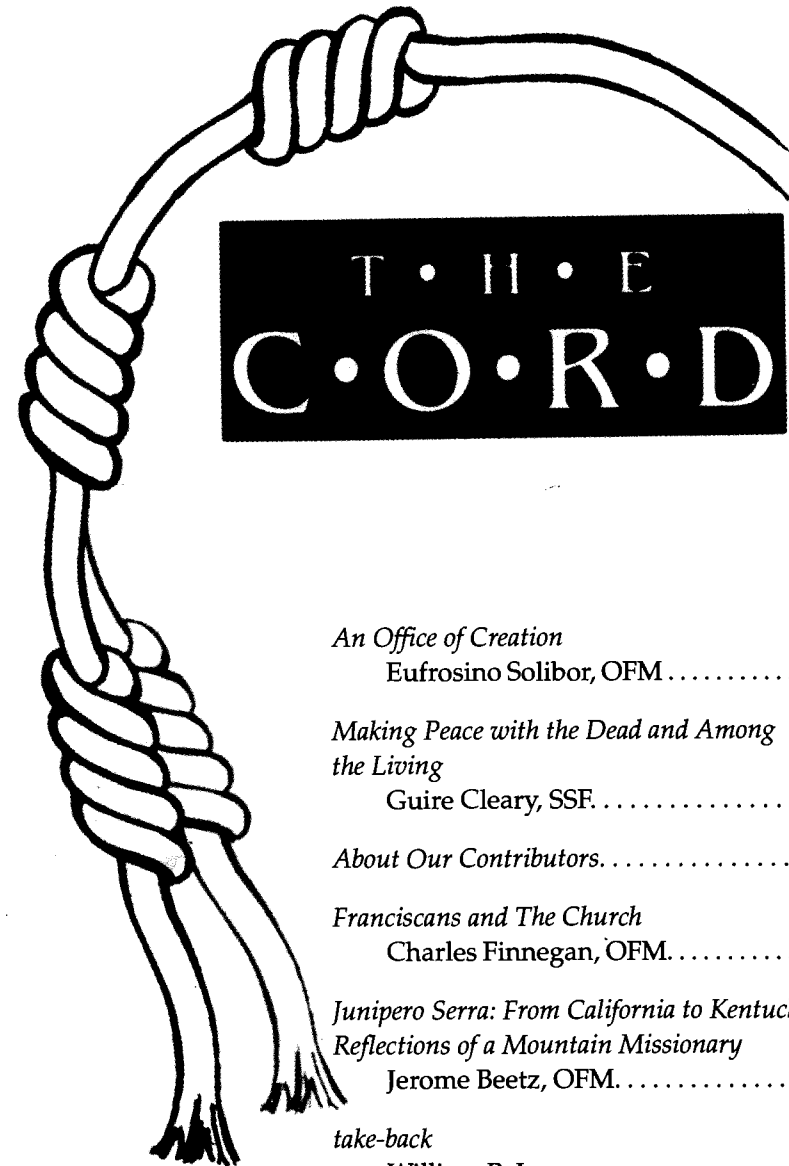
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4. References to Scripture sources or to basic Franciscan sources should not be footnoted, but entered within parenthesis immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:  
(1Cor. 13:6). (2Cel 5:8).  
(RegNB 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.

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

*The Cord*, 55.5 (2005)

**Editorial**

"May the Lord give you peace!"

"God's peace be with you!"

"Peace and all good."

Would that the world would heed these invocations. Bombings, kidnappings, talk of racial profiling—the news these days is certainly not peaceful. The feast of Francis, soon to be upon us, gives us the opportunity to pause and consider the many conflicts, religious and political, that are part of our daily information overload.

But is it not sometimes helpful the past *is* prologue? The material in this issue affirms that truth. Francis created his own "Office of the Passion" and "Canticle of Creation" as part of his spiritual journey into the heart of God. Brother Eufrosino Solibor has created a new "Office" as part of his journey. It is hoped that many will pray it joyfully! Both Guire Cleary and Jerome Beetz have written of personal encounters with the legacy of oppression and poverty, and of the hope for healing. Brother Guire writes: "When hearts are open to each other, when the goodness and the scars are honored, peace can enter in." Brother Jerome draws upon the life of Junipero Serra and the words of John Duns Scotus to envision the possibilities in his own life and ministry. And Father Charles Finnegan once again graces our pages with the challenge to be faithful to our heritage: "While Francis wanted his brotherhood to be 'always submissive' to the Church, his only *unconditional* commitment was to the Gospel." While his article originated as a presentation to the brothers of his province some years ago, it has not lost its value for the current realities of our post-modern, post-conciliar age.

Lastly, how could we move toward October 4th without a little levity? Bill Jones' poem about the "God of Juniper"—who gives all we love and desire and sometimes takes it back again so as to give us love in a newer form—touches a familiar chord in Franciscan life. (Pun recognized, but not intended!)

With the heart of Francis himself, our wish for each of you is: "May the Lord give you peace!" "God's peace be with you!" "Peace and all good."

*Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF*

## An Office of Creation

Eufrosino Solibar, OFM

### Introduction

When the Office of the Passion of Saint Francis<sup>1</sup> was introduced to us in class by Fr. André Cirino, OFM,<sup>2</sup> I was reminded of my own long suffering, pain and isolation, as well as happy moments in my prayer life. Before this course, the Office of the Passion was unknown to me, let alone how to let this text of St. Francis penetrate my life.<sup>3</sup> The first time I saw it was in the book *The Writings of St. Francis* by Fr. Ignatius Brady, OFM.<sup>4</sup> To read it or to study it and to pray it deeply was not my priority at that time.

Now, however, I realize its value in my life's spiritual journey. It can lead me closer to God and revive my longing to pray psalms, hymns and canticles. The more I recited or sang the Office of the Passion in class or in private, the more it penetrated the center of my heart where God dwells. The Office of the Passion I recite or sing is also sung beautifully by my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who Gallant and Cirino call "the Hero."<sup>5</sup>

Now, I understand the value of the Office of the Passion in the life of St. Francis as well as in my own prayer life. Aware that St. Francis created this Little Office himself, I too have attempted to craft my own personal prayer to give praise, glory, honor, blessing and thanksgiving to God the Creator together with all created beings, seen and unseen, even those yet to be created.

### "Psalms" of the *Office of Creation*

All eight "psalms" that follow focus on God the Creator and God's creation. Very often we focus our attention on our fallen nature rather than how good God saw it was: "*God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.*"<sup>6</sup> God created everything good, regardless of our own felt imperfections or deformities.

We belong to One Creator who is continuously creating, and our being created will end when we reach the ultimate, perfect image and likeness of His Son—our Lord Jesus Christ—fully human and fully divine. This ultimate reality

and mystery of God comes from the articulation of love and unity, beauty and order in our Lord Jesus Christ in perfect unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

When St. Francis created his "psalms" for his Little Office, he created a collage of psalm verses to convey his thought. In this section I would like to present my own "psalms" or composite of psalm verses of what I call my *Office of Creation*.

### Psalm One

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Matins (about midnight)	Psalm 1: Pss. 5: 2-3, 8, 12; 9: 2-4, 8-9, 11-12, 17, 19-21 33: 1-3, 6-7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 22

In the evening watch, when people are asleep, God creates anew because of love and mercy. The way God judges the people and all creation is by spreading justice to all. God does not want us to destroy creation but rather is ready to forgive and forget the mistakes of humanity. As for those who remain awake in the middle of the night—humanity, animals and plants—all give thanks and praise for the wonders God has done. The house of God, Mother Earth, provides for all our needs. Even the animals at night can find food for their young.

### Psalm 1

Hear my words, O Lord; listen to my song.<sup>7</sup>  
Hear my voice,<sup>8</sup> my king, my God! To you I pray, O Lord.  
I can enter your house because of your great love.  
I can worship in your house<sup>9</sup> because of my reverence for you, Lord.

Then all your creatures<sup>10</sup> who take refuge in you will be glad and forever shout for joy.  
Protect them that you may be the joy of those who love your name.

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;  
I will declare all your wondrous deeds.  
I will delight and rejoice in you;  
I will sing hymns to your name, Most High.

You upheld my right and my cause,  
seated on your throne, judging justly.  
The Lord rules forever, has set up a throne for judgment.

It is God who governs the world with justice,  
 who judges all creation<sup>11</sup> with fairness.  
 The Lord is a stronghold in times of trouble.<sup>12</sup>  
 Sing hymns to the Lord, proclaim God's deeds among creation.<sup>13</sup>

Those who honor your name trust in you;  
 you never forsake those who seek you, Lord.  
 Sing hymns to the Lord enthroned on the heavens;<sup>14</sup>  
 proclaim God's deeds on the earth!<sup>15</sup>

The Lord is revealed in this divine rule:  
 by the deeds they do their love surpasses all.<sup>16</sup>  
 The hungry animals<sup>17</sup> will never be forgotten,  
 nor the will the hope of men and women<sup>18</sup> ever fade.

Arise, Lord, let no mortal prevail;  
 let your people<sup>19</sup> be judged in your presence.  
 Strike the instruments, sing loudly,<sup>20</sup>  
 show to the Lord our gratefulness!<sup>21</sup>

## Psalm Two

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Lauds (early morning before breakfast)	Psalm 2: Pss. 50: 1-2, 10-11, 14-15, 23; 8: 2, 4-10; 13: 6; 15: 1-2; 42: 9; 92: 2-5, 6-9, 16

At this hour, when the sun is already risen and spreading the new dawn we can still see the shadow of the night as well as the light of the day. We recognize the beauty of the day and the importance given to us by God. The Lord charged us to care for and protect Mother Earth and all creatures in it. While we continue our praise and thanksgiving for the past night, we welcome the new day with the offering: How amazing is your creation, O Lord, our God!

## Psalm 2

The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken and summoned  
 the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.  
 From heaven<sup>22</sup> God shines forth perfect in beauty.  
 For every animal of the forest is mine,  
 beasts by the thousands on my mountains.

Offer praise as your sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High.  
 Then call on me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall honor me.  
 Those who offer praise as a sacrifice honor me;  
 to the obedient I will show the salvation of God.

O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!  
 You have set your majesty above the heavens!  
 When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
 the moon and stars that you set in place.

What are humans that you are mindful of them,  
 mere mortals that you care for them?  
 Yet you have made them little less than a god,  
 crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them rule over the works of your hands,  
 put all things at their feet: all sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the  
 field,

the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,  
 and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!

I trust in your faithfulness.  
 Grant my heart joy in your help, that I may sing of the Lord,  
 how good our God has been to me!  
 Lord, who may abide in your tents?  
 Who may dwell on your holy mountain?  
 Whoever walks in the daylight<sup>23</sup> without blame,  
 doing what is right, speaking truth from the heart.

At the dawn may the Lord bestow faithful love  
 that I may sing praise through the night, praise to the God of my life.  
 It is good to give thanks to the Lord,  
 to sing praise to your name, Most High,  
 to proclaim your love in the morning, your faithfulness in the night,  
 with the ten-stringed harp, with melody upon the lyre.

For you make me jubilant, Lord, by your deeds;  
 at the works of your hands I shout for joy.  
 How great are your works, Lord! How profound your purpose!  
 A senseless person cannot know this; a fool cannot comprehend.  
 As we<sup>24</sup> proclaim: "The Lord is just, our rock, in whom there is no wrong."

## Psalm Three

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Prime (morning after breakfast)	Psalm 3: Pss. 2: 7-9, 11 3: 4-7; 24: 1-3, 7-10 66: 2, 4-5, 8, 20; 95: 1-7

At this time of the day, God reveals to us that He is the Father of all creation. When we ask God for our delight, it will be given to us. As God's children, our task is to serve the Lord with love and free will, bowing down in homage. God's works are indeed awesome! God holds us in His creative hands and listens to our needs, supplying our daily food and drink. God creates silently. No one sees God creating and no one recognizes that God is working a new thing everyday for all creation.

### Psalm 3

I will proclaim the decree of the Lord, who said to me,  
 "You are my son; today I am your father."  
 Only ask it of me, and I will make your inheritance the nations,  
 your possession the ends of the earth.  
 With an iron rod you shall shepherd them; like a clay pot  
 you will shatter them.  
 Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling bow down in homage. . . .  
 Happy are all who take refuge in God!

But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, you keep my head high.  
 Whenever I cried out to the Lord, I was answered from the holy mountain.  
 Whenever I lay down and slept, the Lord preserved me to rise again.  
 I do not fear, then, thousands of people arrayed against me on every side.

The earth is the Lord's and all it holds, the world and those who live there.  
 For God founded it on the seas, established it over the rivers.  
 Who may go up the mountain of the Lord? Who can stand in his holy place?  
 They will receive blessings from the Lord, and justice from their saving God.

Lift up your heads, O gates; rise up, you ancient portals,  
 that the king of glory may enter.  
 Who is this king of glory?  
 The Lord, a mighty creator, the Lord, mighty in goodness.<sup>25</sup>

Lift up your heads, O gates; rise up, you ancient portals,  
 that the king of glory may enter.  
 The Lord of hosts is the king of glory.

Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth; sing of his glorious name;  
 give him glorious praise.  
 All on earth fall in worship before you; they sing of you, sing of your name!  
 Come and see the works of God, awesome in the deeds done for us.  
 Therefore let us rejoice in him.

Bless our God, you peoples; loudly sound his praise.  
 Blessed be God, who did not refuse me the kindness I sought in prayer.  
 Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation.  
 Let us greet him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms.

For the Lord is the great God, the great king over all gods,  
 who owns the tops of the mountains. . . .  
 The sea and dry land belong to God, who made them, formed them by hand.  
 Enter, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord who made us.  
 For this is our God, whose people we are.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation.  
 Let us greet him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms.  
 Bless our God, you peoples; loudly sound his praise.  
 Blessed be God, who did not refuse me the kindness I sought in prayer.

### Psalm Four

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Terce (mid-morning)	Psalm 4: Pss. 7: 18 16: 1-2, 5-6, 9, 11 21: 3-7, 14; 96: 1-13 97: 1-4, 11-12 65: 2, 12, 14

God wishes that all creatures be gathered together—human beings, animals, birds, plants—with the seen and unseen creatures in this world and in heaven. God made us all good and still esteems us as very good. God keeps us safe at all times, even in disaster, and God is always there—in the past, in the present, the future, and forever. God is great, the Lord, and highly to be praised. God's splendor and power are seen in his creatures. God's power and grandeur are here on earth as in heaven.

## Psalm 4

Have the assembly of the peoples gather about you;  
sit on your throne high above them.  
Keep me safe, O God; in you I take refuge.  
I say to the Lord, you are my Lord, you are my only good.  
Lord, my allotted portion and my cup, you have made my destiny secure.

I keep the Lord always before me; with the Lord at my right,  
I shall never be shaken.  
Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure.  
Pleasant places were measured out for me; fair to me indeed is my inheritance.  
Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure.

You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence,  
the delights at your right hand forever.  
You have granted him his heart's desire;  
you did not refuse the prayer of his lips  
For you welcomed him with goodly blessings; he asked life of you;  
you gave it to him, length of days forever.  
Great is his glory in your victory; majesty and splendor you confer upon him.

You make him the pattern of blessings forever,  
you gladden him with the joy of your presence.  
Arise, Lord, in your power! We will sing and chant the praise of your might.  
Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord, bless his name; announce his salvation day after day.

Tell God's glory among all creatures;<sup>26</sup>  
among all peoples, God's marvelous deeds  
For great is the Lord and highly to be praised, to be feared above all gods.  
For the gods of the nations all do nothing, but the Lord made the heavens.  
Splendor and power go before him; power and grandeur are in his holy place.

Give to the Lord, you families of people, animals, birds, plants,<sup>27</sup>  
give to the Lord glory and might; give to the Lord the glory due his name!  
Bring gifts and enter his courts; bow down to the Lord, splendid in holiness.  
The Lord is king. The world will surely stand fast, never to be moved.  
God rules the peoples with fairness.  
Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;  
let the sea and what fills it resound;  
then let all the trees of the forest rejoice before the Lord  
who comes to govern the earth.

The Lord is king, let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad.  
Cloud and darkness surrounds the Lord; fire goes before him.  
Lightnings illumine the world; the earth sees and trembles.

Light dawns for the just; gladness, for the honest of heart.  
Rejoice in the Lord, you just, and praise his holy name.  
To you we owe our hymn of praise, O God on Zion;  
to you our vows must be fulfilled.  
You adorn the year with your bounty; they cheer and sing for joy.

## Psalm Five

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Sext (mid-day)	Psalm 5: Pss. 18: 2-4, 7, 10; 11-17, 20, 22, 31-34; 47, 50 147: 1, 7, 4-5, 8-9, 11-15, 18, 20

God is beautiful, full of wonder, majesty and awe. Even darkness is bright and colorful. God made all good. God changes the course of the ocean floor below and above by storms and typhoons. God reaches down from on high and seizes me, draws me out of the deep waters. God sets me free and rescues me because God loves me. I will sing to you my God, I will sing to you eternally. I want to praise you God my Lord, and glorify you forever more!

## Psalm 5

He said: I love you Lord, my strength, Lord my rock,  
my fortress, my deliverance  
Praised be the Lord, I exclaim! I cried out to my God,  
from his temple he heard my voice;  
He parted the heavens and came down, a dark cloud under his feet.  
Mounted on a cherub he flew, borne along on the wings of the wind.

He made darkness the cover about him; his canopy, heavy thunderheads.  
Before him scudded his clouds, hail and lightning too.  
The Lord thundered from heaven; the most High made his voice resound.  
He let fly his arrows and scattered them;  
shot his lightning bolts and dispersed them.  
Then the bed of the sea appeared; the world's foundations lay bare,  
at the roar of the Lord, at the storming breath of his nostrils.  
He reached down from on high and seized me; drew me out of the deep waters.



He set me free in the open; he rescued me because he loves me.  
For I kept the ways of the Lord.

God's way is unerring; the Lord's promise is tried and true;  
he is a shield for all who trust in him.  
Truly who is God except the Lord? Who but our God is the rock?  
This is God who girded me with might, kept my way unerring.  
Who made my feet swift as a deer's, set me safe on the heights.

The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock! Exalted be God, my savior!  
Thus I will proclaim you Lord, among the nations;  
I will sing the praises of your name.  
How good to celebrate our God in song; how sweet to give fitting praise.  
Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; with the lyre celebrate our God.

Who covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for the earth,  
makes grass sprout on the mountains,  
Who gives animals their food and ravens what they cry for.  
The Lord takes pleasure in the devout, those who await his faithful care.  
Glorify the Lord, offer praise to your God.

Who<sup>28</sup> blessed your children within you, brought peace to your homes,  
and filled you with finest wheat.  
The Lord sends a command to earth; his word runs swiftly!  
Thus snow is spread like wool, frost is scattered like ash,  
hail is dispersed like crumbs; before such cold the waters freeze.

God has done this to others; of such laws they know.<sup>29</sup>

Psalm Six

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
None (mid-afternoon)	Psalm 6: Pss. 19: 2-5, 7-10; 11, 15 29: 1-5, 6-11; 34: 2-4, 9 93: 1-5

In just three mere words, “*Let there be . . .*” and it happened. God’s voice is powerful, though no one except the Son and the Holy Spirit heard God’s voice. God knows all creation. God sees all. As heaven expands above the world, God’s power covers us all. God is more desirable than anything else.

Psalm 6

The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky proclaims its builder’s craft.  
One day to the next conveys that message;  
one night to the next imparts that knowledge.  
There is no word or sound; no voice is heard.  
Yet their report goes forth through all the earth,  
their message, to the ends of the world.  
God has pitched there a tent for the sun.

From one end of the heavens it comes forth;  
its course runs through to the other, nothing escapes its heat.  
The Law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.  
The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.  
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.  
The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.  
The statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just;  
more desirable than gold, than a hoard of purest gold,  
sweeter also than syrup or honey dripping from the comb.  
By them your servant is instructed; obeying them brings much reward.

Let the words of my mouth meet with your favor,  
keep the thoughts of my heart before you,  
Lord, my rock and my redeemer.  
Give the Lord, you heavenly beings, give to the Lord glory and might;  
give to the Lord the glory due God’s name.  
Bow down before the Lord’s holy splendor!

The voice of the Lord is over the waters, the God of glory thunders,  
the Lord, over the mighty waters.  
The voice of the Lord cracks the cedars; the Lord splinters the cedars.  
The voice of the Lord strikes with fiery flame.

The voice of the Lord rocks the desert; the Lord rocks the desert.  
The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forest bare.  
All in his palace say, “Glory!”  
May the Lord give might to his people;  
may the Lord bless his people with peace!

The Lord is king, robed with majesty; the Lord is robed, girded with might.  
The world will surely stand in place, never to be moved.

Your throne stands firm from of old;  
you are from everlasting, Lord.

The flood has raised up, Lord; the flood has raised up its roar,  
the flood has raised its pounding waves.  
More powerful than the roar of many waters,  
more powerful than the breakers of the sea,  
powerful in the heavens is the Lord.  
Your decrees are firmly established;  
holiness belongs to your house, Lord, for all the length of days.

## Psalm Seven

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Vespers (evening)	Psalm 7: Pss. 25: 1-4, 5-8; 9-12, 13-15, 16-18 42: 2; 47: 2-9; 90: 2, 4, 17

God loves creatures beyond all telling. As God's creatures, there is no other way of serving except through love. By loving God we already serve God. God never forgets us though we are here on earth because God is also with us here on earth as well as enthroned in heaven. God saves us in all troubles. Before you created the mountains and hills, or the earth and the world were brought forth, you are from eternity to eternity, O God.

## Psalm 7

I wait for you, O Lord; I lift up my soul to my God.  
In you I trust, do not let me be disgraced.  
No one is disgraced who waits for you.  
Make known to me your ways, Lord; teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.  
For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, Lord.  
Remember your compassion and love, O Lord; for they are ages old.  
Remember no more the sins of my youth;  
remember me only in the light of your love.

Good and upright is the Lord,  
who guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way.  
All the paths of the Lord are faithful love  
toward those who honor the covenant's demands.  
For the sake of your name, Lord, pardon my guilt, though it is great.

Who are those who fear the Lord? God shows them the way to choose.  
They live well and prosper, and their descendants inherit the land.  
The counsel of the Lord belongs to the faithful; the covenant instructs them.  
My eyes are ever upon the Lord, who frees my feet from the snare.

