A Word from John Duns Scotus

If man had not sinned, of course, there would have been no need of a redemption. Still it does not seem to be solely because of the redemption that God predestined this soul (Christ's) to such glory, since the redemption or the glory of the souls to be redeemed is not comparable to the glory of the soul of Christ. Neither is it likely that the highest good in the whole of creation is something that merely chanced to take place, and that only because of some lesser good....

Consequently, we can say that God selected for his heavenly choir all the angels and men he wished to have with their varied degrees of perfection, and all this before considering either the sin or the punishment of the sinner.

***Four Questions on Mary*, Question One**

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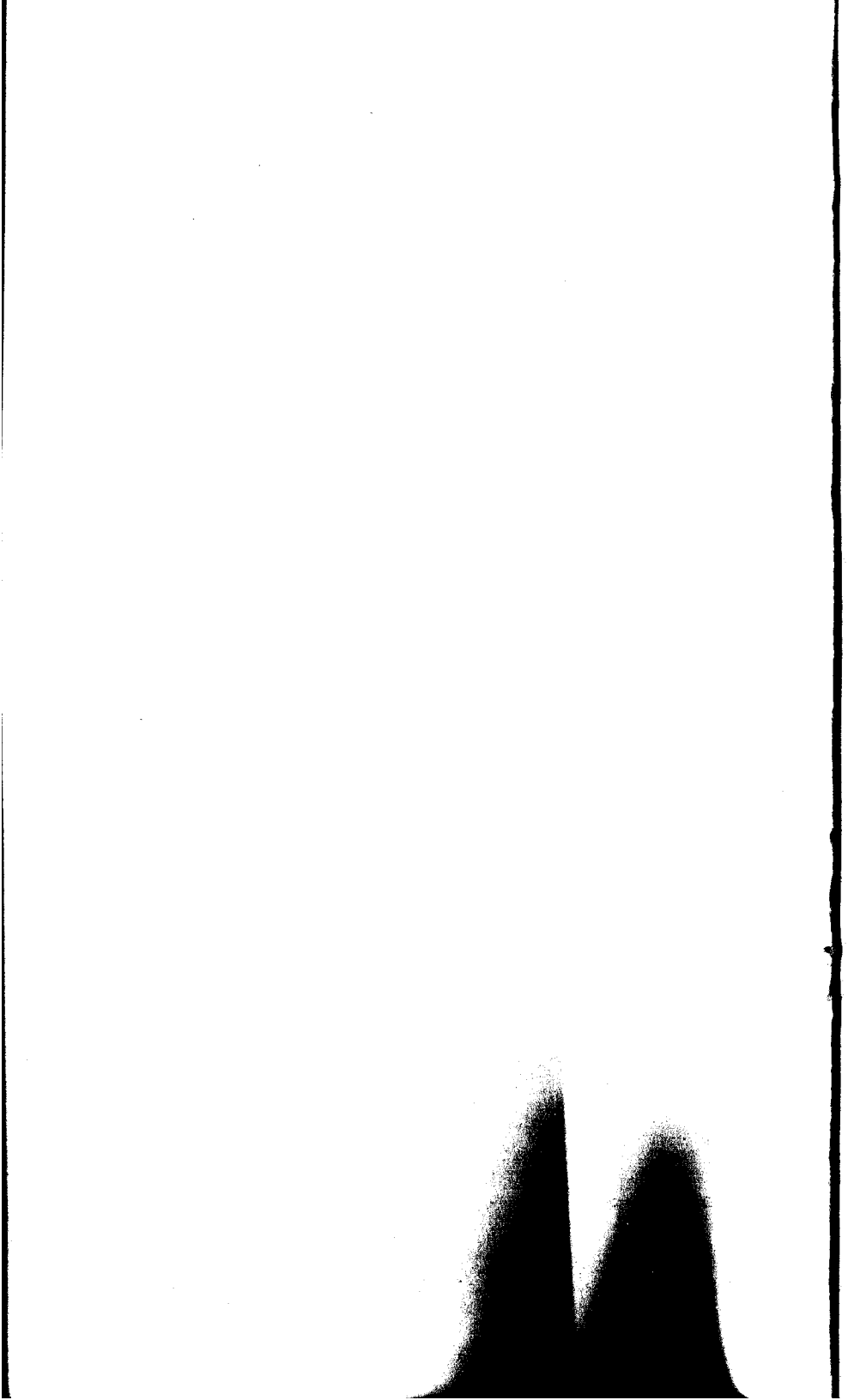
A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW ·



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FOREWORD

With this first edition of 2007 you will notice more changes hinted at in the Nov/Dec 2006 issue. Given the topic of the upcoming Forum we are beginning a series of articles about Islam by Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap. in order to provide some general background on the subject. With Lent looming on the horizon we offer two articles: Michael F. Cusato's insights about penance and Kyle E. Haden's thoughts about suffering. There are two articles about Thomas Merton: Nicholas Youmans contrasts Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* with Merton's concepts of contemplation and paradise, and Timothy Shaffer looks at Merton's Franciscan roots. Murray Bodo, O.F.M. graces our pages again with his poetic imagery. A new feature of *The Cord* is the short profile of a Franciscan ancestor; this issue, Elizabeth of Hungary. This short reflection comes to us from Joy Joseph Konnackal, T.O.R. and highlights the celebration of the Eighth Centenary of Elizabeth's birth. We end this issue with two book reviews, numerous opportunities for reflection and prayer on our Franciscan heritage and the usual *Franciscan Circuit.*

But no doubt you will notice changes even before you open the issue: a new cover design was indicated when the quarterly format required a spine. We are featuring *A Word from Scotus* this year as we near the opening of the Quadrennial Congress. We will continue to evolve each issue.

One thing that does not change is the element of human error. We regret that we misspelled Fr. Christian Oravec's name in the Nov/Dec issue. Fr. Christian is the TOR Provincial whose support for the preparation of the *Source Book on the History of the Third Order Rule* is invaluable.

Most of us have experienced most unseasonal weather in the past two months. Winter seems to make only sporadic, though potent, appearances. While Mother Nature is behaving erratically we know we can rely on the constancy of our Good God who loved us into being and calls us to share God's glory.

Daria R. Mitchell, OSF

TO DO PENANCE / *Facere poenitentiam*

Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M.

Franciscan Identity and Ecclesial Identity

The text known as the *Anonymous of Perugia*, written most probably between the years 1240 and 1241 as an explanation about the place and mission of the Friars Minor in the Church, offers this testimony about how the earliest brothers were perceived by the men and women of their time:

> Those who saw them were amazed... They seemed to differ from all others by their habit and lifestyle, like wild men. When they entered a city, town or a home, they would announce peace. Whenever they saw men or women on the streets or in the piazzas, they would encourage them to fear and love the Creator of heaven and earth, to remember His commandments that they had forgotten, and to strive to fulfill them. Some people willingly and joyfully listened to the brothers; others, however, jeered at them. Many people repeatedly questioned them... Some asked them: "Where do you come from?" While others asked: "To which Order do you belong?" They answered simply: "We are penitents and were born in Assisi."[1]

The early Franciscan fraternity, consisting of a small group of men from Assisi and its immediate environs and

[1] Anonymous of Perugia 19 (FAED II, p. 43).

gathered around the charismatic figure of Francesco di Bernardone, chose to call themselves, as their defining self-description, *fratres minores*. Such a descriptor set them apart from a number of other like-looking groups of their day striving to live the dictates of the Gospel in simplicity and integrity. The name Friars Minor, in short, identified the uniqueness of their charism.

But in terms of the wider Church, they were viewed by others (and also saw themselves) more simply as Christian men who had chosen to embark upon a life of penance, that is to say, to live as penitents. In this, they would associate themselves – to what extent, juridically, is another question – to that broader stream of renewed Christian living known throughout history as the Order of Penitents. In other words, with respect to the categories of the Church, the brothers saw themselves neither as monks or canons; nor did they consider themselves part of the diocesan clergy, even if a few of the early friars prior to 1215 were indeed priests. Indeed, the best description of them might be "itinerant hermits"[2]: not solitary recluses in the contemporary sense of the term but, more simply, Christian penitents dedicated to a life lived physically apart from the world and values of Assisi, in remote areas (*eremi*), in a single-gendered community (*fraternitas*), traveling about the region preaching penance to all who would lend them a hearing.

But what about those women who were inclined in a similar way? When Chiara di Offreducio fled into the company of these same penitents out on the plain of Assisi that fateful night of Palm Sunday 1212, she signaled a desire to join this band of penitents, and to make common cause with their penitential lifestyle. She had, in other words, become part of the minorite movement.[3] When she and her sister Agnes were soon established by the friars at San Damiano, they likewise

[2] Cf. Dominic Monti, "The Friars Minor: An Order in the Church?" *Franciscan Studies* 61 (2003): 234-52, esp. 246-48.