Look upon me, have pity on me, for I am alone and afflicted.  
Relieve the troubles of my heart; bring me out of my distress.  
Put an end to my affliction and suffering; take away all my sins.  
As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.

All you peoples, clap your hands; shout to God with joyful cries.  
For the Lord, the Most High, inspires awe, the great king over all the earth  
who made all creatures subject to him, brought peoples under his feet,<sup>30</sup>  
who chose a land for our heritage, the glory of his beloved.

God mounts the throne amid shouts of joy; the Lord, amid trumpet blasts.  
Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our King, sing praise.  
God is king over all the earth; sing hymns of praise.  
God rules over the nations, God sits upon his holy throne.

Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations.  
Before the mountains were born, the earth and the world brought forth,  
from eternity to eternity you are God.  
Prosper the work of our hands!  
May the favor of the Lord our God be ours.  
Prosper the work of our hands!

## Psalm Eight

Hour of Prayer	Psalm composite
Compline (night, before sleeping)	Psalm 8: Pss. 23: 1-4, 5-6; 28: 6-7 31: 6, 15, 22, 25 32: 1-2, 6-7, 10-11; 111: 1-10

God—even at the end of our lives or in the decay of leaves, grass, trees, animals insects, everything that lives and breathes—refreshes and renews our nature and being. Because for God there is no end, God is always new, full of love. Therefore, I will praise, glorify and adore you, Lord forever, for your wonders are great and worthy to be treasured by all of your creatures.

## Psalm 8

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.  
In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me;  
you restore my strength.  
You guide me along the right path for the sake of your name.  
Even when I walk through a dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side;  
your rod and staff give me courage.

Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life;  
I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.  
Blessed be the Lord, who has heard the sound of my pleading.  
The Lord is my strength and my shield,  
in whom my heart trusted and found help.  
So my heart rejoices; with my song I praise my God.

Lord, you are the strength of your people, the saving refuge of your anointed.  
Save your people, bless your inheritance; feed and sustain them forever!  
Into your hands I commend my spirit; you will redeem me, Lord,  
faithful God.  
But I trust in you, Lord; I say, "You are my God!"

Blessed be the Lord, who has shown me wondrous love,  
and been for me a city most secure.  
Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.  
Happy the sinner whose fault is removed, whose sin is forgiven.  
Happy those to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no deceit.

Thus should all your faithful pray in time of distress.  
Though flood waters threaten, they will never reach them.  
You are my shelter, from distress you keep me, with safety you ring me round.  
I will instruct you and show you the way you should walk,  
give you counsel and watch over you.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.  
Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just; exult, all you upright of heart.  
I will praise the Lord with all my heart  
in the assembled congregation of the upright.  
Great are the works of the Lord, to be treasured for all their delights.  
Majestic and glorious is your work, your wise design endures forever.  
You won renown for your wondrous deeds; gracious and merciful is the Lord.

You gave food to those who fear you, mindful of your covenant forever.  
The works of your hands are right and true, reliable all your decrees,  
established forever and ever, to be observed with loyalty and care.

You sent deliverance to your creation, ratified your love forever,  
holy and awesome is your name.  
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,  
prudent are all who live by it.  
Your praise endures forever.

## How to Pray This *Office of Creation*

The order of the *Office of Creation* is as follows:

### 1. Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, + the Almighty, Creator of all, and of the Son,  
Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Alpha, the Omega, and of the  
Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the  
Son. Amen.

*Testament of Saint Francis* (Sing or recite with bowed head.):

We adore you Lord, Jesus Christ,  
here and in all Your churches throughout the world  
and we bless You because by Your holy cross  
You have redeemed the world.

### 2. Prayer:

Let us pray. Father in heaven, in the beginning you showed your power  
and might. Three simple words: "*Let there be . . .*" and it was created and You  
saw it was good. You continue creating throughout the ages as You did in the  
time of our forefathers and foremothers. To them You gave an everlasting  
covenant not to destroy the earth, the rainbow being the everlasting sign of  
this covenant. You still show Your love through Your Son, Jesus Christ who  
manifested You to us. Your creating hands made us whole again. Thus, we pray  
You: Open our mouth to praise You. Open our ears to hear Your word. Open  
our hands to do Your will so that we may give You praise, glory, honor, thanks-  
giving, blessing now and forever. Amen.

### 3. Hymn:

*Canticle of the Creatures* (Other songs of creation can be substituted.)

### 4. Antiphon

In the very beginning when the world was created  
all creatures were made  
to offer you, God our Creator,  
glory and honor, power, and majesty,  
all good, the highest good, all that is very good.

So be it. So be it.

Amen. Amen.

5. One of the eight psalms of the *Office of Creation* is sung or recited.

6. The *Antiphon* is repeated here.

7. **Blessing and Dismissal:**

V/ Praise the name of the Lord.

R/ Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever.

V/ From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised.

R/ Let everything that has breath give praise to the Lord!" [Pss. 113: 1-3 and 150: 6].

V/ So be it. So be it.

R/ Amen. Amen.

## Conclusion

Following the example of the *Office of the Passion*, I developed my own office entitled *Office of Creation*. In God's creation, we can see God's vestiges and actions. God is continuously manifesting the divine presence through and in creation. Thus, it is worthwhile to give God praise, thanksgiving, and adoration through psalms and prayers for the wonders God has done and still does for all of creation. God is still completing the cycle of creation launched before the beginning of time through the Son as an expression of love.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Laurent Gallant and André Cirino, *The Geste of the Great King* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2001).

<sup>2</sup>Fr. André Cirino, OFM, is an American Franciscan friar who taught the course, *Praying with Francis and Clare* at the Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury; Lent Term 2005.

<sup>3</sup>It was not taught to us when we were in formation, not even mentioned by our formators nor the liturgist of the friary.

<sup>4</sup>Ignatius Brady, trans., *The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* (Assisi: Casa Editrice Francescana, Edizioni Porziuncola, 1983), 40-60.

<sup>5</sup>Gallant and Cirino, 22.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 1:31. All scripture texts are taken from the *Revised Psalms of the New American Bible* (Washington, DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>As St. Francis took the liberty to change words of scripture in his Little Office, cf. Gallant and Cirino, 212, I at times altered the text. Here, I changed *sighing* to *song*.

<sup>8</sup>I changed *cry for help* to *voice*.

<sup>9</sup>I changed *in your holy temple* to *your house*.

<sup>10</sup>I added *all your creatures* to this verse.

<sup>11</sup>I changed *the peoples* to *all creation*.

<sup>12</sup>I omitted *for the oppressed*.

<sup>13</sup>I changed *nations* to *creation*.

<sup>14</sup>I changed *Zion* to *the heavens*.

<sup>15</sup>I changed *nations* to *earth*.

<sup>16</sup>I changed *the wicked are trapped to their love* *surpasses all*.

<sup>17</sup>I changed *the needy* to *the hungry animals*.

<sup>18</sup>I changed *the afflicted* to *men and women*.

<sup>19</sup>I changed *the nations* to *your people*.

<sup>20</sup>I changed *them with terror* to *the instruments, sing loudly*.

<sup>21</sup>I changed *they are mere mortals* to *to the Lord our gratefulness*.

<sup>22</sup>I changed *Zion* to *heaven*.

<sup>23</sup>I added *in the daylight*.

<sup>24</sup>I changed *they* to *we*.

<sup>25</sup>I added *a mighty creator, the Lord, mighty in goodness*.

<sup>26</sup>I changed *the nations* to *all creatures*.

<sup>27</sup>I changed *nations* to *of people, animals, birds, plants*

<sup>28</sup>I added *who*.

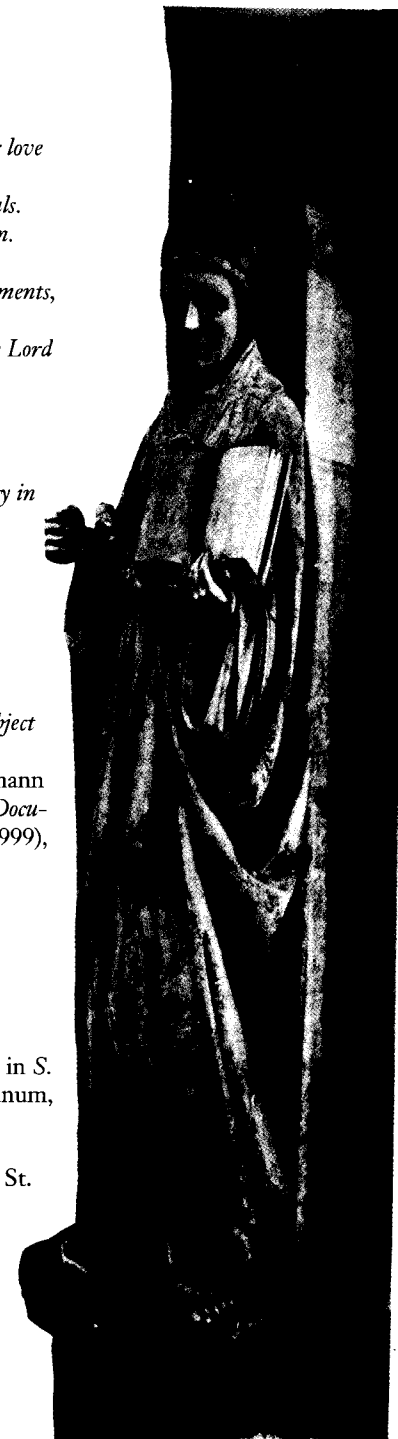
<sup>29</sup>I omitted *not* and changed *other nations* to *others*. I also omitted *nothing*.

<sup>30</sup>I changed *people* to *all creatures*; and *subject to us* to *subject to him*; and *nations* to *peoples*.

<sup>31</sup>See Regis Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann and William Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi Early Documents: The Saint*, Vol. 1 (NY: New City Press, 1999), 124-25.

This image of St. Bonaventure can be found in *S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum, n.d.), 41.

The original statue is in the church of St. Nicholas in Troyes, France.



So be it. So be it.

Amen. Amen.

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6. The *Antiphon* is repeated here.

7. **Blessing and Dismissal:**

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V/ So be it. So be it.

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<sup>3</sup>It was not taught to us when we were in formation, not even mentioned by our formators nor the liturgist of the friary.

<sup>4</sup>Ignatius Brady, trans., *The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* (Assisi: Casa Editrice Francescana, Edizioni Porziuncola, 1983), 40-60.

<sup>5</sup>Gallant and Cirino, 22.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 1:31. All scripture texts are taken from the *Revised Psalms of the New American Bible* (Washington, DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>As St. Francis took the liberty to change words of scripture in his Little Office, cf. Gallant and Cirino, 212, I at times altered the text. Here, I changed *sighing* to *song*.

<sup>8</sup>I changed *cry for help* to *voice*.

<sup>9</sup>I changed *in your holy temple* to *your house*.

<sup>10</sup>I added *all your creatures* to this verse.

<sup>11</sup>I changed *the peoples* to *all creation*.

<sup>12</sup>I omitted *for the oppressed*.

<sup>13</sup>I changed *nations* to *creation*.

<sup>14</sup>I changed *Zion* to *the heavens*.

<sup>15</sup>I changed *nations* to *earth*.

<sup>16</sup>I changed *the wicked are trapped to their love* *surpasses all*.

<sup>17</sup>I changed *the needy* to *the hungry animals*.

<sup>18</sup>I changed *the afflicted* to *men and women*.

<sup>19</sup>I changed *the nations* to *your people*.

<sup>20</sup>I changed *them with terror* to *the instruments, sing loudly*.

<sup>21</sup>I changed *they are mere mortals* to *to the Lord our gratefulness*.

<sup>22</sup>I changed *Zion* to *heaven*.

<sup>23</sup>I added *in the daylight*.

<sup>24</sup>I changed *they* to *we*.

<sup>25</sup>I added *a mighty creator, the Lord, mighty in goodness*.

<sup>26</sup>I changed *the nations* to *all creatures*.

<sup>27</sup>I changed *nations* to *of people, animals, birds, plants*

<sup>28</sup>I added *who*.

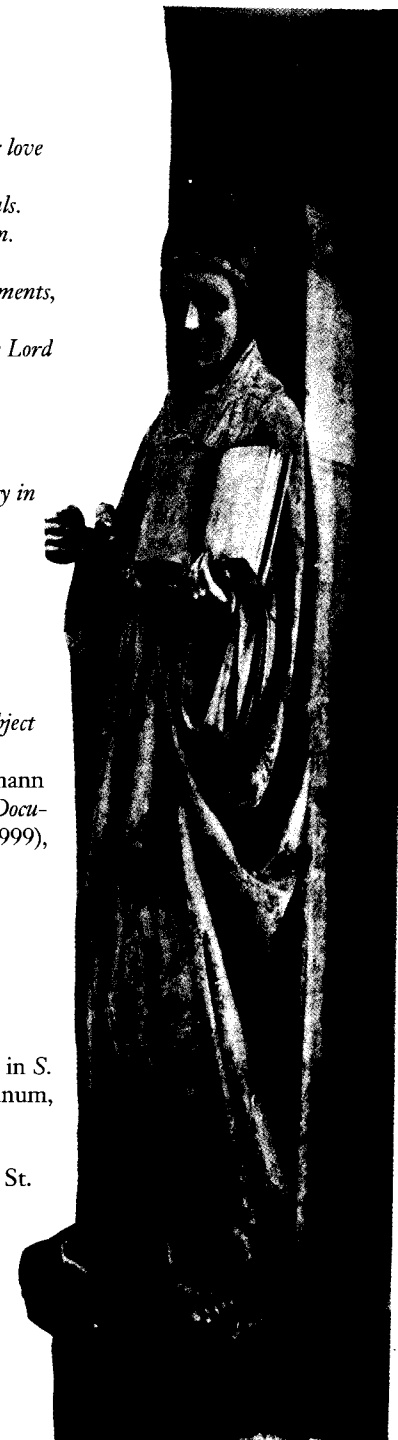
<sup>29</sup>I omitted *not* and changed *other nations* to *others*. I also omitted *nothing*.

<sup>30</sup>I changed *people* to *all creatures*; and *subject to us* to *subject to him*; and *nations* to *peoples*.

<sup>31</sup>See Regis Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann and William Short, eds., *Francis of Assisi Early Documents: The Saint*, Vol. 1 (NY: New City Press, 1999), 124-25.

This image of St. Bonaventure can be found in *S. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio* (Rome: Ed. Antonianum, n.d.), 41.

The original statue is in the church of St. Nicholas in Troyes, France.



## Making Peace: With the Dead and Among the Living

Guire Cleary, SSF

The history of modern California is the difficult story of Spanish Empire Franciscan missionaries, soldiers and colonists in their fateful, and sometimes fatal, encounter with the First Peoples of Alta California. These were the Ohlone, Chumash, Miwok, Salinien, Khumayyai and other peoples of the Indian nations. It was they who entered into a relationship of faith, economics, empire, and power. For many of those Indians, it was, to take the title from Randall Milliken's book on the subject, "A Time of Little Choice." Much of that encounter took place at the twenty-one Franciscan missions of what is now the state of California. This encounter began with the establishment of Mission San Diego de Alcalá by Blessed Junípero Serra in 1769.

I had the privilege of serving as the Curator of the historic Mission San Francisco de Asís (Dolores) in San Francisco from 1999 to 2004. I was the first Franciscan friar to serve at the mission since the last brother left in 1845. That a friar of the Episcopal Church had been hired as a curator and historian of a Catholic institution must seem odd or ironic, to everyone but God I expect! On several occasions, I had intense experiences of the pain and anger of the descendants of those first Indian Christians. I was being deeply challenged as to just what sort of instrument of peace I could be. Once I was invited to speak at the opening of an exhibition relating to California Missions in Los Angeles at the Autry Museum of Western History. A group of Tongva Indians had also been invited. Seeing me in my habit, several of them approached me and one woman said, "You killed and beat my ancestors and destroyed our culture."

On another occasion, I was discussing a memorial plaque to be placed on the wall of the old mission. I was very proud of the plaque that was to read "Peace and Goodness. Founded by Fray Francisco Palou, OFM, The Mission of San Francisco de Asís built by the people of the Ohlone Nation. To them we pay honor as the first citizens." This plaque represented the first instance of a California Mission explicitly acknowledging the Indian Nations as builders of the missions in a plaque on the mission walls. I was also proud that as an

act of peacemaking I had persuaded a pioneer society to accept my wording and pay for the plaque. I had also proposed that the plaque be surrounded by a knotted cord as a reference to the Franciscans. I showed the design to a noted Ohlone basket maker, artist, historian and living treasure of her tribe. She looked at it and shook her head saying, "The cord represents the whips with which the Franciscans beat my people."

The Alta California Franciscan missions were closed in 1834, but the anger, shame, and loss are still keen among the Indian peoples who received both the gospel and the gun. It is difficult enough for the living to make peace among themselves. How does one make peace with and on behalf of the dead? For many of the First Peoples the dead hand of history's record of bad judgment, colonialism, cultural and ethnic chauvinism, and fatal impact was clothed in Franciscan gray or brown. Is it possible to reach across two centuries and heal a wound that still lies on the heart of the living?

If you believe in Resurrection, anything is possible—including resurrecting peace and all good. Sometimes, in my work, I would be somewhat evasive even to the point of coyness. Frequently I would be asked, "Do you think Father Serra should be canonized, given his crimes against the Indians?" Loaded question aside, I would reply, "I am not a Roman Catholic. That question is a faith matter and not appropriate for my comment. Would you like to discuss the historical record instead beginning with the economics of colonial structures?" I didn't work twenty years in law offices for nothing! This approach, which is intellectually honest and also respectful of Catholic faith, does not, however, begin the process of peacemaking. Before anything else, there must be truth and vulnerability. One must acknowledge the pain of the other and say, "Yes, I acknowledge that your ancestors and culture were damaged by the arrival of the Franciscan missionaries. I see the scars on your heart and memory and I sorrow that they are an inheritance of the scars of your ancestors; heart, mind and body." It is not helpful to argue, as have some apologists, that put in context, nearly everyone at the time was being beaten and dominated savagely in the socio-economic world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such context might have some use in historical critique among academics. Pastorally it is a complete failure. No, one must first acknowledge the scars of the suffering and not tell them that the wounds are imaginary or trifling. Your own heart must be open to receive the hurt and anger of the wounded. Until you share the pain of the beaten, you stand with the one who holds the whip. Once your heart bleeds as well, you become a member of the tribe. You are no longer the hated other. You have been marked with the scars of Jesus.

It is possible to move into creative methods of healing once hurts are genuinely acknowledged and shared. Simply to utilize the culture and arts of the First Peoples is a step towards affirming their beauty and receiving those life

ways as part of the common treasure we have all inherited in this multicultural world. My stationery at Mission Dolores bore the chevron design painted on the ceiling of the mission church by Indian Christians, circa 1793. I also located the mission in its original native geography by the words, "Mission San Francisco de Asís in the Village of Chutchui." This was probably one of the first instances of using the old Indian name for the vanished Ohlone Indian village in some 200 years. It is nearly forgotten that one of the first instances of Indian self-government in colonial California was the installation of native mayors (*alcaldes*) at the Franciscan missions in 1779. In 2002, Mission Dolores asked Chief Tony Cerda of the Rumsen Carmel Ohlone tribe to act as an honorary *alcalde*. By this action, we affirmed not only the dignity of the First Peoples, but in a small way renewed a moral sovereignty. It also made great theatre!

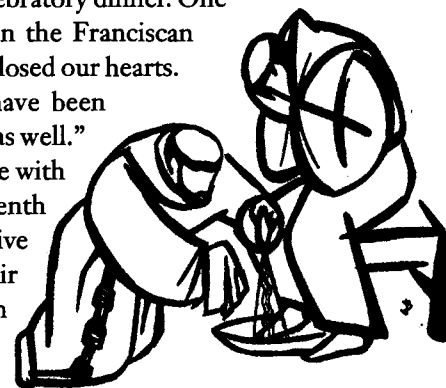
Of the many shattering blows to the dignity and self-esteem of the First Peoples is the assertion that their culture was inferior and is now part of a forgotten past. There is a belief held by many that the Indians were fortunate to be lifted up from savagery into European culture and technology. This is unfortunately memorialized in a huge bronze and stone monument in San Francisco's main square, The Pioneer Monument. One part of it shows a rather sinister looking Franciscan, with capuche up, raising a supine Indian from the ground while a proud Spanish don stands over both. Lazy, ignorant savage gets off his rump, assisted by kindly, but determined, Franciscan, while European male power sees that it is done according to his plans. That is the memorialized shame that First Peoples see when they walk through the Civic Center in the land that once was theirs. Occasionally someone will throw red paint at the friar and Spaniard as a protest. For some the red paint represents Red Power, for others, blood.

How does the Franciscan make peace with such a monument and the Eurocentric pride and violence that stand in the heart of our public space? I cannot do much about a century-old piece of civic art. These days, it is the Franciscan who is on the margins of civic power, oddly and mysteriously, with the Indians who have themselves been marginalized in power, influence, honor, and even memory. As part of the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the establishment of Mission Dolores in 2001, I invited Ohlone people to construct a traditional Indian reed house in the garden of the old mission. I had no ability to construct a new model of justice in the town square. I did have the ability to invite the First Peoples to build a home in the heart of our garden, a garden where some 5,000 Indians had been buried over the years. Every year at least 10,000 school children run up to the little reed house in delight and with their curiosity and enjoyment validate the traditional culture of the original inhabitants of our city. During the construction of the house, a photo was taken that

I will always treasure. It shows the team building the house. Two women are standing together with smiles and tule reeds in their hands. One is a descendant of the First Peoples and the other a descendant of several of the pioneer families that walked from Mexico in 1776 to establish what became San Francisco. Peace had been established between those two women.

I have moved in this article from acknowledgment of hurts and wrongs to validating lives and culture. The next step is to move into a place of forgiveness and healing. For me it took place on November 23, 2002. Chief Tony Cerda had come to the parish of Mission Dolores with a request. He and his tribe wished to hold a dinner and beforehand worship God in the old mission church in the language, music, and dance of their ancestors. He made his request and put in my hand a medicine pouch as a symbol of peace and a token of hope that there might be a mending of what had been broken. The Rumsen Carmel Tribe of Ohlone Indians was invited to share their spiritual and cultural treasure with us. On the night of the event, the People first gathered in the sacristy to pray and to collect their minds and hearts into the Unseen Presence. They then entered the 1793 adobe church, built by their ancestors, through the front door to the joyful ringing of 18<sup>th</sup> century bells. After being greeted at the front door Chief Tony was handed an *alcalde*'s staff of office, a bunch of chiefly eagle feathers. The party moved up into the sanctuary under the floor-to-ceiling *reredos* brought from Mexico in 1796. Sacred ground is sacred to everyone. God was worshiped and their ancestors honored and prayed for in their own idiom. For the first time in the history of California, Indians had been allowed to enter into one of the historic mission churches to sing and dance before the Lord in their culture and tongue and find God in their own way. The pews were filled with representatives from many tribes to witness a momentous turn in the relationship between Euro-American and Indian Christians. For a short time, the people of God experienced wholeness and unconditional love and respect. The Lord who came not to abolish, but to fulfill was manifested. After the service was a celebratory dinner. One of the key speakers observed, "When the Franciscan Missions closed their doors to us, we closed our hearts. Tonight the doors of the mission have been opened to us and our hearts are open as well."

Ultimately, we cannot make peace with people of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who formed the world we live in today. They did their best and their worst and usually muddled through with what light they had. They are dead and quite beyond our correction



or reproof. It is the task of the living to stop hurting each other. We, the living, are able to share our wounds and our cultures. Until then there is no peace. When hearts open to each other, when the goodness and the scars are honored, peace can enter in. Perhaps in those open and shared hearts, love can be discovered and shared. It is then that the living shall have peace and the unhappy and restless past given its final rest as well.

## About Our Contributors

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## Franciscans and the Church

Charles Finnegan, OFM

"All the brothers must be Catholics and live and speak like Catholics." So wrote St. Francis in chapter 19 of the Early Rule. The importance which Francis attached to the ecclesial dimension of his brotherhood becomes even clearer in his next words: "But if any of them has strayed from the Catholic faith and life, in word or in deed, and has not amended his ways, he should be completely expelled from our fraternity."

While there were many reform movements in St. Francis's day, his initiative differed from many others precisely in this: while many reformers sooner or later fell into heresy, Francis's attachment to "the holy Roman Church" (LR XII, 3), his commitment of loving obedience to "the Lord Pope" (Testament 15), his determination to be "always faithful and subject to the prelates and all clerics of Holy Mother Church" (Siena Testament 5) kept his movement from heresy. This was true from the beginning. When the friars were only twelve in number, Francis led them on pilgrimage to "our Mother the holy Roman Church [to] inform the Supreme Pontiff what the Lord has begun to do through us, that, with his will and command, we may continue doing what we have undertaken" (L3C 46). Later, when the number of Francis's brothers increased dramatically, and he thought of himself as "a little black hen" who could no longer shelter all her chicks under her wings, Francis knew instinctively what to do: "I shall go and entrust [the brothers] to the holy Church of Rome" (2 Cel 24). Catholic orthodoxy was so important to Francis that this concern led him to introduce a novelty into religious life: the institution of the Cardinal Protector to be the "governor, protector, and corrector" of his brotherhood. Thus "always submissive and prostrate at the feet of the same holy Church, we may observe the poverty and the humility and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which we have firmly promised" (LR XII, 4). Living the gospel outside the church or in opposition to the church was for Francis unthinkable. *Catholicity* and indeed *Roman Catholicity* was an essential element in Francis's venture of radical gospel living with his brothers.



It is easy to believe St. Bonaventure's claim that when Francis was dying he exhorted the friars to "hold on to patience, poverty and the faith of the holy Roman Church, while putting the holy gospel above all other norms" (Lm XIV, 5). The faith of the church and "living the gospel" went hand in hand. For almost eight centuries now Franciscans have rightly honored Francis in the Liturgy of the Hours on his Solemnity as "a thoroughly Catholic and apostolic man" (1<sup>st</sup> antiphon at Evening Prayer I in the *Officium Rhythmicum Sancti Francisci*, composed by Julian of Speyer c. 1230).<sup>1</sup>

## A Balanced Ecclesiology

While there is no gainsaying Francis's attachment to the Church and his reverence for the Church's ministers, he avoids the exaggerations which one sometimes finds even in the writings of Saints and Founders of religious orders. He could be accused neither of ecclesialotry, nor papalotry, nor episcopalotry—three excesses censured dramatically by Bishop Emile de Smedt in the first session of Vatican II, to the enthusiastic applause of many bishops. Always respectful but never a sycophant, Francis knew how to be his own man with total integrity, and at the same time be a "lesser brother" to all. In this too he is, in the perceptive phrase of Cardinal Thomas of Capua (+1242), the *Forma Minorum*: the pattern and model for his brothers.

While Francis wanted his brotherhood to be "always submissive" to the Church, his only *unconditional* commitment was to the Gospel. This follows from Bonaventure's words cited above: Francis wanted us "to put the holy gospel above all other norms." His values therefore and those of his brothers sometimes differed radically from the priorities of the institutional Church in his day. While the medieval Church was very wealthy, owning more than half the land of Europe, Francis chose poverty. While the medieval Church emphasized the *patriarchal* dimension in church governance Francis emphasized the *fraternal* dimension of his brotherhood. Whereas the medieval Church struggled for ever more power, Francis uses the word power only once (in treating the life of the friars), and that is to say we should never have it.<sup>2</sup> While the medieval church clung to signs of privilege and prestige Francis insisted that his brothers be "subject to every human creature for God's sake" (ER XVI 6). After describing the wealthy and powerful church of the middle ages, theologian Joseph Ratzinger (later Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and now Pope Benedict XVI) commented: "Francis's 'No' to that kind of church could not be more radical. It is what we would call a prophetic protest."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the best example of Francis's exercise of evangelical freedom vis-à-vis the institutional church can be found in the truly revolutionary chapter XVI of the Early Rule, known as the Franciscan Missionary Mandate. Francis's

approach to the world of Islam as expressed in that text is the exact opposite of the approach taken by the popes, councils and theologians of his time.<sup>4</sup> In his Missionary Mandate Francis takes all his inspiration not from the dominant ecclesiastical culture, but from the gospel: that relatively short chapter has twenty-five citations from the New Testament, fifteen of them being gospel citations.

In a similar vein Francis encouraged St. Clare and the Poor Ladies of San Damiano to remain firm in their commitment to radical poverty, and "never to depart from this by reason of the teaching or advice of anyone" (Last Will Written For Saint Clare and Her Sisters, found in chapter 6 of the Rule of Clare).<sup>5</sup>

## Franciscan Life In the Church Today

An excellent treatment of this topic can be found in *The Vocation of the Order Today* (a "Statement of the 1973 Madrid General Chapter To All the Friars Minor of the World"). While at times we may understandably feel that we are being deluged by "documents," *The Vocation of the Order Today* (with its abundant footnotes citing the writings of Francis and other early Franciscan sources) is one that really deserves a re-reading and careful reflection. The following citation pertains to our theme:

Francis, who was pained by the failings of the medieval church, wished wholeheartedly to place himself in complete union with her and there remain. He acted in this manner, not for opportunistic reasons, but out of deep love and out of sincere obedience to the will of Christ, who left His Church in the care of Peter and his successors. This Church, built up by a variety of ministries, was for Francis the place where the authentic Word of God was proclaimed and where Jesus revealed Himself in her sacraments. Although aware of the weaknesses to be found in the Church, he nevertheless continued to love her and to consider the clerics as his lords and masters, knowing full well that he himself was a sinner (n. 9).

The text recognizes that "criticisms and rebellions against the 'institution' are strong and vehement" and with evident sadness recognizes that "many, even among ourselves, abandon [the Church], if only in our hearts" (n. 10).

The Madrid chapter then proposes the only Franciscan solution to the inevitable disappointments that today also many feel with the Church-institution: "Love in Spite of Disfigurement." We see the disfigurements, but "still we wish to love [the church] wholeheartedly and to remain in communion with her. [A]fter the example of Francis, we wish to be men of peace and reconciliation within the Church, loving all of our Christian brothers [and sis-

ters], giving an example of obedience and respect to the bishops and especially 'to the Lord Pope'" (n.11).

## Dissent as Proposing Alternatives

Inevitably these considerations lead to the question of dissent from official teaching that is not concerned with divinely revealed truths and taught infallibly by the hierarchical *magisterium*. An adequate treatment of this topic is beyond my competence and the limits of a brief essay. I offer only a few general observations.

1. Some expressions of dissent from official teaching have gone beyond a respectful expression of disagreement and have been harshly judgmental, especially of recent Popes and the Roman Curia.<sup>6</sup> This is not a Franciscan approach. Rather than judge others, Francis suggested that "each one judge and despise himself" (LR II, 17).
2. Dissent need not mean a disrespectful or rebellious attitude towards the *magisterium*. When done humbly and with love for the church, dissent may simply be proposing alternatives. It poses the question: Is there not another way of looking at this, which is in keeping with revealed truth and sound reason?
3. Some dissent from official teaching is inevitable, since that teaching contains contradictions. Take, for example, the axiom "Outside the Church there is no salvation." It would require extraordinary intellectual dissonance to agree with *both* the teaching of Innocent III, Boniface VIII, Lateran Council IV and the Council of Florence on that axiom *and* present conciliar and papal teaching.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, it is impossible to reconcile the teaching of Pius X on the role of the laity in the church<sup>8</sup> with that of Vatican II and the contemporary papal *magisterium*.<sup>9</sup>
4. It is a fact that Vatican II, in treating of the formation of conscience, deliberately chose a text that would allow for some dissent. The Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, maintains that "in forming their consciences the faithful must pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the church" (n.14). A number of Council Fathers noticed the obvious: one may "pay careful attention" to a teaching, and still disagree with it. They asked that the text be changed to read that the "faithful must form their conscience according to the teaching"—a formulation that would not allow dissent. The commission responsible for rewriting the text claimed that the proposed change was "too restrictive" and that the original text "sufficiently expresses the obligation binding the faithful." This was put to a decision by the whole Council, which by a vote of 2,033 to 190

agreed with the commission. The formula recognizing the primacy of conscience remained, therefore, in the final text of *Dignitatis Humanae*.<sup>10</sup>

5. The partial shift at Vatican II from the classical mentality to that of historical consciousness has had an enormous influence.<sup>11</sup> The latter makes us aware of how much has changed, including some teaching taught by the highest authorities in the church with great emphasis. That happened because the teaching was questioned and new insights gained, to the great benefit of the Church. The traditional Catholic teaching about "reception" by the faithful of Church teaching can still make an important contribution.
6. St. Francis had great respect for theologians, for they "minister spirit and life to us" (Test). No small service! So "with sincere affection Francis greatly revered the learned men of the Order and all scholars" (2 Cel 163 and LP 70). Indeed he looked on theologians as "co-workers with Christ, since they exercise the same office" (2 Cel 172). Our General Constitutions (art. 110) recognize that our theologians and scholars "contribute magnificently to the work of evangelization" and ask that they be given the freedom due them to carry on their research and publish the results of the same while "living the truth in love" (Eph 4:15).
7. When Vatican II was discussing freedom for scholars in the Church, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Michele Pellegrino of Turin made an appeal that was enthusiastically applauded: "If each one knows that he is permitted to express his opinion with wholesome freedom, he will act with the straightforwardness and sincerity that should shine in the Church; otherwise the abominable plague of dishonesty and hypocrisy can hardly be avoided."<sup>12</sup> In other words in the church there is no place for the ALH factor (Acceptable Level of Hypocrisy). Theologian Joseph Ratzinger [now Pope Benedict XVI] wrote something similar in his *Free Expression and Obedience in the Church*: "The servility of the sycophants (branded by the genuine prophets in the Old Testament as 'false prophets'), of those who shy away from and shun every collision, who prize above all their calm complacency, is not true obedience. . . . What the church needs today as always are not adulators to extol the status quo, but men whose humility and obedience are no less than their passion for truth . . . men who, in a word, love the church more than ease and the unruffled course of their own personal destiny."
8. The science of Moral Theology was singled out by the Council to be especially in need of renewal<sup>13</sup> and this can happen only if our moral theologians have the freedom Pellegrino spoke of. Since dissent re-

garding specific moral teachings has proven to be especially challenging, let me quote at some length the very balanced reflection of one of our country's premier moralists, Richard A. McCormick SJ:

This strong inclination [to assimilate official teaching] would concretize itself in several ways. First, it will mean respect and reverence for the person and his office, and continuing openness to his teaching. Secondly, it will mean a readiness to reassess one's own position in light of this teaching, an attempt to see if this teaching can be supported on grounds other than those presented, and a humble realization of the limitations imposed by one's own background, etc. Thirdly, it will suggest a great reluctance to conclude that magisterial teaching is clearly erroneous even after one has concluded that the evidence, arguments, and analyses used to establish this teaching are inadequate. One would prefer, in all humility, to conclude for the present that the authentic teaching is positively doubtful rather than clearly erroneous. Finally, it will demand a style of external behavior which fosters respect and support for the *magisterium*. If a Catholic's conduct corresponds to these demands, he has brought to authoritative teaching a response he brings to no one else. He has, one would think, responded proportionately to the authority of the teacher. Such procedural respect and reverence will generally lead to assent but assent is not the immediate proportionate response.<sup>14</sup>

There is still the "unfinished agenda" of Vatican II calling for attention. An example: the conciliar teaching on collegiality could be more generously implemented, and the high hopes for effective episcopal conferences have still to be fully realized. Inevitably this unfinished agenda is often controversial but as Paul VI maintained: "[The Council] should be thought of as an impulse to a new journey, not as a goal achieved."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, John Paul II recognized the need in our times for "new and bold endeavors."<sup>16</sup> Franciscans, too, are called to make their contribution in solving the crises facing us, "doing the truth in love," in communion with the "lord Pope," firm in our Catholic faith—and in evangelical freedom. A tall order, but both St. Francis and St. Clare did it, as did so many of our Saints, thus showing us the way.<sup>17</sup>

## Questions For Reflection

1. In your life and ministry do you sometimes experience tension with official ecclesiastical policy or teaching? How do you resolve the tension?
2. Since the Church is also a human institution always in need of reform, how can we Franciscans best contribute to that ongoing process?

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The above represents a very brief sketch on Francis's attachment to the Church of Rome. This theme is developed at length by many commentators, such as Cajetan Esser, OFM, in his *Sancta Mater Ecclesia Romana*.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rule of 1221, V, 9: "excluding all power or domination especially among themselves." Francis often uses the word *power* as an attribute of God.

<sup>3</sup>*Zeit Jesu*, 1970, p.269. For examples of the claims made in this paragraph about the medieval church, cf. Y. Congar, *L'ecclesiologie du haut moyen-age* (Paris, 1968).

<sup>4</sup>While the church was busily promoting the crusades to expel Moslems from the Holy Land, Francis instructs his brothers to "go among" them and "live spiritually among [them]." The brothers are "not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake, confessing that they are Christians." Compare that with the instructions given by St. Bernard of Clairveaux to the crusaders in his *De laude novae militiae ad milites templi*: "Dying for Christ and killing for Christ are not sins but deserve glory. The soldier of Christ kills with a peaceful conscience, and dies with even more peace. When the soldier of Christ dies, he gains; when he kills, Christ gains. Killing evildoers is not homicide, it is evilcide. In the death of a pagan Christ is given glory." Both Popes Callistus III and Celestine III urged the crusaders "to purify the land of our Savior from the filth of the unclean Saracen people." The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, attended by St. Francis (LP67), rejected as utopian a pacifist proposal in dealing with Islam.

<sup>5</sup>This strong advice given by Francis to the Poor Ladies of San Damiano is significant, especially in view of the difficulties Clare had in getting her *Rule* approved. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council decreed that any new religious order should adopt one of the Rules already approved. In view of this Cardinal Hugolino in 1217 asked Clare to accept the Rule of St. Benedict and the Constitutions of St. Peter Damian, and later the Constitutions of the Benedictine Monastery of San Paolo on Monte Subasio. From these documents Hugolino drew up a rule for the Poor Ladies of San Damiano. Clare and her Sisters followed it for 30 years. In 1247 Pope Innocent IV wrote a second rule for them. Neither rule called for the poverty that Clare considered so essential, and that Francis encouraged her to keep "no matter what advice you may receive from anyone." So Clare wrote her own rule. Her persevering efforts to obtain papal approval for her rule met with success two days before she died. Interestingly Pope Alexander IV considered Clare's resistance to papal efforts to weaken her commitment to poverty to be a virtue. (Cf. Bull of Canonization, *Clara claris praeclara*, 17.)

<sup>6</sup>The recently published book *Papal Sin* by Gary Wills is an example of this. He does not just disagree with papal teaching, but accuses Popes and the Curia of "living in structures of deceit." His first sentence introduces his basic premise: "Catholics have fallen out of the healthy old habit of reminding each other how sinful Popes can be." St. Francis's approach was the exact opposite, as can be seen in his Admonition XXVI: "... [W]oe to those who look down on them [the clergy], for even though they be sinners, nonetheless no one is to judge them since the Lord alone reserves judgment on them to Himself."

<sup>7</sup>The Council of Florence in the *Decree For the Jacobites* (1442) stated: The Church "firmly believes, professes and proclaims that no one who is not within the Catholic

Church, not only pagans, but also Jews, heretics, schismatics can share in eternal life, but will go to the eternal fire . . . unless before their death they become members of [the Catholic Church]. No one, no matter how many alms they may give, and even if they should shed their blood for the name of Christ, can be saved, unless they remain in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church." For the very different teaching of Vatican II on this, cf. DV 3; LG 16; the emphatic statement of GS,22; AG 13.

<sup>8</sup>In the encyclical *Vehementer* (1906) Pius taught that "The Church is in essence an unequal society. There are two categories: the shepherds and the flock. These categories are so distinct that the right and authority necessary for guiding all the members reside only in the pastoral body. As to the multitude, its sole duty is to allow itself to be led and to follow its pastors as a docile flock." Pius returned to this theme the following year in the encyclical *Pascendi*: "Note here, venerable Brothers, the appearance already of that pernicious doctrine which would make the laity a factor in the progress of the church."

<sup>9</sup>Cf. LG, ch. IV, esp. nn. 32ff; the entire text of AA; PO 9. See also *Christifideles laici* of John Paul II and his encyclical on Mission, *Redemptoris missio* esp. n. 2 and 71ff.

<sup>10</sup>The primacy of conscience is very much in keeping with the Catholic tradition. Recall that St. Thomas maintained that one must follow one's conscience even if that meant dying excommunicated. (Cf. IV Sent., Disp.38, Q.II,Art.4.) Similarly, St. Francis maintains that if one is given an order that violates conscience, one must not obey. (Cf. Adm. III, 7 and Rule 10: 1,3.) In commenting on the teaching of Vatican II theologian Joseph Ratzinger stated very forcefully: "Over the Pope as the expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there still stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, if necessary even against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority. This emphasis on the individual, whose conscience confronts him with a supreme and ultimate tribunal, and one which in the last resort is beyond the claim of external social groups, even of the official church, also establishes a principle in opposition to increasing totalitarianism." (Cf. Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Doctrine of Vatican II*, vol V, p. 134.)

<sup>11</sup>Much has been written on this. A brief but good description of the two mentalities can be found in Timothy McCarthy's *The Catholic Tradition: The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Loyola), p. 29 and *passim*.

<sup>12</sup>Intervention made on October 1, 1965, during discussion of Chapter II of Part II of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. See n. 62 (last sentence) where the Council requires that scholars be given their "lawful freedom of inquiry, of thought, and of expression tempered with humility and courage."

<sup>13</sup>*Decree on the Training of Priests*, n.16

<sup>14</sup>*Theological Studies*, 1969, p.716. McCormick is discussing the possibility of dissent by those with competence in the matter.

<sup>15</sup>Letter of 21 September 1966 on the Theological Congress.

<sup>16</sup>*Redemptoris Missio*, 66.

<sup>17</sup>A good example of "doing the truth in love" can be found in the candid letter of the Capuchin martyr Blessed Agathangelus to the Cardinal Prefect of *Propaganda*, found in the Office of Readings on his feast day, August 7.

## Junipero Serra: From California to Kentucky Reflections of a Mountain Missionary

Jerome Beetz, OFM

### Introduction

In 1988 Pope John Paul II beatified Franciscan Friar Junipero Serra, placing him among those named Blessed in the Catholic Church. In many Native American communities in the United States there was some concern expressed because, although Junipero Serra is recognized by many historians as "the Founder of California," he has often been linked by association to the unjust treatment of Native Americans by the Spaniards who came to Mexico and present day California in the 1700s.

My own understanding of the conquest of Mexico and the western United States was filled from history books with images of exploitation of the land and people and the conversion by sword point of thousands of Indians to the Catholic Faith. Then, in October, 2003, I began a program of pilgrimage to the Missions of California. One week a year for three years I visited the twenty-two missions that were established by Junipero Serra and his companions. The journey led me to discover a remarkable Franciscan Friar whose life and spirituality has much to offer me as I seek to live out my own Franciscan vocation here in southeastern Kentucky.

The route we took on our pilgrimage was along the historic *Camino Real* (Royal Highway) that stretches from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the north. Our guides on the journey were André Cirino, OFM; Joseph Schwab, OFM; and Sue Koepp. They first instructed us in the meaning of being a pilgrim: we were to be as strangers and foreigners in the land and not merely "tourists." They would be responsible for leading us in prayer and giving us the historical background of each mission, but we were to reflect on what we saw and heard, and apply it to our lives. To do this we provided times of solitude throughout our journey, and at each mission let the Spirit of God open us to whatever we needed to experience for our life.

Secular Franciscan Joseph Raischl says, in one of his commentaries on St. Bonaventure's work, *The Journey of the Human Person Into God*:

Journeying is an archetype for human experience. Every culture and religion has some type of procession as a symbolic representation of this basic structure of life. Humankind—and the Church as the people of God within it—is caught between the danger of standing still and aimlessly running helter-skelter, searching in vain. Pilgrimage implies a balance between these two extremes: knowing where I come from and where I am going, with awareness and direction along the way.<sup>1</sup>

To achieve this balance the pilgrim, from the beginning, has to slow down and be open to relearn the art of living.