[3] One should recall that Jacques de Vitry, in his famous letter of 1216 reporting, among other things, what he had witnessed in the Spoleto Valley, refers to these women as *sorores minores*, hence, in my view, very much a part of the minorite movement. Cf. FAED I, p. 579.

continued to live their chosen life of penance, though fixed in one place, unable to move about freely like their masculine confrères due to the constraints typically placed on religious women in the Middle Ages. Even with all the efforts expended by the papacy from 1219 until 1263 to monasticize this feminine expression of the minorite movement, Clare, in her rule of 1253, nevertheless continued to describe her life as one of doing penance.[4]

By the early 1220s, a few years before the death of Francis, another group of men and women, inspired by the particular vision of Christian life announced by these friars and exemplified by these sisters, began to gather together in the cities of central and northern Italy for a more intense and engaged form of Christian existence. They, too, desired to embrace a life of penance.[5] Ugolino dei conti di Segni, charged by Pope Honorius III with the task of overseeing all religious orders and other spiritually-oriented movements in Italy that had begun to flower in the period after Lateran IV (1215), took it upon himself in 1221 to gather these men and women into confraternities within these same cities, giving them a rule of life which he had composed for them himself.[6] This rule refers to such individuals as "the Brothers and Sisters of Penance." Although there is no reference whatsoever to Francis or to the Franciscan fraternity in this document, it is now generally assumed that this rule was intended for penitents associated with the Franciscan Order.[7] This, then,

[4] CAED, c. 6, p. 117.

[5] I make an important distinction between individual men and women who embarked upon a life of penance prior to 1220 thanks to the preaching of Francis and others (e.g., Lady Jacopa dei Settisole, Lucchesio and his wife, etc.) and the new phenomenon, created probably around 1220 or 1221, of confraternities of penitents in urban areas to which the first rule for penitents will be addressed.

[6] Or at least this is the testimony of Bernard of Besse, secretary of Bonaventure (FAED III, p. 65) – the first direct attribution of authorship to Ugolino/Gregory IX.

[7] This is the *memoriale propositi*, the First Rule of the Third Order. Although the great Dominican historian of the penitential movement, G.G. Meersemann, was not convinced, most scholars now assume that the text of the *memoriale* which we have (dated 1227) was directed at the very

is the origin of the Franciscan Third Order, comprised of men and women sometimes referred to as "secular" Franciscans (that is, those choosing to remain in the *saecula* – the world – as distinct from those who physically lived apart from it in single-gendered communities). Such people, in short, continued to live "in their own homes" (*in domibus suis*), doing penance and understanding penance in the minorite way.

The early Franciscan Family in its totality – religious men and women, lay men and women – thus began as a movement dedicated to the life of penance. In the terminology of the Church, this was the name for their spiritual orientation and aspiration. But what was "penance"? What did it mean to "do penance"? Was there a particularly Franciscan understanding of the term?

To Do Penance

Francis begins the famous account of his conversion in his "Testament" in the following way:

> The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way:[8]

Francis describes his own conversion as the beginning of a life of doing penance. As we have seen, this term or phrase – in Latin, *facere poenitentiam* – is foundational for all members of the Franciscan Family – First, Second and Third Orders – since "doing penance" is central to the original identity of all three branches of the movement and its spiritual inspiration. Hence, it is critical that we understand the meaning of the term.

One problem that we face is that our more modern understanding of the term "penance" intrudes into our fuller understanding of its meaning in the High Middle Ages, particularly at the time of Francis himself. For what we generally mean by the word "penance" is what many of us learned growing up as Catholics: namely, that penance is something one does to complete the ritual of going to confession. In such a context, penance is something one does (e.g., a series of recitedprayers, an action), a symbolic act of reparation, to undo the damage done by one's sin. It is, in the language of the Church, something to satisfy the temporal punishment due to sin. By extension, penance also came to be a synonym for the sacrament of confession itself.

This understanding is not unlike that propagated in the Church of the Early Middle Ages through the famous Irish penitentials – those manuals of instruction for clergy which helped guide them in the ministration of the sacrament of penance. Here, the penance imposed upon the penitent after the confession of one's sin(s) was understood as a *poena* – a punishment or penalty of sorts – for the deed done. Indeed, it was a kind of tariff – a fee or fine, if you will – for acts committed, with the amount assigned according to the gravity of the offense. Hence, in this context – as in our own pre-Vatican understanding – penance was a thing – indeed, a quantifiable thing – that one performed to complete the act of going to confession.

However, the High Middle Ages, starting actually in the late 12th century just prior to the time of Francis, saw a revival of the notion of penance and a renewed interest in the ancient Order of Penitents that had become a part of the Church in Late Antiquity.[9] However, although there are scattered

least to Franciscan tertiaries (and possibly also to others affiliated to other religious orders). Moreover, it is my contention that, precisely because of the lack of any reference to a specifically minorite view of the world or its system of values in the text of this rather generic rule, Francis distilled a part of the longer version of his famous "Letter to All the Faithful" into a shorter version addressed specifically to the Brothers and Sisters of Penitents – thus, a minorite "word" addressed by Francis to this third part of his movement. Hence, contrary to the position argued in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 41, 45 in my view the long version of the letter precedes the **short version** (not vice versa) and both texts are to be dated between 1220 and 1221.

[8] FAED I, p. 124.

[9] For an historical overview, see: Joseph A. Favazza, *The Order of Penitents: Historical Roots and Pastoral Future* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988).

references here and there to individual Christians beginning to embrace a life of penance by the end of the 12th century – the Humiliati in the area around Milan in northern Italy are the most prominent example – it is my contention that it is precisely Francis himself who, in a sense, was the primary catalyst for – indeed, revolutionizes – the revival of penance as a central thematic in medieval Christian spirituality. For it is in his own writings, all of which, but one, must be dated after his resignation at the Emergency Chapter of September 1220, that the term "penance" comes into such prominence for himself and the various expressions of the movement that had gathered around him.[10]

Contrary to the early medieval – and modern – understandings of penance as a thing that one does to complete the ritual act of sacramental confession, Francis understood penance as an action: that is to say, a verb, not a noun. Indeed, his written formulations of the concept are almost exclusively done in verbal constructions. The two which appear in his writings are: *facere penitentiam* and *agere penitentiam*, literally "to make (or do) penance" and "to do (or even activate) penance." In both instances, penance is not some-*thing;* it is something one does.

Now this might not seem all that striking. For we do have the notion today of "action penances" which are attempts to invite penitents to do something – a penance – outside of the sacramental moment that might have a bearing upon (some healing effect on) those whom one has sinned against. However, what is different in Francis is that he did not understand penance as something one did to complete the sacrament; rather, penance for him was to be understood as the conversion process itself which extended from the moment of the awareness of one's sin into the sacramental moment and then beyond it into the flow of one's daily life

[10] It should be remembered that the only writing of Francis that can be securely dated before 1220 is the Early Rule – and, even here, the text of this first rule was actually the product of the ongoing discernment of the members of the early fraternity, not that of Francis alone. The work of David Flood on these matters has been particularly significant. Cf. *The Birth of a Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972).

thereafter. In short, to do penance, for Francis, was quite simply a renewed way of life or, in his term, a *forma vitae* that was meant to be the way that one lived the entirety of one's life. Penance was and is one's way of life in Christ.

That is why he emphasized at several junctures in his writings that the penitent – the friar, the sister, the lay man or woman living a minorite existence; indeed all who hear the message of the Gospel preached by the friars – is called to "produce fruits worthy of penance."[11] This important phrase underscores how one's life, after having embraced a life of penance, is to be marked by concrete actions consistent with the penitential vision which originally spurred one's awareness that one had been living "in sin" (*in peccatis*, to use Francis's phrase from his "Testament") and the conviction to definitively change one's attitudes and behavior thereafter.

In short, when Francis tells us that he began to do penance, he means much more than the fact that he availed himself of the sacrament and went to confession or that he did *a* penance in reparation for past sins. Rather, Francis means that he embarked upon a wholly new way of seeing reality – a new way of seeing himself, others, the world and God himself – which would henceforth manifest itself in a different set of attitudes, values and behaviors as a result. This is the essence of authentic conversion – which is what Francis was trying to tell us about himself in the opening lines of the "Testament".

But in order to understand what this new way of perceiving and living meant for Francis concretely, we need to return once again to this seminal document. Even though the words are quite familiar to us, they bear repeating once again since they recall the meaning of Francis's encounter among the lepers.[12]

[11] The phrase echoes the call of John the Baptist in, for example, Luke 3: 8.

[12] While the hagiographers tend to cast this experience as a one-on-one encounter, Francis himself writes about it as an encounter among lepers (plural). It is quite customary for a hagiographer to heighten the importance and intensity of such events by interfacing the saint with another individual figure. What is crucial, however, is not so much how

> The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body. And afterwards I delayed a little and left the world.[13]

What happened to Francis in this encounter? First, it is important to state at the outset that this moment represents the experience of grace *par excellence* in the life of Francis. For, from a Christian perspective, nothing other than grace can have the life-changing effect – the complete reversal of values which this experience worked within Francis – that this encounter had upon him. Indeed, to such an extent that, for him, bitter distaste and revulsion was suddenly transformed into mercy and sweetness.

But it is no longer enough to simply state – as the hagiographers do – that Francis encountered the person of Christ in the leper. No, what is critical for us to grasp is that in this moment Francis encountered, perhaps for the very first time in his life, truly

such an encounter might have actually occurred but rather how that encounter ultimately affected and shaped Francis and his spirituality in the aftermath.

[13] FAED I, p. 124.

suffering human beings: men and women, not unlike himself, whom the Assisi of his youth had taught him were of no account, people to be avoided, shunned and despised. These were part of that mass of people who constituted the invisible of Assisi, who added nothing to the "honor and glory and increase"[14] of this city-on-the-move and who had no voice in the affairs and actions of the town. In short, in the lepers Francis had come face-to-face with the poor: those nameless, faceless, voiceless of every time and generation who are deemed the *minores:* those who do not count. The lepers were no empty ciphers, no mere vehicles, through whom Francis encountered what really mattered: Christ. No, he or she was the privileged and sacred place where the human reality created by God was to be encountered first and foremost – because always dismissed and therefore missed.

In that encounter, therefore, Francis came to the cardinal insight of his life: namely, that all men and women without exception are creatures created by the same Creator God; that all men and women without exception have been endowed with the same grace of salvation offered to all; that all men and women without exception have been endowed with the same inestimable dignity and worth; and that all men and women without exception are *fratres et sorores* – brothers and sisters – one to another sprung from the hand of the same life-giving God. This is what I have called elsewhere Francis's insight of the universal fraternity of all creatures.[15] This is the natural condition of human beings on this earth; this is how God intends that we live with and for each other. And it all starts with Francis's graced encounter with that most difficult of all creatures: the human person. From this insight flows everything else that will be a part of his spirituality.

[14] Words taken from the Assisi charter of foundation of 1210: the *carta franchitatis*.

[15] Cf. Michael F. Cusato, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan *locus* in the World," *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*, Spirit and Life, 10 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 1-30, passim.

For everything that ruptures this universal fraternity of all creatures is what constitutes, for Francis, sin. Sin for him is not really about private and personal foibles. Rather, it is primarily about all those attitudes, behaviors and actions that threaten to fracture the human fraternity, by setting oneself over or against another, dividing the human family and frustrating the designs of God for their intended purposes. It is, in other words, all those things which blind us to this divinely-inspired reality. This is what Francis means when he tells us that, before he was given this graced insight, he had been "in sin" (*in peccatis*): unable to realize and act upon God's vision for the human race. But after this encounter, he describes himself as having embarked upon a life of "doing penance." For to understand what Francis meant by sin is to understand what he meant by "doing penance" for that sin.

We can see now that "to do penance" means far more than simply going to confession, having one's faults erased by the sacrament, then resuming one's life trying to do better than before. No: "to do penance" means to begin to consciously distance oneself from and reject all those attitudes, values, behaviors and actions that further fragment the human fraternity of creatures, setting oneself over and against another. This is authentic conversion; this is the root of a penitential spirituality; to do this, daily and for the rest of one's life, is to "produce fruits worthy of penance.

And, finally, to understand what Francis meant by doing penance is to also understand the content of the penitential preaching of Francis and his early friars. This was the vision of the minorite movement; and this was the vision and message which they brought to the world in word as well as in example. The friars, in short, had something to say to their world: their charism became their message.

Examples of Doing Penance in Assisi of the Early 13th Century

Can we delve a little more concretely into what values, attitudes or actions Francis and his early friars pledged

themselves to distance themselves from and to renounce? We can indeed. The evidence is to be found in a close reading of the content of the earliest layers of the Early Rule, the so-called *Regula non bullata*.[16] Suffice it to list four examples of what the friars consciously chose not to do because of the deleterious effect of these behaviors upon the *minores* of their society: the poor and disadvantaged.

1. The refusal to use money.

One of the most peculiar hallmarks of the *forma vitae* of the early Franciscan movement is the renunciation by the friars to use or have any association whatsoever with money. Commentators often explain this categorical refusal as the most extreme example of their dedication to evangelical poverty. Such explanations, however, typically do not take account of the social realities which the friars were aware of and which they were attempting to address by their life-choices.

For one must recall that Francis and the early minorite fraternity lived during a period of time in which Europe had been witnessing since c. 1000 what historians have called the Agrarian and Commercial Revolutions. The hallmark of the latter revolution was the revival of trade and commercial activity which was increasingly conducted through the medium of money (*pecunia*) and, especially, the use of coins (*denarii*) – a medium which had been vastly eclipsed by barter during the Early Middle Ages.

Money was a neutral means of exchange, receiving its specific value from what human beings assign to it. And it was those who controlled the fabrication of such monies in the form of coin – those who oversaw and conducted the minting of coin – who largely controlled its value.

[16] The Early Rule is a document whose content evolved from 1208 (with the coming of the first disciples around Francis) until 1221 when Cardinal Ugolino urged an end to the constant additions being made to the text and began work, with Francis and other curial lawyers, to draft the definitive and more juridical text of the *Regula bullata*, the Rule of 1223.

Now, generally speaking, there were two different types of coin in circulation at the time of Francis in Italy. The first kind was called *pecunia grossa* – or strong money – which consisted of coins that contained a certain amount of silver within it to give it strong and reliable value. The second kind was called *pecuniae piccolae* – or weak monies – which were coins which had frequently been debased (that is, having had their silver content progressively removed) and which, therefore, had less and less value. The ruling authorities (imperial representatives, communal authorities, aristocratic bishops, etc.) were those who had in their possession and conducted business with the *pecunia grossa*. However, it was the peasantry and the poor who were paid in the lesser monies.[17]

One of the dynamics associated with money at this time in Italy was this frequent debasing of the coinage in circulation. The result of this situation was that the monies which the poor had at their disposition would have less and less value whenever they went to the market to buy food for their families. The poor, in other words, were at the mercy of the whims and wiles of the powerful. Money was thus a pernicious instrument of the exploitation of the weak in society.

Francis, son of a merchant, and his companions who were drawn mostly from the middle and upper classes of Assisian society, was well aware of these dynamics and the ruses of the market. They saw money for what it was: the tool of the powerful to take advantage of the disadvantaged, further splintering and demeaning untold members of the human fraternity. One of the ways, therefore, of "doing penance" – one of the things to distance oneself from because of the harm caused to certain members of the human fraternity – would be to refuse to validate this corrosive monetary system which only continued the downward spiral and misery of the poor by using it. Hence, the friars' renunciation of the use of money is not an attempt to make themselves poorer than the poor,

[17] An excellent, if popular, treatment of this topic can be found in David Flood, "Franciscans and Money," *Haversack* Vol. IV, n.2, 1980, pp.12-21.

driving themselves into indigence for the sake of some vague ideal of gospel poverty. No, their decision had everything to do with a keen awareness of the socio-economic dynamics of how money operates in such a system to the disadvantage of its weakest members. As such, it must be abandoned. As human agents, the friars agree to give it no more value than the stones on the ground or the dust under their feet – this is the value they choose to assign to it![18] And anyone who receives or causes to be received such coinage which has shown itself so deleterious to the poor is to be considered as another Judas – the one who held the money purse of the disciples who betrayed the Lord. That friar, in other words, will have betrayed something fundamental about the vocation he had chosen to live out in the world.

2. The refusal to work in certain positions.

This same dynamic is the explanation for the somewhat curious prohibitions written into the earliest layers of chapter 7 of the Early Rule concerning several kinds of work which the friars were not permitted to do. There are two kinds of work forbidden to the friars.

First, two specific occupations are mentioned. A friar is not permitted to serve either as a *camerarius* or a *cellarius*. Both words require some explanation. A *camerarius* is one who was in charge of the money room (*camera*): the place where the money and other valuables for a particular business or a monastery, for example, were stored and guarded. Having a direct connection with money, therefore, the friar could not allow himself to work at such tasks. The reason for the second prohibition – that of the *cellarius* – at first escapes our understanding. Such a position entailed work as the chief steward of the storehouse for food and wine (cellar). However, as principal provisioner for the establishment (one thinks here especially of the hospices and monasteries where some of the friars worked), the *cellarius* would have been the principal shopper, as it were: one who had to conduct the

[18] Cf. RNB 8.

commerce of the establishment. Again, requiring the use of money, the friar was therefore prohibited from having any association with such a position.