On the pilgrimage we stayed at a central location as we traveled each day to a different mission site. In the evenings we would return to this location and share our experiences, as well as receive added instruction from our pilgrimage team. At one of these sessions we were given insight into two spiritualities that had a tremendous impact on the life and mission of Junipero Serra. The first was Franciscan Spirituality based on the lives and teachings of Francis, Clare and Bonaventure, and especially the philosophy of John Duns Scotus. The second was the Spirituality of the Native People whom Serra encountered first in Mexico and then in California. While these are two distinct spiritualities, they had a common thread in their respect for the beauty and sacredness of creation. This mutual respect for creation was set forth most profoundly by St. Francis in the Cantic of the Creatures. To this, Scotus added his concept of the centrality of Christ as the masterpiece of God's creation. Everything is designed to point to and be gathered into Christ. Commenting on the importance of this Christocentric approach, Cirino states:

Christ, the archetype of all concrete forms of life found in this world and in all virtues, will make everything right, for he will judge the world in its final meeting with him. This means that in Christ all is seen in its true reality. And in this way we all will reach our eschatological goal through Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

I believe that what motivated and sustained Junipero Serra in his mission was his ability to integrate the values of Franciscan and Native Spirituality.

In the months since completing the pilgrimage program I found myself reflecting on two questions: Does the life and journey of Junipero Serra have anything to offer me as I walk in faith with the people of this part of Appalachia? And, in what ways can I bring the values of Franciscan Spirituality as expressed by Duns Scotus to life here in the mountains of Kentucky? To answer these questions I believe it was important for me to address three areas:

1. Ministry as Pastoral Care and Mission
2. The similar circumstances between Serra's California and my Kentucky
3. The impact of Scotistic thought and philosophy on both cultures

## Ministry as Pastoral Care and Mission

In his book *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care* John Patton emphasizes three paradigms of pastoral care: classical, clinical pastoral, and communal contextual. I will address the last two paradigms in this article as I believe they are the best examples of the approach to pastoral care taken by Junipero Serra as he ministered in California.

The Clinical Pastoral Paradigm which has extended approximately the last fifty years stresses the persons involved in giving and receiving the message of care. Edward Thornton has described this emphasis on person as

Beginning with a concern with what a minister must *do*; moving to a concern with what a minister must *know*; then, emphasizing what a minister must *say*; and finally, evolving to the question of what a minister must *be*.<sup>3</sup>

The central features of the Clinical Pastoral Paradigm are its assumptions that 1) the way one cares for others is inescapably related to the way one cares for oneself; 2) pastoral care always involves being someone as well as doing something; and 3) one can best learn about oneself and how to care for others through experiential and reflective participation in caring relationships.

In the Communal Contextual Paradigm, pastoral care is understood to be a ministry of a faith community which reminds members of God's scattered people that they are "remembered." Pastoral care must be attentive to the message, the persons communicating it and receiving it, and the contexts that affect its meaning. The Communal Contextual Paradigm broadens the Clinical Pastoral Paradigm's focus to include the caring community of both clergy and laity.

The shift in ministry that these two paradigms bring involves the dynamic relationship between supervision and consultation and what these reveal about the members of the community. Good pastoral care addresses the details of a particular situation, but it is also attuned to how that situation is an expression of the human condition and the character of the caring response of the community. I believe that Junipero Serra balanced these two dynamics in his life and ministry and as a result was able to make a lasting impression on the lives of many Native American People in the sixteen years he lived with them. He took to heart the basic ideals set down by St. Francis from the beginning of the

Order's missionary activity: "Be a simple presence to the people and preach by the manner of your life." He had a clear focus of his mission, yet never hesitated to seek advice from other friars, as well as the laity.

Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, an international network of communities for the mentally disabled gives a more contemporary meaning to this Communal Contextual Paradigm when he says:

to have a mission means to give life, to heal, and to liberate. It is to permit people to grow in freedom. When Jesus sends people off, he sends them to liberate and heal others. That is the good news.<sup>4</sup>

We can become people of liberation and healing because we ourselves are walking along that road toward inner healing and inner liberation.

## California to Kentucky

In 1998, the Bishops of Appalachia wrote a Pastoral Letter called *At Home in the Web of Life*. In it they called for the creation of "Sustainable Communities" —places where people and creation can live together in harmony and not rob future generations of the means of life. To bring about these communities, the bishops highlighted the following factors as essential to their formation: 1) respect for human dignity; 2) community support; 3) the proper meaning of ownership; 4) respect for the ecology of the area; and 5) the proper role of government in the lives of the people. I saw in this document many of the same challenges that Junipero Serra and the other friars faced as they began to establish the mission communities in California. They had entered a colonial world where the interest and profit of the colonial power was the first concern of government instead of the welfare of the people being governed. The silver mines and the Indians who worked them were exploited to increase the wealth of Spanish royalty, while the Indians themselves were left impoverished. Here in Kentucky, where coal has been the economic mainstay for generations, the local and federal government has often usurped its role as guardian of the people's rights to side with powerful industrial interests. They have allowed the exploitation of the coal miners, the land and other natural resources for the sake of profit. Most of the wealth leaves the area along with the coal.

In his efforts to improve the lives of the Indians, Junipero Serra and his companions developed new methods of farming and ranching, produced irrigation systems to harness the power of water, and introduced new ways to construct buildings, make cloth, and other household goods. We need to affirm and reward these same efforts in the people of this area of Kentucky as they create new sources of income while protecting the environment.

Spanish law, at the time when Junipero Serra was establishing the mission system, determined the native people were "spiritually and intellectually in

the position of children." The Franciscans, however, noticed that their senses of hearing and seeing were developed to a high degree and made full use of these in their liturgical celebrations. Religious music was taught and religious words set to native tunes and incorporated into all forms of Catholic worship. Many of the mission Indians became well known for the quality of their music. They became highly skilled in the use of drums, flutes and stringed instruments.

The people raised in the hills and hollers of Kentucky have also had a long history of being in a position of dependency and of feeling less than mature members of society. Fighting stereotypical images of being "lazy and uneducated," they have struggled to reclaim their rich cultural heritage. In the last 50 years mountain music and art have begun to thrive again. Songs like "Amazing Grace" and "Come Home" have found their way into movie sound tracks, while Aaron Copland used the old Shaker Community hymn "Simple Gifts" as the central theme of his *Appalachian Symphony*. Mountain art and crafts are recognized everywhere for their unique designs and simplicity of form.

Biographers tell us that whenever Junipero Serra visited someone or whenever someone came to see him, he always made the sign of the cross on the person's forehead while saying: "*Amora Dio*" (Love God). The words eventually became the greeting used by the Indians whenever they met Spaniards on the road. St. Francis used a similar greeting, *Pax et Bonum* (Peace and all good) when he encountered the people, especially those who were overwhelmed by their own sinfulness and lack of self worth. Jesus himself told the disciples that upon entering a house they were first to say: *Peace to this house*. Restoring this custom when I do home visiting, greet people at the door, or after a phone conversation is one lesson I can take to heart in the spirit of Junipero Serra.

Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God has been a key theme for Franciscans from the beginning of the movement. In his Second Life of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano describes Francis's love for Mary as "inexpressible" for "It was she who made the Lord of majesty our brother." In his Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis calls her the *Virgo ecclesia facta* (Virgin made Church). Francis clearly perceives and presents Mary as the model for every Christian who responds to the virtuous presence of God in his/her life. John Duns Scotus highlights this Franciscan tradition in his defense of Mary as The Immaculate Conception in which she was preserved from sin from the time of her conception in order to become the perfect dwelling for Jesus in her womb. The Franciscan missionaries brought this Marian tradition with them to California. It gave new dignity to Native American women in a culture that considered them little more than property. Learning that it was through the feminine that God brought about salvation gave them a new sense of worth and self esteem as well as a model for them to follow in their own lives.

This Catholic devotion to Mary has been a major criticism of the more fundamentalist churches in this part of Kentucky. They accuse us of giving a position of honor to Mary that belongs only to God. But I believe we have something positive to offer in presenting Mary as a model of total trust in God. We already have recourse to Mary under the titles of Our Lady of the Mountains and Our Lady of the Mines. As the coal industry which once sustained this area is becoming less and less a factor in the lives of the people, it is the women of the area who have been the driving force in bringing about the vision of sustainable communities called for in the Bishop's Pastoral Letter. Women religious were very influential in providing training for local women in health care, hospice, nutrition, and education. Now, they are not only to be found in the teaching and nursing professions, but they are the owners and operators of many of the small businesses that have developed in the area. However, they are also the ones who suffer most from the rise of alcoholism and drug abuse in the area. In a culture where women are in many ways still abused at the hands of men, Mary stands as a sign of hope and consolation.

The quality of leadership exhibited by Junipero Serra extended to both the people and the friars under his authority. He never hid the hardship of the life of the mission. Writing to his friend Friar Francisco Palou asking him to send friars to the missions he states:

Those who come should be provided with a good stock of patience and charity. Their stay then will be one of delight for them. It will enable them to amass riches—a wealth of suffering.<sup>5</sup>

He often reminded those who were tempted to give up that they should be mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul: "*Caritas Dei urget nos*" (The love of God impels us). Serra also let the friars know of his appreciation of the difficulty they were in and assured them that he was eager to do all he could for their welfare and happiness. Sometimes he himself complained about the isolation of the missions. Writing again to his friend Francisco Palou: "I find it very hard—sinner that I am—to be left alone, 80 miles from the nearest priest and in between nothing but savages and rough roads." His comments show him to be a man of his time and not so holy as to escape his own prejudice, and yet, man of conviction and faithfulness. Being alone here at Holy Cross in Jackson, Kentucky, where I serve as Parish Director, and stationed 30 miles from the nearest Franciscan community, I can echo some of Serra's frustration. The people here can at times be less than understanding in their demands, and the roads going up the hollers are often rough and unpaved. What I found in Junipero Serra was his ability to look for ways to move outside himself and rejoice in what he had instead of complaining about what was lacking. It is that same experience that people in the mountains describe as

"being surprised when something works rather than depressed over what fails." Junipero Serra was able to give back the love he received from God. In doing so, he met the criteria for holiness necessary to be beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1988.

## O Scotus! Where Art Thou!

The influence of John Duns Scotus played a major role in the life and ministry of Junipero Serra, since he was a professor of Scotistic Philosophy before coming to California. Therefore it was important for me to learn more about this Franciscan scholar. Since being beatified in 1989 there has been renewed interest in his philosophy and spirituality.

Scotus is significant today because of his commitment to the person as the image of God, his centrality of love over knowledge as a model for us to understand ourselves and our place in the world, and for showing how freedom—as the perfection of God in human reason—is connection to our concern for autonomy and moral living. In the view of Duns Scotus it is important to affirm faith where one finds it and to help people make good choices. Once we realize the value of love in nature, ourselves and others, we are called to act as the image of Christ. This Franciscan Triune love is generous, creative, and faithful despite inevitable infidelity, betrayals and rejection. It is not based on whatever good it might bring me, but on the intrinsic value of the other.

If the, as Scotus suggests, the fullest perfection of the human involves autonomy and right-ordered living, then rationality must be seen as more than problem-solving and analysis. It must value people in relationship even as it seeks to solve problems. It must focus on the things that integrate us rather than on those things that fragment us. God in this circumstance will be understood as less omnipotent, omniscient, and transcendent, and more as generosity and mercy. Scotus refers to this God, not in terms of a beatific vision, but as a beatific embrace. This embrace of God is extended to humankind in the Incarnation.

Scotus believed that in the fall of Adam we were wounded by sin, not corrupted by it. If we are wounded then there has to be a corresponding sense that we can experience healing. This is accomplished by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. For Scotus this healing is not something I merit by any action of mine, but by the pure initiative of God. He affirms only one centrality in regard to merit: God's freedom and love are so immense that we can count on a reward far beyond anything our actions deserve. The response to this divine generosity and presence of God is simply to accept it. Knowing this, I am motivated to act out of love rather than compelled by guilt, obligation, the avoidance of punishment, or as an act of reparation for sin.



Here in Kentucky the challenge is to once again affirm faith where we find it and to help people make choices that bring life. Poverty and feelings of hopelessness have led to an unprecedented growth in drug abuse in this area. To deal with this problem we need to commit ourselves again to the values that Junipero Serra gleaned from his understanding of Dun Scotus's commitment to the person as the image of God and his centrality of love over knowledge as a model for understanding ourselves and our place in the world. In just fifteen years Junipero Serra was able to establish nine missions in California and left behind a spirit that led to the establishment of twelve more by the Friars who followed him. They were places of training not only in ways of making a living, but in ways of making a life. Today these missions are being restored and their history preserved as people rediscover the Franciscan and Christian values that were given life there.

Our response is best summed up in the words of St. Francis to his brothers: "Hold back nothing of yourself for yourself, so that he who gives himself totally to you may receive you totally (LtOrd 29)."<sup>6</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Josef Raischl, SFO, in *The Journey Into God: A Forty Day Retreat with Bonaventure, Francis and Clare* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000), 124-25.

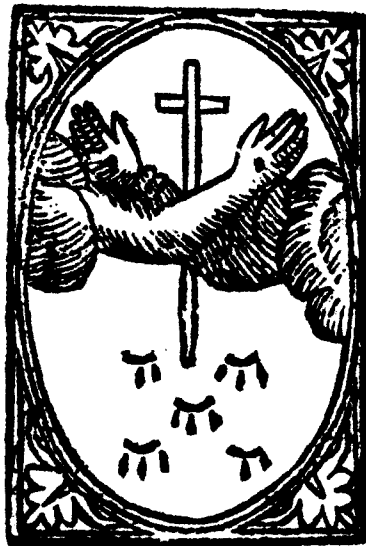
<sup>2</sup>Andre Cirino in *The Journey Into God: A Forty Day Retreat with Bonaventure, Francis and Clare* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000), 281.

<sup>3</sup>Only information provided is John Patton's book, *Pastoral Care in Context: An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup>No resource information provided.

<sup>5</sup>See M.N.L. Couve de Murville, *The Man Who Founded California: The Life of Blessed Junipero Serra* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000), n.p.

<sup>6</sup>See Regis J. Armstrong, OFM Cap. and Ignatius Brady, OFM, *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 58.



## take-back

"... the [other] friars used to take and hide the things they wanted to keep, so that Brother Juniper should not find them. For he used to give everything away, for the love of God and for his praise."

*The Life of Brother Juniper, Lesser Brother (Chap. 4)*

*God of Juniper (who else),  
eyeing everything I treasure;*

*marking all I hold so close  
for some other seeker's cellar;*

*here the habit held so precious,  
ripped-up for a cord to twine*

*here the pages stolen, private  
shedded grist to blooded meine.*

*here the silver thought to hide  
spilled into the life of strays*

*here the partner tagged as mine,  
taken, given in your way!*

*grasping, cannot catch you racing  
naked out of the house to show*

*no God other than this, trickster,  
left to love, and love and grow.*

*William B. Jones*



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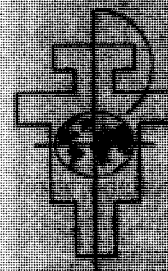
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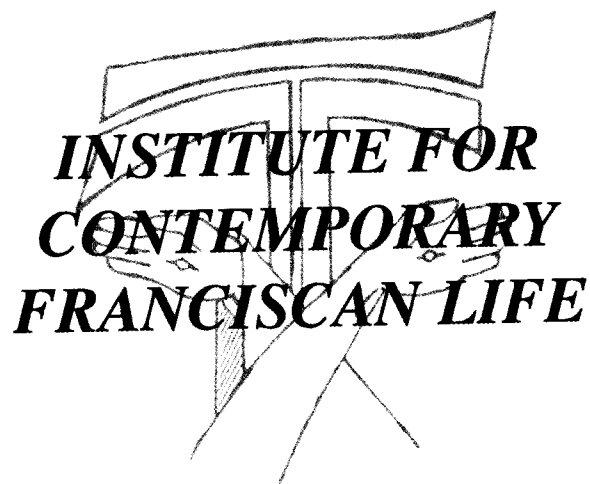
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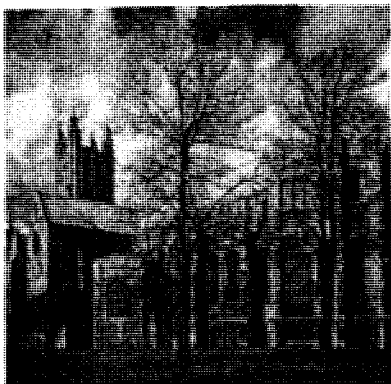
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**Holistic Retreat: Canticle of the Creatures. September 30-October 2, 2005. Friday-Sunday.** Marianne Hieb, RSM and Helen Owens, OSF. At the Franciscan Center, Tampa Fl.

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**The 40 Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat. November 12-December 22, 2005.** Sr. Mary Elizabeth Immler, OSF leads a retreat using *A Franciscan Solitude Experience: The Pilgrim's Journal*. At Portiuncola Center for Prayer, Frankfort, IL. See ad, p. 238.

**Happy and Blessed The Franciscan Journey. September 30-October 2, 2005.** J-F. Godet Calogeras. At San Damiano Retreat Center, Danville, CA. See ad, p. 237.

**Global Awareness Through Experience Pilgrimage to El Salvador. Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Ita, Maura, Jean and Dorothy. Nov. 26-Dec. 5, 2005.** Contact GATE, 912 Market Street, LaCrosse, WI 54601-8800. Ph: 608-791-5283 or fax 608-782-6301. Email: Gate@fspa.org.

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## Abbreviations

### Writings of Saint Francis

Am	The Admonitions
BL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Cc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation of the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
Off	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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
Cl	Rule of Clare
TestCl	Testament of Clare
Cl	Blessing of Clare

### Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFl	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano

# A WORD FROM BONAVENTURE

Now there are three topics that we should consider with regard to the Incarnate Word: the union of natures, the fullness of gifts, and the suffering of the passion for the redemption of the human race. Concerning the union of natures, we have to ponder these . . . points in order to grasp the mystery of the Incarnation, namely, what occurred, how it occurred, and when it occurred.

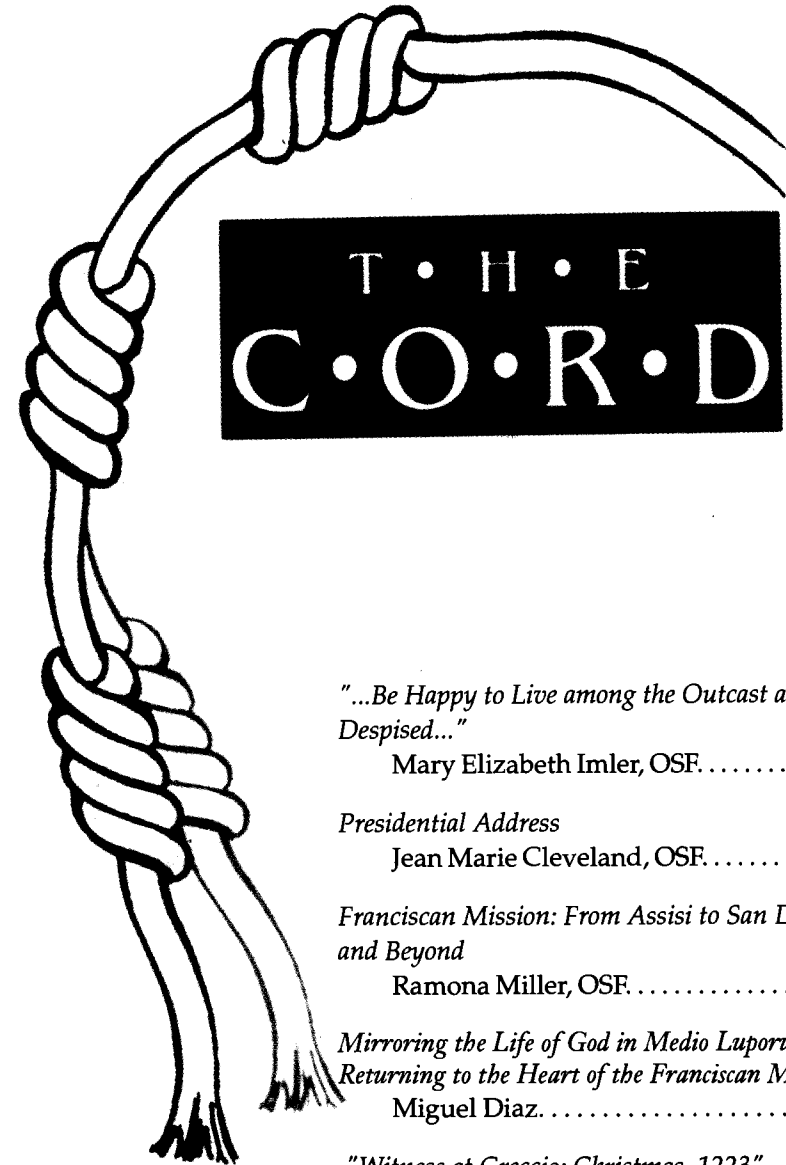
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**A Franciscan Spiritual Review**

Publisher: Michael Cusato, OFM  
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2. The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*, 14th 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**.

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

*The Cord*, 55.6 (2005)

## Editorial

Most of the pages of this issue emanate from the proceedings of the Franciscan Federation Conference held in July, 2005, in San Diego. Each year we also try to highlight in the last issue of the year some level of focus upon Third Order Regular values. And, of course, it is the issue that leads us into the celebration of the feast of Christ's birth in our world. Linking all these together is a bit of a challenge.

The pieces by Jean Marie Cleveland, Miguel Diaz, and Ramona Miller, all based upon presentations at the Federation conference, provide us with insight into the common elements inherent in Franciscan Mission today, while also showing us how to welcome Christ into our lives through attention to the needs of the marginalized. We are called to return to the "heart" of Franciscan life by acknowledging how far from the ideal our daily life can be.

Mary Elizabeth Imler's piece, which opens this issue, recounts a moment of encountering the lepers who are with us still, 800 years after the time of Francis. Joy in the midst of pain is still possible, as she so eloquently reveals. And, lastly, Andrea Barone shares with us her thoughts on the first Greccio experience. We hope all of the authors touch you with grace!

And, who better to help me send out the best possible Christmas wishes to all our readers than Zachary Hayes? His comments about the theology of St. Bonaventure (found in *The Hidden Center*), will, I hope, set the tone for the coming of the Incarnate Word once again:

[I]n many sermons, the birth of Christ, the mystery of His earthly origin, opens up the mystery of origins in broader terms. In the literal sense the texts of Scripture present the historical elements of the birth-scene of Christ. . . . [And] the same scene evokes in the reader an awareness of origins in the spiritual life and presents the conditions for one's own birth in Christ. **Bethlehem is the house of bread; and the child in the manger is the bread of those who are simple and humble in spirit.** . . . The basic conditions of the following of Christ are given in the poverty and humility of Christ and in the poverty, simplicity and vigilance of the shepherds; for the signs of the divine presence can be found only by those who are poor and simple in spirit.