The second set of prohibitions in this same chapter 7 of the Early Rule is more difficult to explain. The friars are warned against being "in charge" in the places where they live or stay. Rather, they are to be *"minores et subditi omnibus"* (*minores* and subject to all) in these same establishments. This is a critical phrase in the early Franciscan lexicon. What is at issue here? It seems that what the early friars are asserting for themselves is a choice. Yes, they might bring into such establishments a certain business savvy and talents honed in the world as people used to wielding a certain amount of authority. However, the friars have chosen to be among the *minores* of their society, as *minores* among the *minores*. Few in the world were interested in doing this! Put starkly: how many would be willing to get down on their knees and wash the feet and the rotting bodies of their brother and sister lepers? Few indeed! No, let others run the affairs of the establishment; the friars will adopt a posture of being at the service of those most in need and hopefully, by this simple yet profound gesture, show forth in these actions the face of the loving Christ seen so rarely by such undesirables cast out of the society of Assisi. In such a way, a little of the integrity of the human fraternity desired by God has been restored through these acts of tender service. Such are the fruits of penance.

3. The renunciation of the ownership of land, property and goods.

Again, the conventional wisdom is that the friars refused to own anything at all in order to be poor, therefore making themselves voluntarily poor in the same manner as Jesus of Nazareth. But again: the issue is more complex than that. The friars were not evangelical automatons, simply opening the Scriptures, finding the poor Jesus in the Gospels, and

then walking in his footsteps in the same manner.[19] Again, we must force ourselves to think socially: that is, to see the friars as responding to specific social situations within their culture which were deemed to be harmful to the most vulnerable in the society, with little or no options for ameliorating the situation in their favor.

In chapter 7 of the Early Rule, the friars promise not to claim ownership of anything, especially lands or properties. Why? The friars were keenly aware that ownership of property was strictly the prerogative of the wealthy and powerful, not of everyone. Indeed, citizenship in Assisi, according to the charter of 1210, was defined by the ability (or inability) of one to own a certain amount of property. Lacking ownership of property defined one as a non-citizen, indeed a non-person. But in the encounter with the lepers, Francis had discovered, contrary to Assisi's definitions, the very personhood – the true citizenship – of such creatures! Assisi surely had it wrong.

The friars viewed creation – all of creation, most especially the land itself – as owned by God. Faithful to the psalmist that "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it," (Ps 24:1) the friars pledged themselves to live in this manner, not claiming ownership of anything that was not, in fact, theirs to own. Hence, it is not a rejection of ownership in order to be poor; rather, in refusing to claim what was not theirs in the first place and to live in accord with this reality made them, inevitably, part of the poor. Moreover, it is God's intention that all of his creatures have a right to be sustained by the creation he has created for us all. Therefore, any system that

[19] The impression given in the early hagiographical texts (Celano and Bonaventure most particularly) is that the friars did just that: namely, went to a chapel, opened the book of the Scriptures, read a few Gospel texts, then went out and lived accordingly. This is a caricature of history. For these texts are meant to simply convey that the way of life developed by the friars found its echo in the scriptures, had its approval from Christ himself and was a legitimate form of religious living. To read these texts as eye-witness accounts of how Francis and his brothers in fact developed their *forma vitae* would be to seriously misread the intention of the hagiographers and, more seriously, to discount the complex human process of understanding, interpreting and putting down on paper a divine inspiration to lead a certain kind of Christian life.

undermines that intention – by claiming ownership of the earth to the exclusion of allowing it to fulfill the basic human needs of others – is an offense to the Creator and serves to divide the human family into the satisfied and the needy, the wealthy and the poor.

In short, poverty for the early friars is first and foremost a positive ethic of creation! It is the pledge to personally and communally use creation on the basis of honest human need, as the Early Rule states it, quoting St. Paul: "having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content" (I Tm 6.8).[20] And it is to work to bring the wealthy and powerful of the world to ensure that the resources of creation under their control are used in order to feed and clothe the human fraternity. To live in this manner and to lead others to respecting this same ethic of creation is, again, to produce fruits worthy of penance.

4. The renunciation of the use of violence.

In the same seventh chapter of the Early Rule, the friars are admonished not to defend the places where they are dwelling against anyone who would come and take it from them. Rather, all – whether friend or foe, thief or brigand – are to be welcomed to such places.[21] One recalls the story of their evacuation from Rivo Torto because someone else wanted it (or needed it) more than they.[22]

This renunciation of the defense of their places encompassed not only the refusal to use physical force against anyone but also implied the decision not to try to contest their right to use such places since such actions by their nature rested upon a claim of rightful ownership – something the friars had already foresworn.

But this refusal to resort to violence in defense of their places also implied the rejection of *all* forms of violence because such acts, literally, did violence to members of the

[20] RNB, 9.
[21] RNB, 7.
[22] 1 Cel 44.

human fraternity. Francis and his brothers were keenly aware of the vicious cycles of violence which permeated medieval society. Indeed, the recent history of Assisi itself, contemporaneous to Francis, had been marked by waves of violence and reciprocal acts of reprisals against one's enemies. The very ascendancy of the *minores* class in Assisi – that is, the bourgeois class of merchants and artisans and the class to which Francis and his father belonged[23] – was accomplished through bloody and destructive civil war between 1198 (with the razing of the Rocca Maggiore and the pillaging of aristocratic properties) and 1210 (with the peace accord establishing the free commune of Assisi).[24] In addition, one should recall Francis's ambitions to be a *maior* (a knight) and his ill-fated, short-lived venture with Count Gentile of Spoleto down to Apulia as a mercenary.[25]

Such men knew war and the effects of war upon the human fraternity. As renewed men of the Gospel, they sought another way. They repented of their past proclivities and activities and sought to honor the fraternity of men and women which God intended as our natural condition of living, first among themselves and then out in the wider world. As such, once again, they produced fruits worthy of penance.

If we return to the opening testimony from the *Anonymous of Perugia*, we now have some real content to understand the reactions of those who listened to the penitential preaching of Francis and his friars. Some, you may recall, were

[23] The term *minores* can have two meanings in Assisi of the early 13th century. It refers first and more specifically to the bourgeois class of merchants, the *homines populi*, who were defined in opposition to the *maiores* class of nobles and their families, also called the *boni homines* (the good men or, as the English might say, your "betters"). The defining measure was the ownership of property: the latter class had a greater (*maior*) amount of lands and goods than did the former class who had less (*minor*) than they in their portfolio. The second, more generic meaning of the term refers to that mass of people who constituted the landless peasantry and the poor. The people of this class were more frequently referred to as *villani*, literally people of vile condition.

[24] An excellent survey of these events in English is Paul V. Riley, "Francis' Assisi" in *Franciscan Studies* (1971)

[25] 1C 4 in FAED 1, p. 185 and L3C 5 in FAED 2, p. 70.

receptive to the message, finding the ring of evangelical truth in the words of their simple but compelling vision. Others, however, found these same words strange, if not challenging to their usual manner of living. There is a similar passage in the *Legend of the Three Companions* (dependent on the text from the *Anonymous*) which reports astonishment and confusion among the friars' listeners whenever they spoke to them specifically of peace, urging them to put away their divisiveness and their propensities to solve human problems and need by recourse to the sword.[26] More striking still is the account given in the Assisi Compilation 101:

> At the beginning of the religion, when blessed Francis would go with a brother who was one of the first twelve brothers, that brother would greet men and women along the way as well as those in their field, saying: "May the Lord give you peace." And because people had never before heard such a greeting from any religious, they were greatly amazed. Indeed, some would say almost indignantly: "What does this greeting of yours mean?" As a result that brother began to be quite embarrassed. Then he said to blessed Francis "Let me use another greeting."[27]

The evangelical vision was clear; the evangelical response was far more difficult.

A Summary Example: Francis in Egypt

In some respects, Francis's journey to the Holy Land – or, more specifically, to Egypt – in the company of a contingent of the Fifth Crusade in 1219 encapsulates some of the same

[26] L3C 34 and especially 37, FAED 2, pp. 88-91: "Those who saw them, however, were greatly amazed that they differed from all others by their habit and way of life and seemed almost like wild men. In fact, whenever they entered especially a city, estate, town or home, they announced peace ... Some people listened to them willingly; others, on the other hand, mocked them..."

[27] AC 101, **FAED 2, p. 205.**

fundamental themes which were so important for the early life of the minorite community.

Francis's fervent desire to go among the Muslims actually predates his successful attempt in 1219. Thomas of Celano, in his *Vita prima*, recounts how, in the Fall of 1212, Francis and a companion embarked for the East, probably from the port of Brindisi on the east coast of Italy, but inclement weather blew their ship off course, to Dalmatia (on the Yugoslav coast). Being too late in the season, they abandoned their effort and returned home. Not to be deterred, the next year, in 1213, he left for Spain, hoping to get to Morocco and there encounter the miramolin. Sickness forced him, once again, to return home, his dream of going among the Muslims still frustrated.[28] For Francis was intent on making contact with the Islamic world. In the first attempt he goes East; in the second, he travels West. He was not necessarily going to see any one individual but rather to encounter a whole people and perhaps get to speak with their leaders. Nor, it must be said, was he traveling as part of any organized crusade for there were no such ventures active at this time.[29] His interest, in short, was spiritual, rather than ecclesiastical or, even less, military.

What is highly interesting in Celano's account of the first attempt to go to the East is the way he describes Francis's motivation. The framework is neither the crusading movement nor even the thematic of martyrdom.[30] Rather, Celano clearly

[28] 1 C 55-56, FAED 1, p. 229-30.

[29] The Fourth Crusade, launched from Venice in 1204, was detoured twice by the crusaders and ended in the shameful sacking of Constantinople. The Fifth Crusade was not called until 1215 at Lateran IV.

[30] This account is a classic instance of the difference between (or perhaps the coincidence of) hagiography and history. One must read such accounts cautiously. Francis is indeed depicted by Celano as going to the East in pursuit of martyrdom (1 Cel 55). However, this is to be understood more as Thomas's interpretation of Francis's motivation in line with the standard hagiographical thematic of Francis following in the footsteps of Christ who, himself, went to the cross. The motivation imputed to Francis is thus a standard hagiographical *topos* (model) more than an actual historical fact. In reality, Celano gives us another important clue as to Francis's real intention in going among the Muslims.

states that Francis's desire was to go and "preach penance" among the Muslims. The question is: why would Francis want to preach penance, if the meaning of penance was, as has too often been assumed, narrowly tied to the sacrament of penance and the imposition of a penance? The answer is that his intention – his understanding of penance – was much wider. As we have seen, to preach penance meant to share a vision of renewed human life in line with the original intentions of God for his creation. If this is so, then one must understand that Francis's desire to go among the Muslims had everything to do with witnessing to a vision of the human fraternity created by God and very little to do with preaching that people confess their sins before the priest. Such a narrowly-construed concept would have little currency in the Islamic world; but our wider concept would indeed.

When Francis was preparing to go among the Muslims in 1219, he gathered the friars together in Chapter. It is my contention that Francis would have publicly explained to the friars why he was going to Egypt, even at the risk of his own life. We have a possible echo of that message contained in the first four verses of chapter 22 of the *Regula non bullata* – what David Flood likes to call the "Testament of 1219."[31] These verses give us his rationale for leaving the fraternity behind. The substance of these lines, if read quite closely, is this: whereas the Christian community has been told that the Muslim is the infidel, the enemy of Christ *par excellence*, the Scriptures tell us to love "our enemy." Moreover, Francis continues, Jesus called his "enemy" – the one who was to betray him – "friend" (*amicus*).[32] Now it is important not to

[31] Flood, however, believes that the entire chapter represents this farewell message. See Flood and Thaddée Matura, "The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Fraqncis," trans. by Paul Schwartz and Paul Lachance, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), pp. 45-48. My contention is that only the first four verses constitute such a message. The rest of the verses (vv. 5-50) represent, I believe, an account of Francis's resignation sermon (filled out with Scripture texts by Caesar of Speyer) delivered upon his return to Italy in September 1220.

[32] RNB 22: "All my brothers: let us pay attention to what the Lord says: 'Love your enemies' and 'do good to those who hate you' (Mt. 5: 44), for our Lord Jesus Christ, whose footprints we must follow called his betrayer

assume that Francis meant "friend" in an emotional sense, as asserting the existence of any kind of "friendly" feelings between the two. Rather, what Francis meant in calling our supposed enemy "friend" is much more akin to a word that is critically important in the Franciscan lexicon: *"frater"* (brother). In other words, the one whom we have been taught is our enemy is in fact our brother!

Francis was going to the Holy Land to give witness to this compelling evangelical truth: that all men and women – even those deemed furthest from the circle of Christian brotherhood: the Muslims – are actually our *fratres et sorores*, brothers and sisters of the same Creator God, even if this might cost him his own life to witness to this simple but irrevocable reality. For this is precisely what it means to "preach penance": to call on men and women, everywhere, to live in the manner in which God intends us to live. This is why he went to Egypt: to oppose the efforts of the crusaders at Damietta, who were intent upon yet more bloodshed dividing the human community further from its truest nature; and this is why he went over into the "camp of our enemy"[33] and under the tent of the Sultan of Egypt, Malik al-Kamil, entering into respectful dialogue with him; and finally this is why he was dismayed at hearing of the aggressive, insulting strategy adopted by the five proto-martyrs in Morocco (January 1220), resulting in their death and in the subsequent formulation of a proper mission strategy by Francis in chapter 16 of the Early Rule.[34]

For if Francis and his friars were faithful to the sharing of this vision of life not only with their fellow Christians in

'friend' (Mt. 26: 50) and willingly offered himself to his executioners. Our 'friends', therefore, are all those who unjustly inflict upon us distress and anguish, shame and injury, sorrow and punishment, martyrdom and death. We must love them greatly for we shall possess eternal life because of what they bring us." Note that the enemy/friend imagery is a direct reference to Judas in the Garden of Gethsemene: the one who was, in Latin, a "*traditor*" (one who "hands another over"/betrayer).

[33] The phrase is used by Jacques de Vitry in describing Francis's mission into the camp of Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

[34] RNB, c. 16, FAED 1, p. 74.

Europe but even among the Muslims in the Islamic world – a venture which, he believed, might result in his own death – then such friars would gain eternal life, according to RNB 22:4, since they will have been unshakably faithful to the *forma vitae* they had promised to live and to share with others at the moment of their entrance into this minorite life. Fidelity to what one has vowed – to do penance and all that such penance now implies – will result in eternal blessing.

Conclusion

Francis's attestation that God had led him to begin to do penance is the foundation of the Franciscan vocation for all members of the family. To promise to do penance is to promise to live in a manner respectful of the integrity of the universal fraternity of all creatures, starting with one's own neighbor and embracing the larger world, Christian and non-Christian alike, indeed virtually the whole cosmos. Precisely how one decides to distance oneself from those things which threaten to fragment and rupture the bonds of the human fraternity will differ, to some extent, according to time, place and culture. But if the experience of Francis's encounter with the lepers is to mean something more for us than Francis's own personal encounter with Christ; if it is to have something definitive to say about God's intentions for the human race which every follower of Francis recognizes and professes to live out for the rest of his/her life: then authentic conversion of life – the doing of penance as a vocation of life – means taking on the attitudes, values and behavior of Jesus of Nazareth, exemplified in the Gospel, which compelled Francis to embrace not only the leper but the whole manner of evangelical living which honors the sacrality of the universal fraternity of all creatures.

SUFFERING FROM A FRANCISCAN PERSPECTIVE

Kyle E. Haden, O.F.M.

Introduction

In February of 1984 Pope John Paul II published the encyclical *Salvifici Doloris*, dealing specifically with the subject of suffering. The basic premise of the document is to ask the question and offer an answer whether suffering is meaningful, does it have salvific import? The twentieth century has demonstrated what appears to be an excess of human suffering, from the Holocaust, the purges of Stalin, Hiroshima, the AIDS epidemic, genocide in Africa, to the latest terrorist atrocities witnessed on the evening news. Can this excess of human misery have any real meaning, and can one still claim the existence of a God who allows such pain and suffering to continue, especially among those deemed innocent – children, the poor, etc.?

Salvifici Doloris argues that there is, in fact, meaning to human suffering, stating that

> even though man knows and is close to the sufferings of the animal world, nevertheless what we express by the word "suffering" seems to be particularly *essential to the nature of man.* It is as deep as man himself, precisely because it manifests in its own way that depth which is proper to man, and in its own way surpasses it. Suffering seems to belong to man's transcendence: it is one of those points in which man

> is in a certain sense "destined" to go beyond himself, and is called to this in a mysterious way.[1]

This position betrays a particular anthropology that is not universally accepted, due to its foundational acceptance of a particular religious worldview.