May we all become signs of the divine Presence!

*Roberta A. McKelvie, OSF*

**"... Be Happy to Live among the Outcast  
and Despised ..."**

Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF

There is a certain romantic feeling around the disease of leprosy for Franciscans. This is rooted in the legends of Francis and Clare and carried on down through the ages right into modernity, sadly because the disease continues to manifest itself. Since ancient times, leprosy has been recorded as a contagious, mutilating and incurable disease. On my most recent visit to our missions in northern Brazil, I felt the call to visit the neighboring leprosarium in Marituba, one of three active government-funded sites in the state of Para. As a novice in the 1980s, I remember cutting and rolling strips of old sheets to pack in mission barrels for the "lepers" where our Sisters would visit. Then, my heart was filled with that romantic zeal to follow in the footprints of Francis and Clare, but was I any different now?

It was an ordinary day, rising before the sun broke the horizon at six, refreshed by the cold shower in the morning warmth. It was my turn to walk to get breakfast bread and be back for prayers. Everyone gathered by eight o'clock to catch the connection of buses from Icoaraci to Marituba. The eight of us, including our two newest novices leading the way, traveled with ordinary commuters, on an ordinary bus route, but was ours any different?

Our arrival was rather quiet because this was not the ordinary time for visitors. The complex was quite modern-looking, different from the grass huts with branches to hang clothes on that I had heard about as a novice. The Brazilian government has been very active working since the 44<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly Resolution in May, 1991. The World Health Organization and its partners continue to work for the global elimination of leprosy as a public health problem as set in 1990. Although WHO hailed reaching the goal to decrease the level of leprosy in the world by over 90%, there are six countries in which full control has eluded them: Brazil, India, Madagascar, Mozambique, Myanmar and Nepal. In 1985, four million were affected; in 1997, there were an estimated 1.2 million cases in the world, most of them concentrated in Southeast Asia, Africa and the Americas. The number of new cases detected in

the new millennium worldwide each year is now about half a million. It is estimated that there are between one and two million people visibly and irreversibly disabled due to past and present leprosy who require care from the communities in which they live.

We were directed to the convent and greeted by the sisters, sharing diocesan news and, of course, a cup of *cafezinho*. The Sisters explained that today the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy is easy; however, access to correct information, diagnosis and early treatment is essential. When *M. leprae* was discovered by G.A. Hansen in 1873, it was the first bacterium to be identified as causing disease in humans. However, treatment for leprosy only appeared in the late 1940s with the introduction of dapsone and its derivatives. Leprosy bacilli resistant to dapsone gradually appeared and became widespread, but this form is now controllable with a multi-drug therapy though the effects are not reversible.

We were told about the disease and the treatments by the one Sister with medical background, "Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, an acid-fast, rod-shaped bacillus." Matter of factly, she added that the disease mainly affects the skin, beginning with a small patch, then peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract and also the eyes, apart from some other structures. Leprosy has afflicted humanity since time immemorial. These are ways of suffering acutely, but in the early stages of the disease, perhaps before the victim knows s/he has been infected, no suffering whatsoever is experienced. It once affected every continent and it has left behind a terrifying image in history and human memory—of mutilation, rejection and exclusion from society.

We asked about contagion and were informed paradoxically that of all the communicable diseases, leprosy is the least contagious; it is probably spread by airborne droplet infection. It is difficult to catch and cannot be caught by a handshake. Over 95% of people are immune and after only a couple days' treatment, sufferers are no longer infectious. They can return to their families and homes, if they are welcomed. But then this is the work of the other twelve Sisters in residence.

Leprosy has struck fear into human beings for thousands of years, and was well recognized in the oldest civilizations of China, Egypt and India. Although leprosy can reduce one's life span, it is not a killer disease. It is chronic suffering and fear that drive the victim to despair, we were told. I remembered that one of the most tragic ways victims of leprosy suffer is to be outcast from society. Several of the patients have begged to be killed, to put an end to their torment. Not a few told that they could bear the loss of fingers, toes or even hands and feet, also eyes. What they could not tolerate is to be cut off from the human race. The Sisters do mostly counseling and spiritual companioning with the patients and for their families.

The time for talk was coming to an end. During the tour of the Sisters' house we were asked if we really wanted to visit the colony, and timidly we just kept following the path opening before us. The first stop was the small chapel with beautiful Brazilian green and yellow stained glass windows. These opened up onto a grassy knoll so that there was enough room for everyone to attend the services. My eye caught the wooden carved corpus hanging dominantly in the small space just beside the Blessed Sacrament. What was so remarkable was that it was only the corpus; there was no cross! The ordinary was extraordinary. "We carry Christ's cross!" she said. This was the realization of Francis: "Take up your bodies and carry his holy cross" (OfP Ps XV). This was not a Lenten admonition but a daily, very real call for the people here to walk the ways of ordinary times.

Slowly, we walked from the craft room where I purchased an incomplete set of hand-painted napkins and left a donation for the beautiful work. The woman had lost too many fingers to complete her painting project, the instructor remarked. We moved to the garden of banana trees and rows of vegetables tended by several men, each missing some extremity but working proudly for the day, laboring under the sun. At first everyone was at a distance; we simply looked on from afar. Slowly our gazing brought us to know that these people were not statistics and facts we had learned. Our eyes, through the grace of God, brought us to consider their humanity. Our minds, touched by the amazing grace of the moment—a desire to imitate—opened our mouths to speak a greeting or reach out to touch a shoulder, or shake a hand. Gently we were drawn into conversations. We were drawn beyond the threshold of the rooms and entered into the sacred space of the other by invitation. This ordinary movement felt extraordinarily courageous at the time.

From around the corner came music and songs and a name, Walter. Here, language differences dissolved into a harmony of humble making. I was moved beyond the gazing, past the considering into a contemplative space I will long remember. My fingers complemented his remaining digits, making chords on his small keyboard he could only remember. I was taken up into the holiness of this sacred time and place as my eyes met his. In that moment we were simply brother and sister united in the cosmic Christ. In my soul, I could feel the tears swelling in our eyes not in pity or sadness but in a harmony dreamt by our God in the beginning of time. How long we were elevated, I cannot know.

Just before I left, Walter and I embraced and he whispered in my ear, "*Lembra!*" (Remember!) Was it my privilege to make a chord for Walter to remember? Could it be that I was to remember the call of Clare to gaze, consider, and contemplate not just in prayers but in imitation on our daily travels? Was Christ begging each of us to remember Francis's call to "take up our bodies and carry his holy cross" as we came down from this sacred moment? I



only know I will never forget this very ordinary encounter on an ordinary day's visit to one of the ordinary leprosariums in northern Brazil. The departure was simple, the bus ride back very quiet. I understand differently what our TOR Rule and Life means to "be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed, and the destitute" (#22). It was a great privilege to be among these "outcasts." There was such a sacred exchange, a mutuality as instruments helping find a measure of dignity in hearts now no longer ordinary. Nothing has changed, yet everything is different as I dare to enter the sacred space of my Sisters, when I dare to be drawn into that contemplative oneness of God. May I remember that romantic but very true Franciscan reality in the encounter with a leper whose name is brother/sister simply bearing their chronic illness, their cross whose name is also sister/brother. This is revealed to me, and in the now of every step I take to take up my body, my cross in my circumstances and time and place! May I always remember!

This reflection was inspired by the Central New York Gathering in Syracuse, NY, March 14-18, 2005, after touring the new shrine for Mother Marianne Cope. This Third Order Regular religious was beatified in Rome on May 14, 2005.



## Presidential Address

Jean Marie Cleveland, OSF

Peace and All Good! Welcome to San Diego! When the planning committee met here in January, we marveled at the significance of gathering at the Sheraton FOUR POINTS to discuss mission. Being sent to the Four corners of the earth—north, east, south, and west; preserving the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water; ministering with and for the four races—red, yellow, black (brown), white; looking forward to the four seasons—spring, summer, fall, winter; and pondering the four points of the Jerusalem Cross chosen for our logo! Coincidence? Or the Spirit's guiding us?

### Return To The Mission: Heart Filled World Of Exchange!

We Third Order Regular Sisters, Brothers, Friars, and our Associates and friends gather to examine our mission in today's world—the twenty-first century. We come from all corners of the country to reconnect with each other, to look at where we have been, and to contemplate where we are to go.

We return to San Diego the birthplace of the Franciscan mission in California. We pray in this place of Four Points and we ask for the grace to ponder with each other what we have pondered with our individual Congregations! What is our Mission?

Let us begin by looking at *The Rule and Life of The Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary*. (Article 2)

With all in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the brothers and sisters of this order are to persevere in true faith and penance. They wish to live this evangelical conversion of life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty, and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the Son himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore and serve him in sincere repentance: "Come blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Sister Margaret Carney, OSF, and Father Thaddeus Horgan, SA who authored the Commentary on the Third Order Rule state, "This second article notes the centrality of *metanoia* (conversion) in our Order's spirituality. It is the root value of our tradition and flowers forth in poverty, minority and contemplation. This article, therefore, is the **charism statement** of the Third Order Regular."

For our Mission to be authentic it must be grounded in these four values: metanoia, poverty, minority, and contemplation. As we "Return to the Mission" we must "Return to the Rule". We must continue to do what our Congregations have been doing: "Return to our Roots"—"Return to our Franciscan Spirituality"—"Return to the vision of our foundresses/founders" but looking to the twenty-first century. What would they do if they were here today?

As I reflect on that question, my mind turns to **Freeing the Fire**, the process built on 2Tim: 1-6 "Fan into flame the gift you have been given" or, as another version reads: "Rekindle the gift of God that is within you." As part of its report to the Franciscan Federation Board and to you assembled here, the Freeing the Fire Task Force asks us to Imagine the Possibilities.

### Imagine the Possibilities

... of reaching through and beyond our individual charisms to embrace our common Third Order Regular Rule and Life;

... of incarnating collectively the goodness and love present in all God's creation;

... of igniting our passion to effect systemic change in our world.

These possibilities come from the work of the Task Force which conducted three assemblies—in Washington, in Frankfort, and in Hastings-on-the-Hudson. These assemblies concentrated on Sister Ilia Delio's message to us in a video made at the 2003 Annual Federation Conference and on the **four flames** identified by the Task Force:

The Flame of the Gospel

The Flame of Our Franciscan Evangelical Identity

The Flame of Our Global Community

The Flame of Our Ecclesial Relationship

**These flames spring from our Rule.**

### The Flame of the Gospel from Article 11

Since the sisters and brothers are to be totally conformed to the Gospel, they should reflect upon and keep in their hearts the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the word of God, as well as the words of the Holy Spirit which are "spirit and life" (Jn 6:63).

### The Flame of Our Franciscan Evangelical Identity from Article 1:

The form of life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity.

### The Flame of Our Global Community from Article 29:

Sent into the whole world, they should give witness by word and work to God's voice and make known to all that only God is all-powerful.

### The Flame of Our Ecclesial Relationship from Article 2 and Article 32:

With all in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church who wish to serve God, the brothers and sisters of this Order are to persevere in true faith and penance.

Always obedient to the church and firmly established in the Catholic faith, let them live according to the poverty, the humility and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ which they have solemnly promised to observe.

Knowing the basis for our flames (the Rule), we connect them with the possibilities (mentioned above) and realize the importance of these possibilities. The Freeing the Fire Task Force, in cooperation with the co-chairs for each flame group, prioritized the twenty-three recommendations from the flame groups. The Task Force suggests that we concentrate on the first nine. How do these possibilities and recommendations lead us to examine our lives and our mission?

**Imagine the possibilities** of reaching through and beyond our individual charisms to embrace our common Third Order Regular Rule and Life. In examining this possibility, we are asked to:

Develop a process like base communities (like *Christ Renews His Parish*, etc.) to bring Franciscans together to share regularly—Franciscan life groups—that will enable Franciscan congregations to work together on a common purpose. (Evangelical Identity)

Research and use resources already available to provide specialized education programs to get Franciscans exposed to the intellectual tradition (similar to three years of programs for the Poor Clares. (Evangelical Identity)  
Provide continued education and study on our Franciscan Third Order Regular Rule and Our Third Order charism and the integration of our

individual congregations' charisms within the Third Order Charism. (Evangelical Identity)

**Imagine the possibilities** of incarnating collectively the goodness and love present in all God's creation. In examining this possibility, we are asked to:

Identify and develop a networking system for Franciscan art, symbol, and ritual. (Gospel)

Develop reflection tools focusing on incarnational theology as expressed in scripture and Franciscan sources. (Gospel)

Invite a Franciscan to create a "white paper" that addresses the process of gaze upon, consider, contemplate and live the Gospels, as a template to approach life for action. (Gospel)

Develop/conduct a retreat or assembly experience for educating and reflecting on incarnational and Christological dimensions of the gospels. (Gospel)

**Imagine the possibilities** of igniting our passion to effect systemic change in our world. In examining this possibility, we are asked to:

Hire a national Justice and Peace Coordinator at the Franciscan Federation. (Global Community)

Create healing services for use in groups: parishes, retreats, etc. (Ecclesial Relationships)

During the next two years, the continuing Freeing the Fire Task Force (appointed by the National Board at its July 10 meeting), the National Board, and the National Office will determine which of the possibilities are feasible at this time. They will continue to present assemblies using Sister Ilia Delio's video on Religious Life and Sister Mary Elizabeth Imler's video on Franciscan Life and Federating which she made during the 2004 Federation Conference. The Spirit and Life Committee and our Franciscan scholars have already been working on similar ideas. Regional gatherings have focused on some of them. What if we determined to turn these possibilities into realities? What if we dreamed of making a difference—together?

Each of the eighty Congregations belonging to the Franciscan Federation was asked to send the Federation a copy of its Mission statement. Throughout the conference you will find these statements shown on the screens. Look at them. What do you see? Sister Dianne Kaimann, OSF studied them and discovered that they contain eight main threads:

Following the example of Francis, Clare, and our Foundresses/founders  
 Being centered in God  
 Living the Gospel–Evangelical Life  
 Living in Simplicity and Joy  
 Meeting the Needs of Our Time  
 Serving the Poor  
 Committing Ourselves to Peace and Justice  
 Respecting All Creation

It seems to me that if we look at our main threads, we have a common Mission Statement:

*We, the members of the Franciscan Federation, follow the example of Francis, Clare, and our own Foundresses/Founders. Centered in God, we base our lives on the Gospel, living in simplicity and joy. We strive to meet the needs of our time through serving the poor, committing ourselves to peace and justice, and respecting all creation.*

I wonder if there will come a time when we recognize our unity while celebrating our diversity. When Federating will be a way of being for us. I believe that by working with Freeing the Fire, by cooperating in regional areas, by participating in National Conferences, by finding ways to support the Federation with the resources of personnel and finances, we will find ways to be one while remaining different Congregations.

There are some concerns for us working with the Federation and for you the members. How do we balance the role of the regions with that of the whole Federation? How do we determine the role of leadership in the Federation? Who is eligible to become an officer? How do we see our organization changing with regard to leadership and grassroots participation? How do we want it to be in the future? What should we include in our statutes? How much should we be governed by Robert's Rules of Order? Is there another way? How do we establish a realistic budget and live by it? How do we find more resources and sources of income? How do we establish guidelines for socially-conscious fund raising and financial investment?

These and other questions face us in the future. They will be addressed at Board meetings beginning Friday and will be topics for leadership assemblies in the years to come. My hope is that there will be involvement from both leadership and grassroots in the future. I believe, however, that leaders need a place to meet and discuss topics of concern to them. We in leadership are placed there – for a time – by the members of our Congregations. We gain much from gathering once a year to discuss issues facing us as Franciscan leaders.

Next July will be a special time for us as we gather in Rochester, NY, to devote time to prayer and spirituality. We await the distribution of the Franciscan Prayer Book which is scheduled to be a part of that assembly. We look forward, too, each year to the pre-conference reflection materials which are prepared for us by the Spirit and Life Committee. Post-conference materials are available to the regions and to the Congregations.

We thank those who help with the finances of the Federation—a never ending battle of long standing. Much has been done during the past years to determine a realistic budget. It seems that we have accomplished that. Now we need to find the funding to meet the income needs.

It has been an incredible three years for me on the Executive Committee of the Franciscan Federation. I cannot explain all that I have experienced during that time—both as a President and as a member of the Freeing the Fire Task Force. I have met wonderful people—especially in your convents around the country. I realize ever more the joy of being Franciscan—of working with other Franciscans whose values I share. It is impossible to tell you how much I have learned from each of you. Or to share with you how much is contributed by our Congregations so that we can have a Federation that has endured for forty years.

I would like to recognize some people who make all this possible.

- National Office
- Executive Committee
- Region Representatives to the National Board
- Prayerbook Committee and those who labored with the prayerbook
- Freeing the Fire Committee, those who developed the Culture and Tradition section, the flame co-chairs, those who have attended an Assembly
- The Spirit and Life Committee, and all who designed and wrote
- The Finance, Scholarship, Investment Committees and all who shared wisdom
- Office help
- Region VI and all who are coordinating this Assembly

Thank you, all of you who have come to explore our Franciscan Mission in the twenty-first century. We have much to do to absorb what we hear and to make it part of our lives. Let us determine to work together to build the City of God. Let us challenge one another. . . .

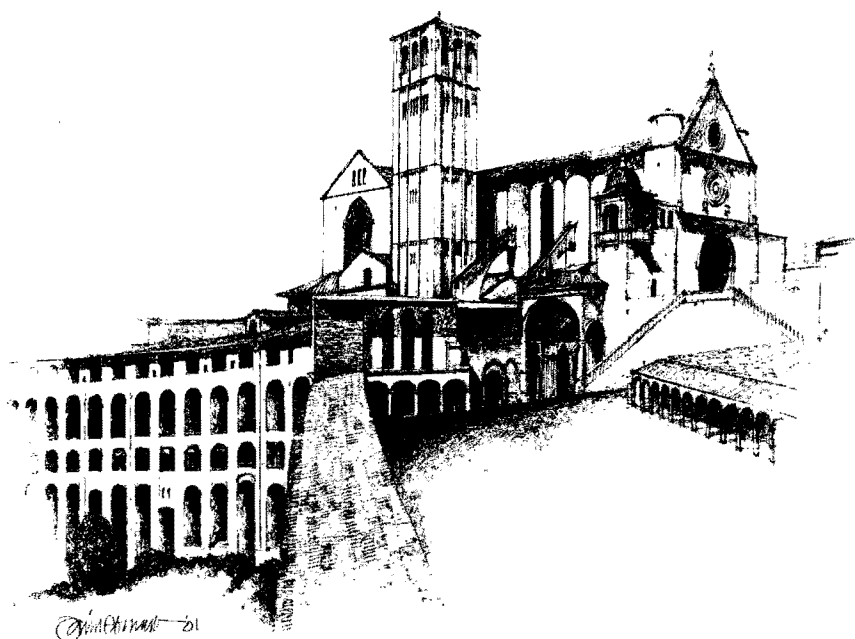


Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!  
 A new day is dawning for all those who weep.  
 The people in darkness have seen a great light.  
 The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Let us build the city of God.  
 May our tears be turned into dancing!  
 For the Lord, our light and our love,  
 Has turned the night into day!

We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.  
 The One who has loved us has brightened our way.  
 The Lord of all kindness has called us to be  
 A light for his people to set their hearts free.

Daniel L. Schutte  
 New Dawn Music Oregon Catholic Press



*The Cord*, 55.6 (2005)

## Franciscan Mission: From Assisi to San Diego and Beyond

Ramona Miller, OSF

What a great moment for us here in San Diego celebrating 236 years since the beginning of Franciscan mission in this city. My dear sisters and brothers, it is such a privilege for me to speak about our lives, about our Franciscan mission, about the progress we are making for God that builds on the past missionary activity of such great persons as Father Junipero Serra. Fr. Serra arrived here on July 1 in 1769 and on July 16<sup>th</sup> celebrated the first Mass for the Mission San Diego de Alcala.<sup>1</sup> His life and ours have similarities in our Franciscan mission.

### Mission

So what makes mission Franciscan? Christianity is missionary by its very nature. Each baptized person participates in God's mission of communicating God's love for the entire world. Mission has its origin in the heart of God; God, *fontalis plenitudo*, the fountain of love.<sup>2</sup> I propose that Franciscan mission is a refraction of Christian mission, and that Franciscan mission particularly reveals God's love in three ways: 1) Heart transformation, 2) Life with the marginalized, and 3) Cosmic horizons. As we meditate on the Gospels for heart transformation, live with the marginalized and peer toward the expanding cosmic horizons, we share in God's love, which is generative and self-diffusing. These qualities set in motion an energy that resonates with the goodness in others. In this presentation, I will offer an overview of Franciscan mission from Assisi to San Diego. I will speak about the beginnings of Third Order Regular mission in the United States, and I will suggest how our future may further exemplify heart transformation and life with the marginalized while having our eye on cosmic horizons.

### Heart Transformation

Franciscan mission expressing heart transformation began in February 1208 when Francis of Assisi attending Mass at the Portiuncula *heard those things which Christ tells the disciples who were sent to preach, instructing them to carry no*

gold or silver, a wallet or a purse, bread, walking stick, or shoes, or two tunics. (L3C 25).<sup>3</sup> Francis heard the Gospel as a personal directive and his life was forever changed, changing history and the mode of missionary activity of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Much has been written about the dramatic conversion stories of Francis, the events that transformed his heart from an ambitious knight in Assisi's army to the poor beggar with the lepers. The effectiveness of Francis's explicit preaching of the Word was because his life as well was a sermon. In addition, his itinerant lifestyle reflected his desire to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, which in turn developed his passionate love of God. His passion for God overflows in the Exhortation to the Faithful:

O how glorious it is to have a holy and great Father in heaven! O how holy, consoling to have such a beautiful and wonderful Spouse! O how holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love [...] to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (1LtF 11-13).

Francis concludes the exhortation by paraphrasing Jesus' prayer for unity as found in John's Gospel, "*may they all be one, as You and I are one*" (John 17:21). The longing that Jesus has for all to be with Him in heaven becomes Francis's longing, a desire that all who hear the Word of God will turn away from vice and be happy and blessed in living the Gospel life. The Gospels resonated in Francis's heart setting up his agenda for living and preaching.

His preaching flowed from his prayer life, and from his meditation on the Gospels. Heart transformation took place in daily increments as he sought *to live according to the pattern of the holy Gospel* (Test 14). He unsettled those who enjoyed entitlements with positions of leadership and power because he taught that we *must never desire to be above others, but instead, we must be servant and subject to every human creature for God's sake* (2LtF 47). The starting point in Francis's mission was the greeting: *May the Lord give you peace* (1 Cel 23).<sup>5</sup> Francis's voice served as a bell that brought people together to hear this messenger of the Gospel. Chances are the preaching took place in the town's piazza, where persons of all economic stations mingled.<sup>6</sup> The people responded and their hearts and lives were changed. The Franciscan movement expanded rapidly and these new penitents literally brought about peace in their towns and villages by laying down their military arms, refusing to be conscripted for war. This medieval societal change of choosing nonviolence resulted from the preaching of the early Franciscans which demonstrates the influence of the power of the Word of God *proclaimed by those whose hearts have been transformed by the Gospel*.

Francis of Assisi modeled a new missionary approach of conversation as exemplified in his encounter with the Sultan, Al-Malik al-Kamil. Francis put

himself at the service of Christ—who came to bring peace to the world—when he dared to go visit the Sultan in Jerusalem whom the Christians were fighting with the support of the papacy. Francis's simplicity and piety impressed the Sultan who himself was a man desiring peace. The two of them spent days in conversation with each other growing in respect for each other's faith, a model for today's need for interreligious dialogue. The image of Francis and the Sultan in conversation reminds us that when our hearts are aligned with God's love we are able to converse with those who think differently than us. Mission for the future flows from a new consciousness, that of having hearts transformed so that we consciously convey God's love and grow in our capability of developing harmonious relationships with others whose worldview might be very different from ours. This dialogic stance takes great faith that God moves in ways we cannot comprehend, and God is free to move in ways that God so chooses. Entering into dialogue is a vulnerable disposition because it means abandoning one's right "to be right" and to be open to change.

Did his dialogue with the Sultan change Francis of Assisi? Yes. While visiting the Sultan, one of the observations that Francis made and that influenced his thinking was the way that the muezzins called out from the high minarets several times a day inviting the Muslims to turn to God in prayer. In a letter written to the Custodians after his return from the Holy Land, he says,

May you announce and preach His praise to all nations in such a way that praise and thanks may always be given to the all-powerful God by all people throughout the world at every hour and whenever bells are rung (1LtCus 8).

Bells have the purpose, according to Francis, of directing hearts and minds toward God in praise and thanksgiving. The use of Mission bells probably had their beginning in the encounter of Francis with the Sultan.<sup>7</sup>

## Life with the Marginalized

The second way that Franciscan mission reveals God's love is life with the marginalized. At the end of Francis's life he wrote that his conversion occurred when he was led among the lepers. This encounter directed him toward the marginalized and life outside the safety of the city walls. In fact, the early band of brothers would not have any fixed abode but spent much of their time as "pilgrims and strangers," as marginalized themselves.<sup>8</sup> In this manner, Francis's love for Jesus deepened as he pondered how God chose to become poor and a pilgrim descending to live among us. For Francis, there was nothing else to do but to follow in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to live poor with the poor, and to teach his followers "to respond to the divine *love by their poor* human love, seeking to love one another as brothers."<sup>9</sup>

Clare of Assisi exemplifies life with the marginalized in her interpretation of the cloister of the Poor Ladies as being for the world, not hidden from the world.<sup>10</sup> Living outside the safety of the walls of Assisi with the marginalized required the Poor Ladies to depend on the providence of God made manifest through the goodness of the people. In exchange for materials from the townsfolk to sustain their community living, Clare and the Sisters provided a witness of evangelical life, that life of relationality exemplified by Jesus of the Gospels. Their lives enlivened the faith and generated hope in the presence of God with the people who were suffering tumultuous social change at the end of feudalism. The lifestyle of humble work and prayer lived outside the protection of the city walls preached its own sermon to those who knew the privileges that these noble women left behind to join the Franciscan movement. Clare witnessed in her writings and in her life the joy that flowed from recognizing that indeed the Word was made flesh and dwells among us.

The subtitle of this year's conference, "A Heart-filled World of Exchange" is typified by Clare's life of contemplative prayer that overflowed in her ministry of writing and healing in exchange for care from others. Her witness with the Poor Ladies who were not hidden from the world invited conversation among women to re-examine their roles in society and to risk new ways of living among the marginalized. Because of Clare's example, the princess of Bohemia, Agnes of Prague, left her citadel on the mountain to move across the Vltava River down onto the lowland with the poor. Francis and Clare had set the example for future Franciscans that mission among the poor and the outcasts is the way to walk in the footsteps of Jesus who came to live among us.

## Cosmic Horizons

The third way that Franciscan mission reveals God's love is with cosmic horizons. The Umbrian valley is an artist's delight that holds the rays of sunlight in its basin warming the earth and the stones of the caves. In the 1200s, without electricity the night sky flickered with the brilliance of the stars and planets. It is easy to imagine Francis and Clare gazing upon the ceiling of the cosmos and having their thoughts directed to the beauty and majesty of the Creator. What an overwhelming feeling of gratitude arises within us when we ponder our shared relationship with other creatures within this great creation. Francis's canticle expresses his relationality with all of creation: Praised be *You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful* (CtC 5).

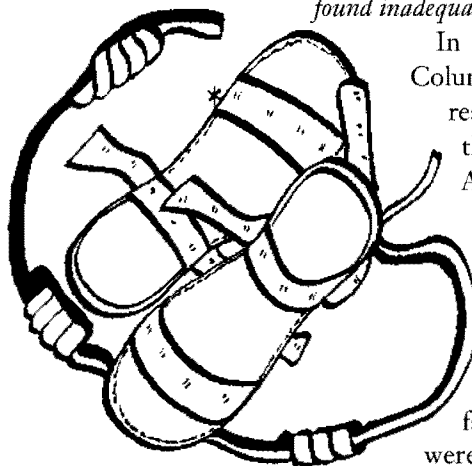
One of the Poor Ladies at San Damiano, Sister Angeluccia, said that when Clare sent the serving Sisters out from there, she reminded them to praise God when they saw beautiful trees, flowers, and bushes; and, likewise, always

to praise Him for and in all things when they saw all peoples and creatures (Proc XIV, 9).

These co-founders of the Franciscan movement provide us the example for our own lives of mission: to ponder creation and to give respect to each created being and thing as sister and brother, members of one family.

## Junipero Serra

Now I would like to offer an overview of Franciscan mission from Assisi to San Diego. I've been sharing the early beginnings of the Franciscan mission enunciated in the lives of Francis and Clare. In your imagination, fast-forward over three hundred years, and come to America. Let us recall the stories of the first Franciscans on this continent. Many of the first missionaries in America were Spanish friars of the Observant movement. These men, known for their lifestyle of poverty and prayer, were much respected by the Spanish monarchy.<sup>11</sup> When Christopher Columbus was searching for someone to sponsor his desired voyage to reach the East by traveling west across the ocean, it was a Franciscan friar that advocated for him by going to Queen Isabella and persuading her to offer this opportunity to Columbus. At the time, Spain was feeling some success in their victory after 800 years of struggle against the Moors and they perhaps were ready for a new extension of their territorial reign. Queen Isabella's sponsorship of Columbus initiated centuries of Spanish colonization including the funding of the Franciscan missions in California. Visitors to the California state capitol are reminded of Spain's influence by a large statue in the rotunda depicting Columbus kneeling before the Queen. The sculptor engraved Queen Isabella's response to Columbus: *"I will assume the undertaking for my own crown of Castille, and am ready to pawn my jewels to defray the expenses of it, if the funds of the treasury shall be found inadequate."*<sup>12</sup>



In the flurry of communication after Columbus returned from his first trip, we read the enthusiasm in papal letters for the new horizons of mission. Pope Alexander VI desired that the Catholic faith be spread everywhere and encouraged searching for new islands "so that the natives and inhabitants thereof be brought to the service of our Redeemer and the blessings of the Catholic faith."<sup>13</sup> Spain's colonization efforts were conducted as a mandate from the

pope who blessed the Spanish *conquista*. Today we are horrified to read of the military conquest of the Aztecs and other indigenous peoples done in the name of the Church. This could lead us to reflect upon our contemporary American dominant behavior and consideration of how we will be judged by future generations.

Spanish friars evangelized thousands of Indians in the Caribbean, in the southeastern United States, and in southern Texas and Arizona in the 1550s, two hundred years before Junipero Serra arrived in San Diego. Miguel Diaz, Cuban-American here, reminds us that the first Franciscan missionaries to the United States arrived in Florida from Cuba in 1526. Those early Franciscan missionaries were able to establish a rapport with the Indians because of the friars' evangelical poverty, a simple lifestyle akin to the natives. This rapport contributed significantly to the friars' ability to minister among the Indians.

The life of Junipero Serra (1713-1784) manifests a heart transformed while seeking to live the Gospel. He joined the friars at age seventeen. He was a good student. His studies earned him a doctorate as well as the Chair of Scotist Theology at the University of Palma. It was there that he felt the call to come to the New World. About his calling, Father Serra recorded:

I have had no other motive but to revive in my soul those intense longings which I have had since my novitiate when I read the lives of the saints. These longings had become deadened because of the pre-occupation I had with studies.<sup>14</sup>

When he landed on the eastern shores of Mexico, Serra and another friar obtained permission to walk the 270 miles to Mexico City. Walking was being faithful to the Rule of St. Francis, which forbade friars to ride on horseback except in cases of real necessity. In addition, Junipero wanted to offer the penance of a journey on foot so as to win graces for the great endeavor he knew he was undertaking.

After a few years of Serra's ministry in Mexico, the Jesuits were expelled from all parts of the Spanish empire in 1767. This gave new direction to Serra's life because he received the assignment to become president of the former Jesuit missions of Lower California, the Baja peninsula. There he was approached by Count de Galvez, appointed by the Spanish crown for the work of Spanish colonization on the west coast of North America. Serra and Galvez met from October 1768 to January 1769, to plan to secure the west coast of America for Spain through colonization by Franciscan missions.

Junipero Serra traveled by land from Mission Loretto in Baja to meet up with the Spanish ships anchored in the bay of San Diego. He arrived on July 1, 1769.<sup>15</sup> A couple of weeks later, "on the morning of July 16, 1769, Fray Junipero

Serra, the Father President, founded Mission San Diego de Alcalá, California's first."<sup>16</sup> The soldiers raised the cross, and Serra blessed it; on that same day Serra inscribed the initial pages of the baptismal, marriage, and burial records of the mission. Thus began the development of the California missions. Junipero Serra would administer these missions for fifteen years before his death at Mission San Carlos in Carmel.

Each "mission" came to mean an economic and agricultural enterprise under the control of the missionaries. This concept of creating villages for the Indians was part of a larger enterprise, the Franciscan mission in the New World. The operational plan was to have the baptized Indians move into villages, places of common residence and work, with a chapel for worship.

Bells were important for these missions to call the residents together. One of the stories conveying the importance of the bells for the missions is told about the Mission San Juan Capistrano. In 1775, Father Serra had sent Father Fermin Francisco de Lausen with eleven soldiers to establish a new mission halfway between San Diego and the San Gabriel mission. Lausen had erected a cross to mark the beginning of Mission San Juan Capistrano, but soon after received word of a violent Indian uprising at San Diego in which settlers were attacked. Lausen and his companions feared that further hostility from the Indians would endanger the colonization efforts at San Diego, so they went back to San Diego. A year later, Fr. Serra with more friars and soldiers returned to Capistrano and found the cross still standing. They dug up the bells that were hastily buried the year before and rang them, announcing the second founding of Mission San Juan Capistrano.<sup>17</sup> This bell, ringing into the wilderness, announced the faith of the friars and their missionary activity, which would build a community to give praise to God.

When Pope John Paul II beatified Serra September 25, 1988 and the nation celebrated the Columbus Quincentenary, the events brought forth publications criticizing the honor given to someone so complicit with the Spaniards in the oppression of the Native Americans.<sup>17</sup> Such criticism displays ignorance of Junipero Serra's commitment to the Indians, his vision for their quality of life, and his self-understanding of his role in California. When one reads Serra's diary and his correspondence, one learns of his compassion, his zeal to preach the Gospel, and his advocacy for the Indians' welfare. His concern for raising their standard of living is expressed in his petitions to acquire mules, cattle and plants for improved agriculture.

In our current political climate with thirty-eight of the fifty states legally executing criminals, Serra offers a beacon of light and wisdom for those opposing the death penalty. In a letter written to the viceroy, Don Antonio Maria Bucareli y Ursua, we see Serra's stance opposing execution. Serra had received news that Friar Luis Jayme had been murdered by Indians while they sacked

the San Diego mission. Therefore, Serra requested that a formal statement be drawn up that states:

If ever the Indians, whether they be gentile or Christian, killed me, they should be forgiven. . . .What I say is that, in order to prevent them from killing others, keep better guard over them than they did over the one who has been killed; and, as to the murderer, let him live, in order that he should be saved—which is the very purpose of our coming here, and the reason justifies it. Give him to understand, after a moderate amount of punishment, that he is being pardoned in accordance with our law, which commands us to forgive injuries; and let us prepare him, not for death, but for eternal life.<sup>18</sup>

The letter testifies to the dangers that the friars faced in their missionary activity, and the love that Serra had for the Indians. The friar's love fulfilled Jesus' prayer: may they be one just as we are (John 17:11). Serra's request for forgiveness was truly a proclamation of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ. Mission requires us to be constantly exchanging love in our conversation in order to widen the circle of love.

## Dialogue

It is difficult to converse with persons who desire revenge for the hurts they have endured, especially if they are relatives or friends of murder victims. Compassion for victims and perpetrators while trying to influence attitudes to end the death penalty requires a commitment to the asceticism of dialogue. Dialogue does not impose, but rather is an exchange of truth and love between uniquely different persons. God as a community of three distinct persons offers us a model for mission and exchange between persons, and between peoples. During dialogue, the nonverbal communication conveying freedom, respect for, and dignity of the other speaks as loud as the words that are spoken. Love is the only appropriate persuasive influence. Meaningful and respectful conversation offers a medium for the Word of God to flow between those engaged in the interchange. Dialogue is the norm of every form of Christian mission because mission is participation in the mission of God and God's being and action is dialogical.<sup>19</sup>

Junipero Serra died on August 28, 1784 at Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel. The bells tolled announcing his death. The mournful sounds brought all the officers from the ship, and all the Indians of the Christian village together in mourning. Throughout the night, Indians and Spaniards entered the room where his body lay, praying to him, touching his face and hands with their rosaries and medals, saying "Santo Padre" and "Bendito Padre." Even though his body was laid out in the Church with a guard, there

were devotees who snipped pieces of cloth from his tunic to keep as relics.<sup>20</sup> The demonstration of such affection seems a convincing argument that Father Serra was a man of dialogue.

## TOR Beginnings in the U.S.

When Junipero Serra was founding the San Diego mission, the tensions were rising in the northeast of this continent that sparked the American Revolution. The birth of the United States in 1776 was seven years after Serra had begun the establishment of Spanish missions along the west coast. Missionary activity shifted drastically in the United States in the century following Serra's death. The bishops of the United States faced with great pastoral concerns for waves of immigrants placed evangelization to the Native Americans low on their priority list because of the immediacy of the needs of thousands of Catholic immigrants. The Church through the centuries is continually "reinventing" itself as it struggles with and approaches new situations, new peoples, new cultures and new questions.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1800s Third Order Franciscans in Europe responded to the invitation to leave their native land for unfamiliar territory to participate in the movement of God's love toward the immigrants in the United States. Three Irish brothers arrived in 1846, sixty-two years after Serra's death.<sup>22</sup> Three years later in 1849, a small band of Secular Franciscans, seven women and five men that included two diocesan priests, arrived in Milwaukee responding to an appeal that Bishop John Martin Henni, first bishop of Milwaukee, had made in Europe.<sup>23</sup> The women lived in community according to a rule written by a diocesan priest appointed by Archbishop Henni. This constituted the first Third Order Regular community of women in the United States. They faithfully lived the Word of the Gospel and over time there was a showing of the fruitfulness of their lives.

Just as the Friars had brought bells for the missions of California, so too the Third Order Franciscans brought bells for their convents, bells for ringing out the call to prayer including the devotional prayer of the Angelus. I can close my eyes and remember the distinct noonday ring of an Angelus bell on the campus of the College of Saint Teresa when I was a student there. That bell was hung on its frame near the original motherhouse, St. Mary Convent, of the School Sisters of St. Francis in Winona, Minnesota in 1885. The Sisters had built there by the invitation of Bishop Thomas Grace. Two years later, the new Archbishop Ireland who succeeded Bishop Grace in St. Paul, indicated to the German community of Sisters that he did not want them to be a German community receiving vocations from Germany, and he preferred that they would become a diocesan community. Mother Alexia and the School Sisters left and went to Milwaukee leaving behind their property with the Angelus

bell that came into the possession of the Rochester Franciscans who developed the College of St. Teresa on that property.

The devotional prayer of the *Angelus* affected the transformation of the heart of the Third Order immigrant religious. The ringing of the *Angelus* bell beckoned the religious to cease their immediate activity and to bring attention to God's mission, which gives meaning to all daily activity. *The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.* The angel of the Lord, revelation from God, broke through the silent longing of the Israelite people and was heard as clear as a bell by Mary. Mary's hearing of what God wanted of her and her affirmative response established a new and intimate relationship with God. She conceived the Word and pondered all things in her heart. Our Franciscan mission develops similarly; the Word of God is first conceived in our heart, and then it is shared in our communal life and ministry.

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word.* . . . In Milwaukee during the first year of the newly established community of Third Order Regular women, a cholera epidemic spread throughout the city. This epidemic left children orphans. The fledgling Franciscan community responded to these children by starting St. Aemilian's Orphanage for them. Similar stories of response to social conditions are a hallmark of Franciscans. Ministering in these new circumstances expanded previous concepts of being Church.

Another example of adapting to new circumstances is the life of Friar Pamfilo da Magliano. Friar Pamfilo was the leader of the small group of friars from Italy invited by Bishop Timon of Buffalo to come to western New York. Pamfilo started parishes, created a seminary and Catholic high school, which later became St. Bonaventure University. Pamfilo is credited with starting, we might say, co-founding the Allegany Franciscans and the Sisters of St. Francis of Joliet. Father Pamfilo carried out Franciscan hospitality differently than the European concept of cloister. In Bishop Timon's diary we can read: "I scolded Father Pamfilo because he admitted lay people into the Mass in the friars' house."<sup>24</sup> Both the bishop and Pamfilo came from a more traditional European concept of religious houses as cloisters removed from interaction with the laity. Father Pamfilo adjusted for the sake of evangelization in the New World, in new circumstances that the European Church could not imagine. His example of interaction with the laity indicated a new dimension of Franciscan mission in the United States.

*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.* Each time that the *Angelus* is prayed, we have the opportunity to recall our Franciscan mission as God's mission. God *who so loved the world that he sent his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life* (John 3:16). Jesus, sent on mission to express God's love by his presence with us, as one of us, willingly

became a lowly servant, even giving his life for us (cf. Mt 20:28). Francis's affection for Jesus became appropriated as an internal identification with and a sharing in Jesus's mission. Our Third Order Rule holds up for us our daily mission: *Let them glorify the Lord in all they do. Sent into the whole world, they should give witness by word and work to God's voice and make known to all that only God is all-powerful* (TOR Rule #29).

Indeed, the Franciscan congregations founded in the nineteenth century in the United States birthed the presence of God in the United States in their missionary activities. They prospered in numbers and ministries. Then over forty-five years ago, on the brink of the announcement of the Second Vatican Council, a Major Superiors Conference in Rome in 1959 urged religious to send 10% of their members to Latin America as soon as possible. The major superiors identified needs that required assistance from well established North American religious. Some women in the United States burdened with institutionalization desired to go to Latin America to be among the poor. The pastoral shift of identification with the poor was not so easy for those who left the United States for Latin America. This move to a new culture brought great frustrations for missionaries when faced with the immensity of the situation they came into in Latin America.<sup>25</sup>

In the United States, the combined move out of institutions for education and health care along with the post-Vatican II decline in religious vocations meant some institutions closed, and others were sold to secular entities, or turned over to other non-profit groups. These social changes required a responsiveness to the demands of the gospel in a particular historical context, to be continually reframing, expanding and extending the influence of God's love. In the 1970s a new image of mission for American religious was developing; presence among the poor became the touchstone of authenticity.<sup>26</sup> Today, our challenge is to be constantly envisioning ourselves participating in the birthing of God's presence among us in the historic moment and place that we find ourselves in. Because societal changes require new responses, Franciscan mission will always be changing in its context, but not in the essence of heart transformation, life with the marginalized, and care for **Mother Earth**.

Through the years of European colonization, the word expansion was used to describe mission. Mission or expansion of Christianity meant the increased numbers of baptized persons in new geographic locations. Today expansion refers to raising consciousness of God and living Gospel values in all dimensions of our life. Living an authentic Christian life is the first means of evangelization.<sup>27</sup> Globalization requires a new sensitivity to our individual role in the global picture. This is summarized in the expression, *Think globally, act locally*. The reports of oppression of the poor of the world caused by capitalistic greed of the rich countries could tempt us to hopelessness. Our mission is hopeful because it is grounded in God's act of raising Jesus from the dead; "making all



things new" (Rev 21:5).<sup>28</sup> The entire Franciscan family has a praxis of hope in our networking through Franciscans International: all branches of the Franciscan family united together in a combined effort to influence global decision making for the Gospel values of concern for the poor, care for the earth and peacemaking.

## Mission in the Future

Having proposed that Franciscan mission is a refraction of Christian mission that reveals God's love in 1) Heart transformation, 2) Life with the marginalized, and 3) Cosmic horizons, I would like now to address the form our Franciscan mission might take in the tomorrow of our lives. **Heart transformation** happens in prayer, in the moments where we are receptive and our hearts are like clay in the potter's hand. Since our mission has its origin in the heart of God, we go to prayer so that our hearts will be set on fire with God's love. Our time of private prayer and communal prayer turns us toward the one on whom we have our hearts set. Our local communities, first of all, ought to be centers of prayer, an oasis for others to come from the desert of secular society.