An example of a religious worldview that decries meaning to suffering is that found in the works of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas, a Jew, unlike some of his co-religionists, maintained a belief in God after the Holocaust, but could no longer maintain a belief in theodicy. Richard Cohen writes that

> the phenomenal or intrinsic meaninglessness of suffering and evil render them resistant to all theodicy. The enormity of the Holocaust would be the unforgettable and irrefutable historical proof, and henceforth a paradigmatic proof, of the essential disproportion between suffering and explanation. But Levinas went one step further. After Auschwitz theodicy itself becomes immorality. The idea of theodicy may remain a consolation or a moral challenge for the sufferer, but from me, coming from me, it is my flight, rationalization, imposition, as if the other's suffering, meaningless to the sufferer, were meaningful to me. "For an ethical sensibility," Levinas wrote, "confirming itself, in the inhumanity of our time, against this inhumanity – the justification of the neighbor's pain is certainly the source of all immorality."[2]

Although one can have sympathy for Levinas's position – the Holocaust does seem to have changed how we can talk about suffering, and whether it is licit to speak of suffering on such a grand scale as meaningful – can one dismiss theodicy so easily? If the divine can be dismissed from any

[1] John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, para. 2, (1984), available from www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris_en.html

[2] Richard Cohen, "What Good is the Holocaust: on Suffering and Evil," *Philosophy Today*, 43(1999:2): 178.

purposefulness in the realm of suffering, can one legitimately speak of a divinity at all involved with human history. Whether or not one has a realistic grasp on the nature of divine justice is a separate question to whether or not God is truly involved and interested in human welfare.

It is painfully obvious that human suffering is deeply a part of every human experience. From natural disasters, wars, accidents of various kinds, sickness and disease, to emotional and existential distress, we each experience the discomfort that life's disconnects can impose on us. How we deal with suffering is the crucial question. One can ask the "why" of suffering, but the answer, or answers, will ultimately depend on one's fundamental perspective about life as a whole. What do I mean by this? If I am an atheist, having no transcendent reference beyond my own bodily and mental existence, and hold the belief that this material existence is all that is granted, then I more than likely will view suffering as some sort of absurdity, a result of chance located in a universe of chance.

If I am a believer in some transcendent existence, a divinity of some sort, or some form of transcendent reality beyond my own consciousness, my belief and imagining of this divinity or state will shape how I view human suffering. For example, if I were a Buddhist, I could console myself by seeing suffering as the result of desire. Because I cannot possess and appropriate all that I desire, I suffer. I desire pleasure, but cannot always have it, thus I suffer the deprivation of pleasure.

I believe that *Salvifici Doloris* makes an important point in its premise that

> *to suffer* means to become particularly susceptible, particularly *open to the working of the salvific powers of God*, offered to humanity in Christ. In him God has confirmed his desire to act especially through suffering, which is man's weakness and emptying of

> self, and he wishes to make his power known precisely in this weakness and emptying of self.[3]

I can confess to agreement with this point of view because I have been, and continue to place myself within a specific context which has and continues to shape my worldview and imagination. My context is specifically that of a twenty-first century, Roman Catholic, Franciscan priest who has been formed by the explicit and implicit milieu of Franciscan hermeneutics. To be more specific, I have been shaped by a religious culture that has a long tradition that has posited meaning and purpose to human suffering. And even more specifically, I have been shaped by a particular traditional stream within the wider stream of Catholicism, namely, Franciscanism. This particular stream has various similarities and points of connection with the larger stream, but admits to nuances within that larger stream.

My interest in this essay is to attempt to examine and explicate how a Franciscan hermeneutics has shaped my imaginal world concerning the problem of suffering. In other words, how have the 'texts' of Franciscan tradition formed my image of the why and the purpose of human suffering, and how does this affect my way of being in the world. I use myself in this essay because I am convinced that doctrine without praxis is, in all practical senses, meaningless. Theory devoid of effectuation is simply an exercise in futility. So then, instead of generalizing, I want to attempt to concretize my examination by using myself as the locus of this hermeneutical inspection.

Saint Francis and His Social Setting

Much of Western religious thinking has considered the divine in terms of onto-theological categories, allowing for an assumed teleological outcome to human flourishing and end. In other words, the realm of the possible is limited to

[3] *Salvifici Doloris* (para. 23).

presumed goals by which the person is to conform in order to reach some kind of fulfillment; God is such and such, and human happiness depends on conformity to how God is rightly imaged. For much of its history, the stream of Franciscan theological reflection has generally formed itself in the context of a metaphysics that is shaped by an onto-theological perspective, that is, forming postulations about the divine beyond particular experiences, forming concepts of the divine through experiential generalizations. Its metaphysics has been influenced by the categories of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy that have, basically, created an image of the divine that is more or less static; unmoved mover, self-thinking thought, ground of all being, etc. These postulations can be easily deemed narcissitic, a deity turned in on itself, setting lose the world, leaving it to its own devices. In fact, much of medieval theology dealt with the concern of how such an immutable God could sully God's self in the changeable messiness that is the world.

I am convinced that aspects of St. Francis's experiences of the incarnation, found in his various writings, can extricate this boundedness to an onto-theological conception of the divine, allowing for a more eschatological view that allows for a *theology of possibility*, which has implications for both ethics, and more immediately for the goal of the essay, suffering, specifically, how suffering, in light of an eschatological view of human possibility, can be salvific.

Francis was a man of his time. He was not a professional theologian, and even portrayed himself as an illiterate, uneducated man. But in the few writings that we have from him, I can affirm with some scholars that, in fact, Francis was truly a vernacular theologian. His profound experiences and insights of the divine shaped a worldview that is still radical, although not typically followed. Although he did not develop a systematic theological framework, there are instances and insights that betray a possible worldview that can be translated and useful for our own time, and can speak to the issue of suffering. Francis would not have asked particular questions as to why God allows physical suffering in its modern formulation, most likely taking for granted that

that was simply the way things are in the world. But by his behavior and hints from his writings, we can glean a possible reason for moral human suffering. Obviously certain aspects of physical suffering are related to moral deficiencies, and it is this aspect of physical suffering I want to highlight. At the same time, I would like to propose the idea that physical suffering, as endured by Francis himself, in fact, has meaning, even possibly, salvific meaning.

> "The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. And when I left them, what has seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body."[4]

This passage from Francis's *Testament* is filled with an explosion of meaning beyond merely an ethical change in behavior towards an underprivileged group found around the regions of medieval central Italy. It is both an act of benevolent charity, and more challenging, an indictment on a system of oppression that had become an unconscious acceptable reality, if even "the way of the world" as willed by God.

Human society has been replete with the religiously and socially dictated idea that humans are easily categorized and subject to differing castes by which one's worth was dependent on one's social status. In medieval Assisi at the time of St. Francis, the commune of Assisi was just at the beginnings of an evolutional change from a typical feudal society to one that was feeling the effects of market capitalism. Whereas the landowning aristocracy had virtual control over most economic and social practices, the rise of what is generally termed the middle class, and the reintroduction of a money based economy, began a slow erosion of the aristocracy's

[4] All references to Francis's writings are based on *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. 1, edited by Regis Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William Short (New York, London, and Manila: New City Press, 1999), 124.

(*maiores*) control over these social areas. In fact, the conflict reached violent proportions which led to a temporary exile of the *maiores* from the city of Assisi. Where before the *maiores* dictated social divisions, now these social divisions were beginning to be dictated by the appropriation of capital. Where land ownership was once the determinate of power, it was now beginning to be effected by the accumulation of money.

Although Francis is admired for various reasons, from the spectacular to the ridiculous, the most revolutionary thing about him was his insight into an aspect of human nature, its tendency to marginalize based on imagined differences, which has created endless suffering for millions on this planet. In his recognition of the lepers in their God given dignity, a dignity stolen from them through fear, sanctioned by religious taboos, he broke through a wall of division that justified a marginalization of those that are different, broken, strange, monstrous (at least in the imagination), which has had and, continues to have, both economic and social effects that have been devastating for countless souls.

It was the practice in the Middle Ages to cast out lepers (who could be afflicted with, in fact, a number of different skin diseases that had the appearance of physical degeneration) to locations outside the city walls at a safe distance from the healthy. In many cases a funeral would be offered as a sign of the individual's death to the community for all practical concerns. If charity was shown to lepers, it was by the generosity of the individual, but not a socially dictated practice. This dislocation of lepers had two effects on the individual. First, their economic status was completely made void due to their inability to partake in any commercial activity other then begging. It also had the devastating psychological effect of denigrating the individual's sense of worth, especially in a society that was diatic in nature, that is, where one's identity was found in one's social location, especially in one's familial role.