Because our Franciscan mission is a collective endeavor to develop communal expression of God's love, we could and do engage in theological reflection. Margaret Wheatley, well known for her initiative in leadership training, says change is birthed when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about.<sup>29</sup> There are various processes of theological reflection, but what they have in common is the sharing of lived experience through the lens of Scripture and tradition. Theological reflection is not an intellectual exercise, but it is a conversation about meaning of our lives. After hearing the Gospel proclamation of Jesus sending out his disciples to preach, Francis of Assisi exclaimed "This is what I want with all my heart." Theological reflection is a means for our communal heart transformation because our meaningful exchange forms a united voice, "This is what **we** want with all our heart."

Our Franciscan mission is to strive for a social order that mirrors the love within the Trinity. This mission requires ongoing, daily conversion of each of us as well as collective transformation of our congregations. The quality of our community life must be congruent with our given mission. When there is dissonance in our congregations we must dialogue to develop harmony. Harmony is not uniformity but rather harmony mirrors the mutuality among distinctly different persons in the Trinity. Let us choose to truly listen to each other's lived experience for in doing so, we hear how the Spirit of God is working within the life of our brother or sister. Our very act of listening is mirroring the love of God. Without our vibrant sharing, our mission statements will remain mute. With ongoing dialog that ensues from our lived experience, our

mission statements come to life in each of us. In this manner, the Franciscan family lives its mission, and deepens and expands its understanding of mission.

## Life with the Marginalized II

At the heart of Franciscan mission we have Francis's words, *and I led me among them* [the lepers]. The 1982 TOR Rule expresses our mission life with the marginalized in paragraph 21: *let them be happy to live among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the lepers, and those on the street*. Authentic Franciscan mission beckons us to leave our comfortable dwellings to live with the marginalized. Our history abounds with the stories of those who have exemplified this charism.

Many founders of our congregations were immigrants to the United States. Wherever they settled, they responded to the social context. Around the world today, including in the United States, there are new waves of immigrants, refugees, and the marginalized that are causing major shifts in population, neighborhoods and cities have changed a great deal over the past fifty years. Do new immigrants who find their way to our doors receive the necessary hospitality to become at home among us? In California, 36% of the residents are foreign born. This reality requires an intellectual paradigm shift. We must think multiculturally.

In the past, we European descendants have considered ourselves superior, as having something to teach others. Today we have an opportunity to live the Franciscan charism of being the "little ones;" to be among new immigrants and refugees learning from them and building relationships with them. This requires us to have humility, a willingness to learn from others, and an openness to being changed by others. I predict that Franciscan mission of the future will find us less secure and more identifiable with the poor, living with them and among them. Our long range planning will require the arrangement for an increase in the percentage of our congregational material and human resources for life with the marginalized.

Religious life that prevails will be multicultural. Last year I entertained a small group of women who are graduate theology students. When I asked them if they had ever considered religious life, their answer was a wake-up call to me about becoming multicultural. The Latina and the Filipino women both responded that they felt uncomfortable with American women religious both had visited convents exploring their potential call. They described us as unable to converse with them in ways that allowed them to feel that they would be accepted and be at home with us, free to express their own cultural in her-ests.

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The Franciscan Friars of the OFM Santa Barbara province consciously chose to become a multicultural community. This required some education so

that the core community could learn cross-cultural perspectives in order to integrate new members into a multicultural fraternity.<sup>30</sup> Men from five languages are now in their formation program. The province exemplifies for us the effort to “widen our tents;” to lessen our white dominance, and to develop more inclusive ways of living with each other.

For us religious women with a median age in the seventies, we recognize that multicultural challenge is not all about ethnicity. It is also about the age differential impeding young persons from joining us. We who have lived through major lifestyle changes during the post-Vatican II era are now facing another major challenge: the incorporation of the millennials and the Echo generation who seek rituals and symbols that are more common to our pre-Vatican II lifestyle.<sup>31</sup>

A year ago I experienced one model for bridging both generational difference and cultural difference in a Franciscan House of Formation. I accompanied a lay graduate student to participate in Morning Prayer with a small community of Franciscan women in Oakland who live in a poor to moderate Latino neighborhood. The student was in a course on the Liturgy of the Hours and she had never prayed with a community. So I arranged for us to have a prayer experience with this community of Franciscan women.

We arrived at the house to be directed to the garage in the backyard that had been set up as the chapel. When we entered, we were invited to take off our shoes, and to sit on cushions. We were surrounded with sensual aids for prayer: candles, incense, bouquets of flowers, statues, banners, a small fountain, and soft music. The custom of this Spanish-speaking community was to have faith-sharing after the Gospel reading. The focus of the sharing was to relate the Scripture passage to their anticipated day’s activity. (They accommodated us who were not bilingual by speaking in English.) The immersion into the prayer life of that community of Franciscan women opened the eyes of the graduate student to the source of joy for Franciscan women. Their joyful daily missionary activity flowed from the Word of God. Their morning prayer experience impressed upon me another image of our future: our communities will become bilingual. This will be necessary for meaningful conversation in our communities. Extending God’s love by becoming bilingual enables us to be bridge builders with new immigrants offering hospitality that portrays inclusivity.

The way of establishing hope for the future is through simple conversations, not chit-chat but meaningful conversations that generate deep insights and actions, and a strong sense of community.<sup>32</sup> This type of conversation cuts beneath the impersonalism of our society to connect persons, to bring about communion, to fulfill Jesus’ prayer that we become one.

## Cosmic Horizons II

The third aspect of Franciscan mission, cosmic horizons, lifts us to a new level of consciousness of our interdependence with all of creation. Observing, paying attention to creation around us, develops our best practices for reverence of creation. The daily practice of careful recycling of our waste materials with the examination of the global significance of our lifestyle shifts our attitude. We change and become conscious of our interrelatedness with the cosmos. The dedication we have to care for the earth is more than a spiritual platitude. It is a matter of a sustainable future.

The Earth Charter offers four principles for developing praxis of living with cosmic horizons: 1) respect and care for the community of life, 2) ecological integrity, 3) social and economic justice, and 4) democracy, nonviolence and peace. Franciscan mission flows from the heart of God. God’s love informs our praxis in an infinite manner. Each one of us makes a personal and valuable contribution to the future of a sustainable community. Living with Cosmic horizons influences our thoughts and behaviors so that our day by day living contributes to the sustainability of the planet. No person’s actions are insignificant; every person gives or takes away from sustainability. The collective (corporate) response of our congregations to this concern will evolve from individual persons talking to other persons in a meaningful manner. House chapters might be held to identify the best local practices for adopting the principles of the Earth Charter. This is just a suggestion for continuing to keep our eye on the cosmic horizon.

## Conclusion

In summation, I would like to quote Gerard Manley Hopkins whose inspired poetry describes how each of us manifests Franciscan mission.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;  
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell’s  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves—goes its self; *myself* it speaks and spells,  
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*<sup>33</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Carmelites who accompanied a Spanish expedition to map the California coastline in 1602 had offered Mass and named the site San Diego de Alcalá. Saint Didacus

(Diego) of Alcala (1400-1463) lived as a hermit devoting himself to prayer and work before joining the Franciscan Order. He went as a missionary to the Canary Islands in 1441 where he held the office of superior and faced many difficulties. In 1450 he lived for a time in Rome where he cared for the sick afflicted with a pestilential illness and restored many to health by his prayers. He returned to Spain and died there on November 12, 1463.

<sup>2</sup>David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 390-92.

<sup>3</sup>Charles V. Finnegan, "Franciscans and the 'New Evangelization,'" *Mission in the Franciscan Tradition* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1994), 4.

<sup>4</sup>Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, "Mission and the Mendicant Movement," *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 137-70.

<sup>5</sup>Kathleen Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (Rochester, MN: Sisters of St. Francis, 2003), 103.

<sup>6</sup>Angelyn Dries, "Mission and Marginalization: The Franciscan Heritage," *Missiology* XXVI/1 (January 1998): 3-13.

<sup>7</sup>"The Angelus," *Greyfriars Review* 6/1 (1992): 127-28; Also a discussion of the impact of Islam on Francis including the practice of the use of bells to call all people to prayer can be found in Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 81-85.

<sup>8</sup>Regis J. Armstrong, "If My Words Remain in You...": Foundations of the Evangelical Life," *Francis of Assisi: History, Hagiography and Hermeneutics in the Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 2004): 81.

<sup>9</sup>Chiara Frugoni, *Francis of Assisi* (London: SMC Press, 1998), 24.

<sup>10</sup>Dries, "Mission and Marginalization," 8-11.

<sup>11</sup>Lino Gomez Canedo, *Franciscan Presence in the Americas* (Potomac, MD: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1983), 6; Francisco Morales, "Franciscan Evangelization in America," *Mission in the Franciscan Tradition* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 185; Edwin Edward Sylvest, Jr., *Motifs of Franciscan Mission Theory in Sixteenth Century New Spain, Province of the Holy Gospel* (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1975), 25-41.

<sup>12</sup>D.O. Mills, who donated the statue in 1883, was a successful banker who had loaned the money for the construction of the capitol building. He purchased the statue for the capitol rotunda for the sum of \$30,000.00 from an American sculptor, Locke Goldsmith Meade, an artist fascinated with the story of Columbus. (This account from the capitol tour guide 12/29/04). For further reading on Isabella's role in sponsoring the Castilian expeditions, see Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 82-83.

<sup>13</sup>Sylvest, *Motifs of Franciscan Mission*, 13.

<sup>14</sup>For a biography of Serra, see Maynard J. Geiger, *The Life and Times of Junipero Serra* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1959); M. N. L. Couve de Murville, *The Man Who Founded California* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000); Eric O'Brien, "The Life of Padre Serra," *Writings of Junipero Serra*, vol. I, ed. Antonine Tibesar (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), xxiii - xlv.

<sup>15</sup>Although Serra died on August 28, the Church celebrates his memorial on July 1 because St. Augustine's feast is observed on August 28 and July 1 marks the anniversary of Serra's entry into Alta California. See *The Way of St. Francis*, (July-August 2004):10.

<sup>16</sup>Geiger, *The Life and Times of Junipero Serra*, vol. I, 233.

<sup>17</sup>See David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (NY: Oxford, 1992) and George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: the Gospel and Native American Genocide* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

<sup>18</sup>*Writings of Junipero Serra*, vol. II, 405-407.

<sup>19</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, 378-379.

<sup>20</sup>See the complete description in Geiger's *The Life and Times of Junipero Serra*, 380-88.

<sup>21</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, 31.

<sup>22</sup>Margaret A. Slowick, *The Franciscan Third Order Regular in the United States: Origins, Early Years, and Recent Developments* (Tiffin, OH: Sisters of St. Francis, 1999), 2.

<sup>23</sup>For a description of this influential bishop, see Angelyn Dries, *The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 24-26.

<sup>24</sup>Dominic Monti, Video presentation, (Rochester, MN: Sisters of St. Francis, 2004).

<sup>25</sup>Dries, *The Missionary Movement*, 242.

<sup>26</sup>Dries, *The Missionary Movement*, 242.

<sup>27</sup>Pope Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1975), 41.

<sup>28</sup>R.A. Kanyoro Musimbi, "Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures," *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization: Faith and Culture*, eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992): 134-45.

<sup>29</sup>Margaret J. Wheatley, *Turning to One Another* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002), 9.

<sup>30</sup>For background and witness of one province's efforts, see Finian McGinn, *Toward "Multiculturalizing" a Religious Community!* (San Juan Bautista, CA: Westfriars, 1996).

<sup>31</sup>For an overview on embracing members from the younger generations, see *Dialogue on Community* (Chicago: Center for the Study of Religious Life, 2001).

<sup>32</sup>Wheatley, *Turning to One Another*, 28.

<sup>33</sup>John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne, eds., *Mortal Beauty, God's Grace: Major Poems and Spiritual Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 23.

*Heart transformation happens in prayer, in the moments where we are receptive and our hearts are like clay in the potter's hand. . . Since our mission has its origin in the heart of God, we go to prayer so that our hearts will be set on fire with God's love.*

**Mirroring the Life of God  
in Medio Luporum:  
Returning to the Heart  
of the Franciscan Mission**

Miguel H. Díaz, Ph.D.

Introduction

The Early Rule of Francis (1221) contains a chapter in which Francis reflects on the nature of mission to the Saracens and unbelievers.<sup>1</sup> As is well known, this is the first time that a founder of a religious order included in his rule reflections on the nature of mission to non-Christians.<sup>2</sup> This chapter opens with a citation from Matthew 10:16: "Behold I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be prudent as serpents and simple as doves."<sup>3</sup> A number of Franciscan scholars have argued that this chapter and its opening biblical citation were inspired by Francis's personal missionary experiences, namely, his journey to Egypt and his conversations with sultan Al-Malik al-Kamil.<sup>4</sup>

Francis offers two ways of carrying out Christian missionary activity. The first and most essential way calls for building fraternal ties at the level of inter-communal relations. In dealing with Muslims or unbelievers, Francis invites his brothers not "to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake."<sup>5</sup> In other words, Francis calls his followers to embrace and be willing to receive from the humanity of others.<sup>6</sup> The second way invites the brothers "to proclaim the word of God openly, when they see that it is God's will, calling on their hearers to believe in God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Francis's emphasis on embodied proclamation (his rejection of violence and his desire to subject himself to other creatures) over the mere proclamation of words has found expression in the oft-cited saying attributed to him: "Preach always, and if necessary, use words."

Francis's emphasis on personal Christian example also finds expression in Clare's missionary vision that calls her sisters to "mirror" the unity of mutual love for others to follow.<sup>8</sup> Clare's vision, however, suggests a way to broaden

Christian missionary activity to include Christian witness at the level of intra-communal relations.<sup>9</sup> Thus in speaking to her sisters, Clare writes:

For the Lord himself has placed us *not only as a form for others in being an example and mirror, but even for our sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life as well*, that they in turn might be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since the Lord has called us to such great things that those who are to be a mirror an example to others may be reflected in us, we are greatly bound to bless and praise God and be all the more strengthened to do good in the Lord. Therefore, if we live according to the form mentioned above, we shall leave others a noble example and gain, with little effort, the prize of eternal happiness.<sup>10</sup>

The following reflections return to the heart of the Franciscan mission: Mirroring the life of God in the midst of "wolves." This is the approach to mission that Francis and Clare set forth when they embodied inter and intra-personal relations in the midst of personal, communal, social, and religious violence and various forms of human marginalization. As a way to discuss this Franciscan approach, I will structure the following reflections around three central themes found in the writings of contemporary missiologists: 1) To be Church is to be in mission and vice versa, 2) To be in mission is to mirror God's missionary Triune life, and 3) To mirror God's missionary life is to walk preferentially with the poor and marginalized. I will conclude this essay with a brief discussion on some of the contemporary implications that follow from this approach to mission.

To Be Church Is to Be in Mission (and Vice Versa)

In their groundbreaking theological work on mission Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder argue that "to be church is to be in mission," and "to be in mission is to be responsible to the demands of the gospel in particular contexts."<sup>11</sup> This means that the Church is called to be continually 'reinventing' itself as it struggles with and approaches new cultures and new questions.<sup>12</sup> Bevans and Schroeder go on to affirm "an inevitable link "between the need for Christian mission on the one hand, and the need for that mission to be radically contextual."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, as they point out, the very survival of Christianity has always been linked to the ability of the church to cross-over into various human boundaries, including new social, cultural, racial, generational, gender and religious landscapes.

The evangelical notion that the church comes to be constituted through missionary activity (see the Acts of the Apostles), an activity defined by particular contexts, is not at all foreign to the roots of Franciscan traditions. Francis

is believed by some to have anticipated contemporary approaches to missiology in his call for conversation with and appropriation of the goodness found in others.<sup>14</sup> Francis, we recall, challenged his followers to go throughout the world embodying the Good News and asked them to be "subject to every human creature for God's sake." Much has been made of this phrase, especially with respect to its origin and purpose for Franciscan understandings of mission.<sup>15</sup> The phrase likely originated as a result of Francis' missionary journey to Egypt. In this journey, Francis subjected himself to another, that is, he was sensitive to the Sultan and the ways of Islam. Thus, Francis received at least as much as he was able to give. As Lehmann points out,

... in a letter to all those holding office of responsibility in the Order, he urges them to preach the Islamic custom of the *salat*. He had experienced in the Orient how the Muezzin's call summoned the people to prayer and how they prostrated themselves before God. He was so taken by this Moslem (sic) praise of God that he wanted to introduce a similar sign to the West. The praise of God should link both Moslems (sic) and Christians.<sup>16</sup>

Just as the disciples "really do not fully *recognize* themselves as church—a separate reality from Judaism—until they recognize that they are called to a mission that has as its scope 'the ends of the earth'" (Acts 1:8),<sup>17</sup> Francis sensed that his followers would not fully recognize their ecclesial and Franciscan identity until they had been called into service, especially among the marginalized creatures of God. This intuition seems to be the reason why Francis places so much emphasis on sending forth his followers "into the world" and the foundation for understanding God's call to Francis to "rebuild" the Christian Church.<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, Francis came to realize that through missionary activity, the Church (understood as the people of God) would be "reinvented."

As stated above, the Franciscan tradition offers an inclusive approach to mission. For Franciscans, the kind of missionary activity that rebuilds and reinvents the Church is not merely comprised of service to human creatures abiding in distant lands. Rather, as the example of Clare makes clear, the missionary activity, the sending forth into the world that rebuilds the Church can also take localized forms of presence and service. In this sense, it is significant to point out that "Clare never referred to her sisters as *reclusae* (recluses) but as *inclusae*, that is, she did not view the sisters as secluded, immured, or isolated from others. Rather, she considered all the community house and garden as sacred and invitational space."<sup>19</sup>

To prophetically welcome others is central to defining the mission that constitutes the Franciscan community. This activity can take the form of going out of comfort zones and landscapes in order to search for the distinct gift

of other human beings (as was the case with Francis) or it can simply take the form of working to create local places where others in our midst are welcomed (as was the case with Clare).

Going out into someone's world or welcoming another into our world does not come naturally. Fears of encountering the otherness of others (gender, racial, social, cultural, sexual orientation, etc.), fears of letting go our positions of privilege in order to empower others, or fears of prophetically denouncing personal and social evils that exclude others often stand in the way of authentic efforts to re-build the Church and society. Yet, as the legend of Francis who converted the very fierce wolf of Gubbio suggests (Fioretti 21), these "wolves" or fears must be tamed. No authentic re-building of the people of God can occur without first facing, befriending, and making peace with these fears.

### To Be in Mission Is to Mirror God's Missionary Life

The same biblical tradition that affirms that the Church comes into existence and is reconstituted again and again through Christian mission, suggests that the mission of the church is inextricably linked to the affirmation of human diversity. For instance, in Acts 2: 1-4, we see the emergence and growth of the Church associated with the mission to recognize the diversity of the human family. The Pentecostal image of hearing the speaking of many tongues suggests how authentic communal unity comes about through the affirmation of being-with others. This biblical image invites us to consider how the mission of the Church participates in the missionary life of God.

For us in the West, we have a tendency to conceive of the Church in more institutional terms. This is still the case for many Roman Catholics even after Vatican II when the image of the Church as the people of God has become so prevalent. In the East, however, the reality of the Church is not understood just as an institutional reality. The Church, Greek-Orthodox theologians underscore, is best conceived as a way of relating and existing in the world.<sup>20</sup> The Church is called to exist as God exists. And God "exists" as a being who not only gives but also *receives* from others. When the Church embraces this way of existence, the Church participates in and mirrors the missionary life of God.

Within the Franciscan tradition, Bonaventure's understanding of God as an overflowing fountain of water (*fontalis plenitudo*) also provides another dynamic way to conceive mission and the ongoing rebuilding of the Church. Just like a fountain cannot be conceived without over-flowing water, the Church cannot be conceived without mission.<sup>21</sup> Like God, the Church comes to exist and expresses the nature of this existence in diffusive acts of love. Thus, by reaching out in self-diffusion, and receiving from others, the Church comes into existence and participates the life of God.

This trinitarian notion of reaching out to and receiving from other creatures resonates well with Francis's approach to mission. Commenting on Francis's instruction to his followers "to be subject to every human creature" a number of scholars have underscored the personal and missionary implications of this instruction. In this instruction, Francis calls his followers to renounce power over others and any claim to elitism.<sup>22</sup> This way of being with others rather than above others, which is so characteristic of divine life, is paradigmatically expressed in Francis's filial relationship with all of God's creatures (not just human creatures). Latin American liberation theologian Leonardo Boff expresses this Franciscan way of relating in the following way:

Here is made clear a distinct way of being-in-the-world, not over things, but together with them, like brothers and sisters of the same family. To his own agonies and sufferings "he gave not the name of pains but of brothers." Death itself was for him a friend and a sister. Because of this, the Franciscan world is full of magic, of reverence, of respect. It is not a dead and inanimate universe; things are not tossed here, within the reach of possessive appetites of hunger; nor are they placed one beside another. They are alive and have their own personality; they have blood ties with humanity. And because they are brothers and sisters, they cannot be violated, but rather must be respected.<sup>23</sup>

Being-with, giving to and receiving from things and persons in the world defines the heart of the Franciscan mission. Elsewhere I have reflected upon the significance of the oft-cited aphorism in Spanish: "Dime con quién andas y te dire' quién eres" (Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are).<sup>24</sup> I have pointed out that this aphorism suggests that ultimately it is not what persons have or know that determines who they are but human relationships. Relationship to others and not power, wealth or possession ultimately constitutes personal identity. Francis's egalitarian way of relating to all creatures offers an important qualification to this aphorism. It is not only relationship that is of utmost importance to defining who persons are, above all what defines persons is *how* they relate to others.

In his missionary call to be-with other creatures, and not above them, Francis mirrors how God walks-with others. As a communion of equal and distinct persons, God's life is characterized by being-with others, so much so that God diffuses God-self to us and the rest of creation in Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed God in the various ways he reached out to others and was present to their needs. Above all, he called his followers friends, and placed himself at the side of, rather than above them. Following the lead of Jesus, Francis envisions an ecclesial community called to exist through a mission that is defined by peace-filled embraces of human distinctiveness and service to others.

## To Mirror God's Missionary Life Is to Walk Preferentially with the Poor and Marginalized

Although Francis embraced all of God's creatures, there is an indisputable option that he made: To walk with and learn first and foremost from the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. "What was extraordinary about the teaching of Francis," writes Leonardo Boff "was his intent to live in complete fraternity under the presupposition of a poverty voluntarily accepted in order to be at the side of the poor, and with them, to build all human relationships, always beginning with those who have least, with concern for those who are least."<sup>25</sup> "The poor" continues Boff, "are seen as an apparition of divinity."<sup>26</sup> The justification for this preferential option, which privileges the poor and marginalized as a source of divine revelation, can be rooted in the Galilean identity of Jesus.