Francis's recognition of the leper's dignity was an indictment on his community's attitudes and behaviors towards those who did not fit into the neat categories of

acceptability. His embracing the leper was a symbolic act of re-invitation to human society. Although he could only comfort the physical pain through the limited means he had at his disposal (which was little indeed), the psychological effect was enormous. But more importantly, his behavior, as beneficial as it may have been for a limited number of people, somehow caught the imaginations of numbers of men and women who, transcending a worldview that created a separation among human beings due to birth, accident, and location, began to see these "imagined distinctions" as simply that, constructed on a worldview that, by the radical standards of gospel equality, was no longer tenable nor justified. No longer could one, if Francis's vision was reliable, maintain the belief that human distinction and stratification, thus marginalization, could be justified in the name of God. Francis recognized that each individual had the dignity of being a child of God, and thus, deserved the privileges that came with that designation.

How did this radical new insight of Francis towards the marginalized come about? Levinas, as stated above, argued that suffering in itself, for the individual sufferer was meaningless, even when another may be moved by compassion to act when confronted with another's suffering. It may have a positive effect on the individual who is moved by seeing the suffering of the other, but is still meaningless for the sufferer herself. I would like to propose that in fact Francis's act towards the leper was rooted not simply in an act of pity created by the visualization of present suffering, but in fact was rooted in his own experience of suffering which had the effect of drawing him outside himself towards another.

Francis's Experiences of Suffering

In his youth Francis lived a rather carefree, if not somewhat frivolous lifestyle. He seemed to have been addicted to pleasure, and was known to be the life of the party among many of the youth of Assisi. Due to his family's

economic standing in the community, being a member of the burgeoning new market class, he was provided the means to live a rather comfortable life, despite the enormous signs of poverty around him. In fact, there is no evidence that in his youth he was particularly moved by the poverty and suffering he must have seen. His was a self-involved existence that dreamed of pleasure, fame and glory. His dream of being a great knight was encouraged by his family due to the family's aspirations for greater status and position in the society of Assisi. Knighthood was relegated to the aristocratic class, thus the hopes of the new middle class to break into this state was pinned to the aspirations of their children who benefited from the accumulation of capital.

In the late 12th and early 13th centuries Assisi experienced a violent confrontation between the aristocratic and new middle class, resulting in actual armed struggle. Many aristocrats (*maiores*) removed themselves to Perugia for safety. This would result in an armed confrontation between the cities of Perugia and Assisi in which Francis himself would participate. In this struggle, Francis was captured as a prisoner of war and languished in prison for about a year, until his family was able to ransom him. Although no historical documentation recorded Francis's particular actions in the conflict, one can assume that he either killed, or at least injured someone in this struggle. Even if he did not kill or injure another, it is certain that he was faced with the brutality and ugliness of violence and death. Added to this was his difficult experience of imprisonment, which in the middle ages was primitive and dangerous. Disease and exposure were a constant threat that took many lives. We hear in some of the stories about Francis that he in fact came out of the prison quite sick, and it took a significant amount of time to recover.

In this experience, Francis faced, and experienced, two aspects of suffering. First, he faced moral and existential suffering through the violent act of war that must have caused him to face the issue of his own mortality. He went from a lifestyle of being a carefree youth intent on a good time, to a prisoner of war that forced him to face some real

and harsh realities about the world around him. Second, he experienced physical suffering which had a deleterious effect on his body.

It was through this formative experience of moral and physical suffering that a seed was planted in Francis for future action towards others who suffer. His sensibilities about life and its meaning were deeply disturbed and shaken in this experience which could have led him to resignation and an acceptance of the status quo, but in fact opened him to the possibility for compassion that leads to action. In other words, it had a salvific effect.

Meaning of Salvific

It needs to be clarified what is meant by salvific. For many, the concept of salvation entails the soul's continued existence in a paradisial state after physical death. This is not what is meant by salvific in this essay. Rather, it is the ongoing realization of what it means to be created in the image of the divine, and how that image is to be incarnated in this world of matter and history. The fulfillment of what it means to be truly human, which, for the Christian, is best imaged in the Christ event, and how the individual participates in the Christ event, is the meaning of salvific. Thus, suffering which leads to compassion and action is salvific, because it reflects the very nature of the divine, which in Franciscan tradition, is self-diffusive love that empties (*kenosis*) itself for the good of another.

This aspect of divine *kenosis* is important to a Franciscan understanding of suffering. It can offer an alternative to a traditional understanding of theodicy, which has been profoundly shaped by an Anselmian concept of Atonement. A Franciscan concept of *kenosis* moves one away from a concept of the divine in need of retribution and satisfaction. The incarnation no longer is seen as a means of placating a wrath-filled God demanding payment for transgressions, which is very much influenced by medieval feudal relations. Rather, the triune God, whose immanence is revealed in its economy,

is less concerned about punishment and satisfaction, and more concerned about re-orienting humanity's vision of who it is called to be. Created in the divine image, humanity has been created to reflect the very nature of a triune deity, which is, in the Franciscan tradition, self-diffusive love towards the other. The Father, Son, and Spirit love each other and eternally share that love between themselves. It is that very love that emanates from the divine into creation, through the mediation of the Word.

It is important to emphasize that the love that is shared in and through the Trinity is freely given. It is this free exchange that makes it truly relational, unmanipulative. In other words, the will has priority because it is in the will that love is freely given, making it relational. It is this freedom of will that is given priority by the divine, allowing, and risking, human manipulation of this gift. Thus, when the question of why an all benevolent and just God allows the innocent to suffer, a Franciscan response would be the importance and inviolability that the divine gives to human freedom. Because of its misuse and perversion of this gift, humanity interprets the incarnation and passion of the Christ as a necessary act to placate divine wrath, rather than as the revelation of the true eschatological end of humanity, which is grounded in self-giving love based in a justice that recognizes the dignity of all persons, regardless of class, race, gender, or creed.

Salvifici Doloris stated that "'suffering' seems to be particularly *essential to the nature of man.*" How is this understood from a Franciscan perspective? If it is true that humanity reflects, or images, the triune God and that an essential quality of the divinity is loving relationality, then it seems obvious that human suffering is grounded in the experience of broken and disordered relationships. If the fulfillment of human aspirations are founded in self-giving, loving relationality, then the experience of suffering is necessarily present when these aspirations are frustrated. How are these aspirations frustrated? Through human sin, which, according to Francis, is rooted in the misguided desire to appropriate things that lead us away from our original and

necessary focus, which is our love and service to God, which in turn is manifested in our love and service to others.

In his *First Version of the Letter to the Faithful* Francis makes the following exhortation, stating:

> See, you blind ones, deceived by your enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil, because it is sweet for the body to sin and it is bitter to serve God, for every vice and sin flow and proceed from the human heart as the Lord says in the Gospel... And you think that you will possess this world's vanities for a long time, but you are deceived because a day and an hour will come of which you give no thought, which you do not know, and of which you are unaware when the body becomes weak, death approaches, and it dies a bitter death.

In the *Earlier Rule* Francis tells his brothers, quoting from the Gospel of Matthew, that if they want to be perfect "go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." Francis was emphatic in his belief that the brothers were to live *sine proprio*, appropriate nothing to themselves. Why? This radical concern about poverty was deeply rooted in his own experience of suffering. The impact of both moral, existential and physical suffering gained for him an insight into the human condition that was further radicalized by his recognition that the meaning of life was grounded in loving relationality that reflected the divine in its own life of Self-giving love. The flesh, the world, and the devil are, in Francis's worldview, the cause of blindness to life's real purpose. They are the distractions that cause one's focus to deviate from its true source of happiness, God, to those things that will never satisfy the human longing for loving relationships. These are played out on a grand scale through the politics of power and domination, grounded in the human desire to possess that which will never gain what underlies the very desire to possess in the first place.

When human vision is distorted, and deviates from its original and eschatological end – loving and self-giving relationality, grounded in the reflection of the triune God – it

begins to reshape its desire in the accumulation of goods that it believes will fulfill these desires. Instead of the will to love, it becomes the will to power, through appropriation and domination, that severs loving human relations, creating divisions based on divisions of power, justified in language of divine rights. This division, caused by greed and fueled by envy, is the root of human suffering. For Francis, the only remedy to this progression from distorted human desire to human suffering, due to greedy appropriation, was a radical denial of accumulation. Poverty was not an end in itself for Francis, but a means to true loving relationships that would in turn help eliminate moral and existential suffering created by the desire to horde.

A Franciscan Perspective

From a Franciscan perspective, then, the root of all moral and existential suffering is located in the distorted vision of the true end of human existence, which is based on a true understanding and image of the divine. Any foray into the history of human suffering bears this out. The desire to appropriate through domination has created unlimited human suffering. But this appropriation is not limited to material goods. It can also be traced to the appropriation of ideologies that create divisions and discord among human societies. A positive Franciscan argument against the justification of division based on ideological differences can be made.