In recent times there has been much interest in the Galilean identity of Jesus. Few would take issue with the notion that Nazareth of Galilee is the place in the Gospel that most defines the human identity of Jesus. Virgilio Elizondo, the founder of contemporary U.S. Latino/a theology, argues that the human meaning of the Incarnation is to be sought in the socio-cultural analysis of the place and persons associated with Jesus: Galilee and the Galileans. As a number of scholars have argued, Galilee is a symbol of multiple rejection and marginalization. It is a place where "The domestic architecture of Galilean village homes indicates that these agricultural peasant communities occupied the lower rung of the social and economic ladder."<sup>27</sup>

Elizondo turns to Jesus' Galilean identity to derive three basic principles. In turn, these principles can be used to inform a Christian understanding of mission.<sup>28</sup> Elizondo argues that in Jesus, the Galilean has taken the side of the marginalized. From this divine-human solidarity, Elizondo proposes his Galilean principle, which advocates for human solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Elizondo goes on to point out how the Galilean travels to Jerusalem to challenge oppressive religious and political authority, and all that dehumanizes and denies the dignity of human persons. From this journey to Jerusalem, Elizondo derives the Jerusalem principle. This principle maintains that God chooses a marginalized people as agents of personal and social transformation. Finally, Elizondo argues that the transformation and birth into new life for the marginalized as well as those who cause marginalization can only be brought about as a result of the power of unlimited love. This peace-filled and transforming action grounds what Elizondo characterizes as the resurrection principle, a principle that underscores love as the only means to usher life-giving and inclusive human communities.

These ideas, which lie at the heart of Latino/a theology, also resonate well with the heart of the Franciscan tradition. Above all, the lives of Francis and



Clare exemplify the Christian call to be in solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Just as God in Jesus Christ identified in a preferential way with the poor and marginalized, so do Francis and Clare see as their central mission the need to identify themselves with the poor and marginalized members of their society. Just as the Galilean challenged religious and political injustices, so did Francis and Clare challenge the ecclesial and social situation of their times through their embrace of radical poverty and inclusive relationships. Lastly, just as in Jesus, God invites us to embrace a new social order through the power of love, so do Francis and Clare's peace-filled mission signal an alternative vision for humanity. Thus Boff writes:

Faced with a feudal system centered on the "greatness," Francis becomes a "lesser" and wants his order to be called the "lesser brothers," subject to every human creature. Faced with the bourgeoisie, organized on the backbone of wealth, Francis proposes the idea of radical poverty and complete rejection of the use of money. Faced with the Church of the time, the hegemony of the *sacerdotium*, Francis is a lay person; and even though he becomes a deacon later on, he is not tied to any benefits. . . . *The meaning of mission for Francis is not, above all, to convert the infidels and to expand Christianity, but rather to live the Gospel of universal fraternity* by submitting to all men through the Lord and professing that they are Christians." Because of all this, the living of fraternity and service beyond differences of religion and culture is closer to the truth of the Gospel than its mere doctrinal substance. Only afterward, "when they see what pleases the Lord, may they proclaim the Word of God." Thus, the criterion is not ecclesiastical, reinforcing the Christian system, but rather theological, "to please God." This perspective of nonviolence toward the Saracens would be in contrast the norm of violence of the Crusades of the age.<sup>29</sup>

Francis's desire to become a "lesser" person and to identify with the poor so much so that he "was distressed to see anyone poorer than himself,"<sup>30</sup> does not imply either disdain for humanity or a masochistic approach to poverty and suffering. Instead, by seeking to walk-with and identify with the most physically and socially oppressed and marginalized, Francis sent a clear message that no ecclesial and social reality could claim to mirror God's life until all of God's creatures, especially the most vulnerable were included at table. Francis links the physical and social body in a similar way that Jesus had clearly done when he healed leprosy and other illnesses. We must remember that Jesus' healing actions were "signs" of the reigning of God within human life. The reign of God provides for us a signpost of the kind of integral personal, communal, and social relationships that are expected when human life mirrors divine life. Thus, Jesus' healings not only anticipate the final healing of all

physical and excluded bodies, but also anticipate communal and social healings directly tied to these bodies.

The claim is sometimes made that there is an exclusive aspect to the preferential option for the poor and marginalized. Critics of this option claim that there is an implication that God loves some more than others. I would agree that God's love is inclusive. Yet precisely because God's love is inclusive and seeks historical manifestation, there must be a preferential love of and option for those who are excluded from human communities. The very divine life of being-for all others, in whose image we were created, demands that no one be excluded. If the whole of creation is called to mirror God's life, then our central missionary task must consist in the struggle, or "*la lucha*" as we would say in Spanish, to respond to God's grace in ongoing efforts to build inclusive communities.<sup>31</sup> Herein lies the primary reason for understanding the mission of Francis and Clare, which was defined by preferential acts of hospitality directed at the "Galileans" of their time.

## Contemporary Implications and Concluding Remarks

So far I have argued that the Church comes into existence as a result of mission. Following the example of Francis and Clare, I have understood mission in terms of not only going out into foreign lands to welcome the stranger and proclaim justice and peace (as was the case with Francis) but also in terms of making our lands a welcoming, just and peace-filled place for others (as was the case with Clare). By seeking to be-with all others, proclaiming and living the Good News of salvation, the Church defines its primary mission. Such being-with others mirrors the life of God whose radical way of inclusive existence reaches out to us in the mission of Christ and the Spirit. Yet precisely because God welcomes all, I have argued that the prophetic and often dangerous mission of searching for and empowering others must be mindful, first and foremost of the "Galileans" present in the Church and society.

Anachronistic and simplistic readings of history must be avoided. There are, however, some interesting parallels that can be drawn between the signs of Francis and Clare's time and the signs of our time. Much like our times, the missionary vision of Francis and Clare develops at a time characterized by militarism, conquest, moral corruption, religious tensions with Islam, and the misuse and abuse of religious authority.<sup>32</sup> In the midst of this context, Francis and Clare reject violence and exclusion and map an alternative road comprised of conversation with and reception of others. The story of Francis's conversations with the sultan provides a prophetic vision of how we might be called today to recognize the good and holiness that is in others and allow ourselves to be taught and transformed by this other.



Francis and Clare's way of existing with-others rather than above others best crystallizes the challenge for our times. In embracing egalitarian relationships today, the people of God are called to re-build once again the Church and society. Similar to Francis, we receive God's call to denounce prejudice, hatred and violence and affirm, embrace, and foster whatever good there is in other creatures. Just as Francis walked with-the sultan and learned from his otherness, so should we all learn to walk-with, subject ourselves to, and learn from others in our midst.

In my mind, Franciscans in the United States can play a central role in the effort to re-build the Church and society. By virtue of being situated in one of the most powerful economic and military nations of the world, the Franciscan mission can be one of challenging this nation to become a more welcoming and peaceful society. In the aftermath of 9/11, it is particularly essential for Franciscans to tap into the heart of their tradition to renew interreligious conversations with contemporary "sultans" and leaders of various religious traditions willing to embrace the universal message of peace. In the Spirit of Francis who reached out and learned from his Muslim brother, Franciscans today can challenge all work along Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others in the re-building of social relations. As Pope John Paul II declared to world religious leaders in his historic 1986 interreligious convocation in Assisi, "Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others."

Within the Church and society in our country, Clare's mission to create an inclusive community can offer a model for the creation of social and ecclesial realities that exclude any discrimination based on gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, age, physical disability or any other form of marginalizing human experience. Following her example, Franciscans today can take the side of poor and marginalized communities in order to listen to their cries and include them in the realization of more authentic communal realities.

Within our society, the preferential option for the poor can express itself in an option for persons facing distinct but often inter-related forms of economic, gender, racial, and cultural poverty. Above all, the poor among us are materially deprived persons, including African-Americans, Asians, Latino/as, Haitians, and Native-Americans. Secondly, the poor among us are those women who continue to face marginalization in the home, in the Church and in society. Following Clare's example, who blessed loaves of bread upon Pope Innocent's IV's request, can we as a community of Catholics be willing to subject ourselves to the blessing women can bring to our various tables?<sup>33</sup> Thirdly, the poor among us are children and adolescents sexually exploited and abused within familial, ecclesial, and social realities. Finally, the poor among us are elderly and disabled persons, often viewed as non-persons in the eyes of a

society that defines persons based on human productivity. Like Francis, all these persons bear the markings of the cross within their bodies, and remind us of the resurrection that is yet to be realized within the Church and in society.<sup>34</sup>

Challenging the Church and society to become a more inclusive community will not be easy. In the process of facing today's wolves and winning them over through peaceful means, some will undoubtedly experience one or more of the various contemporary expressions of Christian martyrdom. But by imitating Francis, Franciscans today can become peaceful instruments that transform the personal, socio-political, and economic institutions that threaten the lives of the vast number of peoples in this world.

As a Cuban-American child, I remember growing up with a story that I am sure other Cuban and Cuban-American children have also been told. It is the story of Hatuey, a Taíno native American chieftain who witnessed first hand the atrocities of the conquest. He is said to have been originally from the island of Quisqueya (present day Dominican Republic). He fled to Cuba with a number of other Taínos after experiencing the violence brought about by Spanish *conquistadores*. He told others about the God that the European conquerors adored, namely, the God of gold and precious jewels. After the violent conquest of Cuba in 1512 by Diego Velásquez, he was captured and fatally injured. Just before he died he was asked by one of the Franciscan missionaries if he wanted to receive baptism, which would cleanse him from all of his sins and bring him to heaven. Hatuey is said to have responded as follows: "Are there people like you in heaven?" "Yes," answered the Franciscan priest, "there are many like us in heaven." Hatuey then said: "If the Spaniards are going to heaven, then I do not want to go there."

Hatuey's story is an example of what happens when Christians fail to mirror the life of God. Rightly so, Hatuey was unable to see how the violent actions of those engaged in conquest and war could in any way mirror their message of the prince of peace. Francis's way of subjecting himself to the other and Clare's creation of an inclusive community have not always prevailed as common and universal Christian and Franciscan practices. Learning from past mistakes, and rooted in the missionary vision of Francis and Clare, Franciscans today can help pave the way to birth a different Church and society. Finding themselves in the midst of "wolves," Franciscans can help in the taming of such wolves in order to invite the realization of a new humanity shaped by fraternal love, especially mindful of the needs of the poor and marginalized.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Scholars point out that the rule of St. Francis went through a three stage formation process: 1) The rule of 1209/10 which was orally accepted by Pope Innocent III and addressed the "simple pattern of life," 2) The rule of 1221 (*Regula non bullata*),

which incorporated and expanded the first version, and finally, 3) the edited, revised and papal sanctioned rule of 1223. See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 425, note 29. See also Walbert Bühlmann, "Francis and Mission according to the Rule of 1221," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 6 (1994): 87-107.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Finnegan, "Franciscans and the 'New Evangelization,'" *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 6 (1994): 3. Note that I use the male pronoun because Clare, who wrote her rule after Francis, is considered to be the first woman to write a rule for religious women. Her rule obtained papal approval two days before her death (1253).

<sup>3</sup>RegNB, 16.

<sup>4</sup>In chapter nine of *The Major Legend of Saint Francis*, Bonaventure describes the beginning of the journey to Egypt in the following way: "Taking a companion with him, a brother named Illuminato, a virtuous and enlightened man, after he had begun his journey, he came upon two lambs. Overjoyed to see them, the holy man said to his companion: 'Trust in the Lord, brother, for the Gospel text is being fulfilled in us: behold, I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves.' When they proceeded farther, the Saracen sentries fell upon them like wolves swiftly overtaking sheep, savagely seizing the servants of God, and cruelly and contemptuously dragging them away, treating them with insults, beating them with whips, and putting them in chains, LM 9.

<sup>5</sup>RegNB 16.

<sup>6</sup>Francis's call to be subject to every creature should not be misconstrued to mean unjust and unequal subjection to others, whether with respect to gender, race, culture or any other human experience. Just the opposite is the case: Francis is simply calling for the willingness to recognize the equality of all God's creatures.

<sup>7</sup>RegNB 16.

<sup>8</sup>*Rule of Clare*, 10. See Angelyn Dries, "Mission and Marginalization: The Franciscan Heritage," *Missiology: An International Review* 25/1 (1998): 8-9.

<sup>9</sup>Note that in Clare and Francis's model of mission one cannot avoid some consideration of gender stereotyping, which associates men with public roles and spaces and women with private roles and domestic spaces. Notwithstanding the challenge to overcome such stereotyping, when interpreted in a gender inclusive way, the missionary vision of Francis and Clare can offer men and women a way to make both public and private places, places that welcome the distinctiveness of others.

<sup>10</sup>*Testament of Clare*, 18. Emphasis added. Also cited in Dries, "Mission and Marginalization," 8.

<sup>11</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 31.

<sup>12</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 31.

<sup>13</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 31.

<sup>14</sup>See Juniper Cummins, "St. Francis and the Missions," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 6 (1994): 29.

<sup>15</sup>For instance, see Cummins, "St. Francis and the Missions," 29; Anton Rotzetter, "The Missionary Dimension of Franciscan Charism," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 6 (1994): 51-52; and Leonhard Lehmann, "Essential Elements of Mission," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 6 (1994): 39-40.

<sup>16</sup>Lehmann, "Essential Elements of Mission," 44.

<sup>17</sup>Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 10.

<sup>18</sup>See *Anonymous of Perugia*, 4.

<sup>19</sup>Dries, "Mission and Marginalization," 8.

<sup>20</sup>See John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood: New York, 1985), 15-16.

<sup>21</sup>On Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology see Maria Calisi, S.F.O., "Bonaventure's Trinity: Revelation of an Intensely Personal God." Paper delivered for Franciscan Federation in New Mexico, August 2001.

<sup>22</sup>See Rotzetter, "The Missionary Dimension of the Franciscan Charism," 51.

<sup>23</sup>Leonardo Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 35.

<sup>24</sup>See Miguel H. Díaz, "Dime con quién andas y te dire' quién eres: We Walk-with our Lady of Charity," in *From the Heart of Our People: Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 153-71.

<sup>25</sup>Boff, *Saint Francis*, 79.

<sup>26</sup>Boff, *Saint Francis*, 79.

<sup>27</sup>Elizabeth Johnson, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 143.

<sup>28</sup>For what follows see Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), esp. pp. 49-125.

<sup>29</sup>Boff, *Saint Francis*, 93-94. Emphasis added.

<sup>30</sup>1 Cel 76.

<sup>31</sup>On the notion of *la lucha*, see Ada María-Isasi Díaz, *En la Lucha, in the Struggle: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

<sup>32</sup>See Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 140-41.

<sup>33</sup>Note the Eucharistic implications of this story. In a visit to Assisi, Pope Innocent IV during a meal asks Clare to bless the loaves of bread. At first, the story tells us that Clare is hesitant. The pope insists, indeed, commands that Clare should pronounce a blessing over the bread. Clare finally agrees and we are told that upon making the sign of the cross over the loaves, "there immediately appeared on all the loaves of bread a most beautiful sign of the cross." See Fior 42.

<sup>34</sup>Fior 65.

**Hail, O Lady,  
Holy Queen,  
Mary, holy Mother of God,  
Who are the Virgin made Church,  
chosen by the most Holy Father in heaven  
whom he consecrated with His most holy  
beloved Son  
and with the Holy Spirit the Pararclete,  
in whom there was and is  
all fullness of grace and every good.**

**SalBVM: 1-3**

### ***Witness at Greccio: Christmas Eve, 1223***

***"...the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in,  
and the ox and the ass are led to the spot . . . and  
out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem. The night  
is lit up like day, delighting both man and beast."***

**I remember  
the special glow  
that the sky had that night . . .**

**from the torches,  
the stars,  
and the eyes of men and beasts . . .**

**as they led us gently to that place**

**where we were reminded  
after far too long,**

**of that infant child  
by that saint of God**

**who had brought us together again,  
at last . . .**

**and who deemed us  
worthy to be  
again at His birth,**

**and to join him with the rocks and woods,  
the hills and streams,**

**in a joyful  
song  
of praise.**

**Andrea F. Barone, SFO**

### **About Our Contributors**

**Andrea Barone, SFO**, is coordinator of educational services for students at The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. This is her second appearance in *The Cord*.

**Jean Marie Cleveland, OSF**, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, IN, has been President of the Franciscan Federation of the Third Order Regular, and is also her community's Congregational Minister. The article in this issue was her address at the end of her term as Federation President.

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**Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF**, is a Franciscan scholar and Congregational Minister of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Frankfort, IL. She is well-known on the Franciscan circuit, and her book, *A Franciscan Solitude Experience*, is widely used as a source book in Franciscan retreat work.

**Ramona Miller, OSF**, is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Rochester, MN, and currently serves as Director of Spiritual Formation and Director of Field Education at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, CA. She is a long-time staff member for Franciscan Pilgrimage Programs, and is a graduate of The Franciscan Institute. Her article was one of the keynote addresses at the 2005 Annual Conference of the Franciscan Federation.





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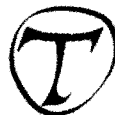
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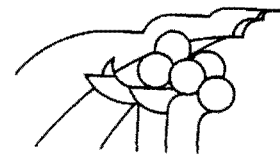


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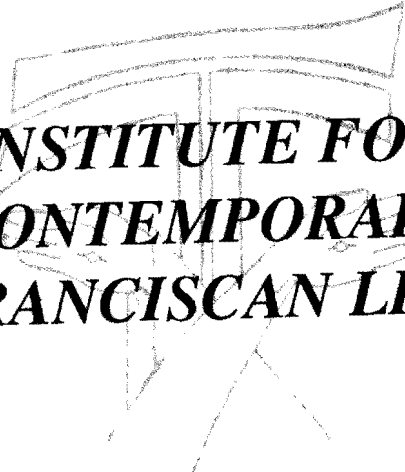
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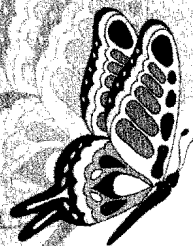
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Presenter: Elise Saggau, OSF

This will focus on Mary as a companion in our Christian life, one who experienced human living in a very real and challenging way, yet remained faithful. The day will incorporate reflective talks, personal and communal prayer, group sharing, Eucharistic celebration and lunch.

#### Retreat: "On Being Simply Human – the Wisdom of Francis and Clare"

Sunday, January 8 (7p.m.) – Saturday, January 14 (noon), 2006.

Director: Michael Blastic, OFM

Retreatants will reflect on Francis and Clare of Assisi's embrace of the Gospel which led them to the realization that the Gospel described a way of being simply human. The retreat will reflect on the writings and experience of both Francis and Clare as a way to come to terms with humanness through forgiveness and reconciliation following in the footprints of Jesus Christ.

#### Retreat: The Admonitions of St. Francis

Friday, August 4 (7 p.m.) - Thursday, August 10 (noon), 2006.

Director: Elizabeth Mackowiak, CSSF.

Retreatants will look at Francis' journey of conversion. In the book, *The Admonitions of St. Francis: Sources and Meanings*, Robert Karris, ofm., uncovers three levels of meaning: the spiritual tradition which provided background for Francis; Francis's creativity infused into that tradition; and the meaning for us today. Retreatants will be invited to examine these meanings, to pray them and to find insight and inspiration for their ongoing conversion.



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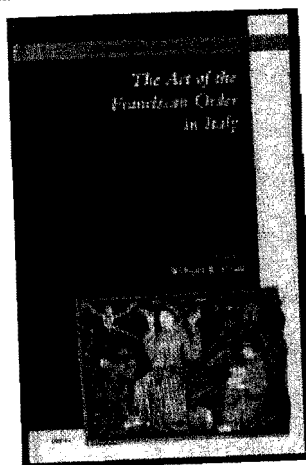
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	(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541				
	(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS				
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		50		50	
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d. and 15e.)		70		70	
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c. and 15f.)		955		955	
h. Copies not Distributed		95		95	
i. Total (Sum of 15g. and h.)		1050		1050	
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c. divided by 15g. times 100)		90		90	
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication required. Will be printed in the Nov/Dec 2005 issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.					
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner Roberta A. McKelvie				Date 9/30/05	

## Abbreviations

## Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BIL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Ctc	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtExh	The Canticle of Exhortation
1Frg	Fragments of Worchester Manuscript
2Frg	Fragments of Thomas of Celano
3Frg	Fragments of Hugh of Digne
LtAnt	A Letter to Br. Anthony of Padua
1LtCl	First Letter to the Clergy (Earlier Edition)
2LtCl	Second Letter to the Clergy (Later Edition)
1LtCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtCus	The Second Letter to the Custodians
1LtF	The First Letter to the Faithful
2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtOrd	A Letter to the Entire Order
LtR	A Letter to the Rulers of the People
ExhP	Exhortation o the Praise of God
PrOF	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
OP	The Office of the Passion
PrCr	The Prayer before the Crucifix
ER	The Earlier Rule ( <i>Regula non bullata</i> )
LR	The Later Rule ( <i>Regula bullata</i> )
RH	A Rule for Hermitages
SalBVM	A Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalV	A Salutation of Virtues
Test	The Testament
TPJ	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

## Franciscan Sources

1C	The Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano
2C	The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	The Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
LCh	The Legend for Use in the Choir
Off	The Divine Office of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
LJS	The Life of St. Francis by Julian of Speyer
VL	The Versified Life of St. Francis by Henri d'Avranches
1-3JT	The Praises by Jacopone da Todi
DCom	The Divine Comedy by Dante Aliegheri
TL	Tree of Life by Ubertino da Casale
1MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Smaller Version
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection, Larger Version
HTrb	The History of the Seven Tribulations by Angelo of Clareno
ScEx	The Sacred Exchange between St. Francis and Lady Poverty
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
AC	The Assisi Compilation
1-4Srm	The Sermons of Bonaventure
LMj	The Major Legend by Bonaventure
LMn	The Minor Legend by Bonaventure
BPr	The Book of Praises by Bernard of Besse
ABF	The Deeds of St. Francis and His Companions
LFI	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
KnSF	The Knowing of Saint Francis
ChrTE	The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston
ChrJG	The Chronicle of Jordan of Giano