After his conversion and renunciation of the status quo, Francis indicated a great desire to travel to the Holy Land to preach to the followers of Islam. Part of this desire was rooted in his personal desire for martyrdom, which was a commonly sought after experience for many religious persons in the Middle Ages. The Crusades were in full swing, thus, when he arrived in the Holy Land, he was confronted by the horrors of war. He felt a need to try to broker some kind of peace, but his efforts fell on the deaf ears of the Christian crusaders. He then decided to meet with the Sultan who he hoped would

come to accept the truths of Christianity. Obviously he was unsuccessful in this venture, but what is more salient to this essay was the fact that he made it out of the Sultan's camp alive. This is important for a couple of reasons. The sources indicate that he and the Sultan had an amicable encounter, and came to a positive regard for each other. Why is this so significant?

It must be pointed out that the animosity between Christians and Moslems in the Middle Ages was quite intense. Moslems were considered by Christians to be infidels, and that all Moslems, if they did not embrace Christianity, would wind up in Hell. Besides the theological arguments that created such hostility, there were the political and economic realities that created competition for markets and resources. For Francis to have come to an appreciation and admiration for such a figure as the Sultan speaks loudly the fact that he was able to transcend cultural and religious biases, and recognize in the *other* the possibility of divine movement and presence. Some scholars argue that Francis came away from this encounter with not only a deeper appreciation of the Muslem experience of the divine, but that he in fact desired to borrow some aspects of Islamic practices that he thought would deepen Christiandom's piety and practice.

There are two examples in Francis's writings that scholars argue indicate his desire to borrow from his experience of

Islam. The first is found in his *Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples*, where he states:

> May you foster such honor to the Lord among the people entrusted to you that every evening an announcement may be made by a messenger or some other sign that praise and thanksgiving may be given by all people to the all-powerful Lord God.

This more than likely reflects his positive impression of the Moslem call to prayer that is given five times a day. The second is found in his *Praises of God,* which, an argument could be made, he was inspired to write after hearing the Moslem list of 99 names of God.

His ability to transcend his cultural biases towards an alien and hostile religion is another example of his ability to divest himself (*sine proprio*) of anything that created relational divisions, which, if maintained, promotes the continuation of human suffering. A Franciscan response to ideological and religious differences is one of dialogue and mutual respect, despite the fact that the different parties may never come to philosophical agreement. The priority does not lie in ideological agreement, but in human relationality grounded in mutual respect and recognition of mutual human dignity.

Conclusion

What is the meaning of suffering? Does it have salvific import? These are questions that have been a part of every human experience of the world. I have tried to argue from a Franciscan perspective that suffering is meaningful only in the context of the meaning of human existence. Through the lens of Francis's lived experience and writings, and through the lived and reflected experience of Franciscan tradition, I believe the answer to life's meaning and purpose is grounded in the very nature of the triune God. The triune God is self-diffusive, self-giving love, revealing loving relationality as the eschatological end to human aspirations and fulfillment. Because of sin, the distorted vision of the nature of the

divine, and the desire to appropriate to itself that which is substituted for relationality, humanity experiences moral and existential suffering. Suffering, in itself, for the individual, is salvific when it helps to clear, or purify one's vision and understanding about the nature of the divine, and human fulfillment. This is demonstrated in the suffering experienced by St. Francis in his confrontation with war and physical sickness.

But it is not enough to simply gain a truer vision of reality. The transformation of the intellect must be accompanied by a transformation of the will. This implies ethical responsibilities to the problem of suffering, responsibilities having not only ramifications for individuals, but political and economic ramifications as well. Politically, it speaks to the prevalent practice of dominance through military and economic force. It also calls for an approach to human relations based on common divine origins. No longer can we see the world divided by ideological and religious demarcations, but rather recognize that we are each part of a whole that has responsibility for the whole. From a Trinitarian perspective, national and economic borders can no longer dictate distributive concerns. Humanity is called to reflect the kenotic triune God whose desire is the elimination of divisions that perpetuate moral and existential suffering.

Obviously this Franciscan perspective appears utopian, and overly idealistic. In fact it is. The history of the Franciscan movement proves this. The greatest struggle for the Franciscan fraternity was how to institutionlize this charism and insight of Francis. The point was missed when it was thought that his charism could in fact be institutionalized. Francis never set out to start what has become the Franciscan Order(s). His was a conversion that must be received and allocated by each individual *freely*. It is this radical understanding of human freedom, grounded in the triune God who is freedom, that is at the heart of the Franciscan theological tradition.

But it is this very utopian and idealistic aspect of the Franciscan tradition that is its greatest achievement. Because God is imaged as love freely shared and given there is no need for a reliance on a teleological model. In other words,

as St. Paul writes: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."(I Cor. 2:9) We are called to become more and more the reflection, or image, of the divine. This divine that we are to reflect is infinite, thus infinite possibilities lie open to humanity. It is this infinity of possibilities that calls forth from us the need to use more creatively our imaginations to help bring about relief, and possible elimination of human suffering caused by a human desire to appropriate through a will to power.

A Franciscan perspective can free us from an onto-theological view that does not allow for a God of possibilities. An onto-theological perspective has resulted in a view of the divine that is self-involved, removed from the real experiential suffering of humanity. When the incarnation is taken seriously as a true revelation of the immanent nature of the divine, it radically expresses a God who is absolutely concerned and involved with human history, and who takes human suffering seriously. Francis's constant call for Christians to rightly receive the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist is a call not only to perform a religious duty, but to enter into the deeper mystery of God's immersion into the human situation, taking on its very suffering. We too, when we receive the Eucharist reflectively and contemplatively, not only try to imagine the mystery of Christ's suffering, but in fact, as St. Paul writes "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church." (Col. 1:24) We participate in the salvific passion and resurrection of Christ in our very suffering, which opens us beyond our self-involvement, beyond narcissism, and towards and for the other.

Although I stated previously that salvation is not meant, in this essay, to be solely about attainment of heaven, I do want to argue that an eschatological view of suffering is incomplete without a conviction that life is more than this material and historical experience. The belief that life is continuous is obviously important to a full Franciscan account of suffering. It is the possibility and promise of a continued relationship

with God and others that infuses meaning into the salvific nature of suffering. We have the confidence in and through the Christ event that our suffering has in fact salvific import. It is not an absurdity perpetrated by a capricious deity who leaves us to our misery. Nor, has a world of chance mysteriously thrown us, without our consent, into the midst of a meaningless struggle. But in fact suffering is a call to forsake the mistaken and distorted vision of a human society that elevates creation to the level of divinity, thus steeping itself in the practice of idolatry, and to recognize a God utterly concerned about life-giving relationships grounded in self-giving love. And each of us is invited into that concern, by allowing our own suffering to move us out of ourselves towards the other, overcoming whatever the obstacles are that divide human relationship, by recognizing that we are participating in divine reconciliation.

MERTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM: READING CONTEMPLATION AND PARADISE IN THE *ITINERARIUM* WITH A MODERN-DAY TRAPPIST

Nicholas Youmans

> If we wish, therefore, to re-enter into the enjoyment of truth as into a paradise, we must do so through faith in, hope in, and love for the mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, who is like the tree of life in the middle of paradise.[1]

In her well-known memoir entitled simply *Merton: A Biography*, Monica Furlong paints a thorough landscape of Thomas Merton's journey as a Christian spiritualist, interfaith voice, and author. Furlong remarks that Merton was a rarity in his generation who "follow[ed] in the footsteps of the saints" as a Christian contemplative, embedded himself within a world focused on various other things, and left an indelible mark in the minds and hearts of many.[2] She goes on to share a telling anecdote of his travels through Asia when a holy man identified him with penetrating immediacy as a *rangjung Sangay*, or natural Buddha.[3] As Furlong and many others attest, Thomas Merton's life is indeed one worth recounting. But what is it about the man that makes

[1] St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (*Itin.* hereafter), Works of St. Bonaventure, Vol. II, trans. Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (Saint Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2002), c. 4, n. 2, 99. This essay was first written for a contemporary theology survey course in the Fall of 2004 at Flagler College in St. Augustine, FL with Dr. Timothy J. Johnson. Many thanks are in order for the essay's current state, but foremost I would like to thank Dr. Johnson for his thematic and editorial expertise.

[2] Monica Furlong, *Merton: A Biography* (Liguori: Liguori Publications, 1980), xix.

[3] Furlong, xix.

him so revered? His writings, the majority of which wrestle with questions of contemplation, implore readers not only to read but also to encounter afresh their own faith and to reflect on issues both ancient and contemporary. Though deceased in 1968, this invigorating, authentic Trappist monk continues to enhance and cultivate the faith of others vis-à-vis his thoughts and words. Most chiefly, however, Merton's unrelenting 'green thumb' spirit evokes the great mystics of history. A keen eye for fertile soil in which to nurture the soul, a poignant selection of seeds for spiritual tilling and fruition, and a harvest of the divine mystery in the mundane and the acute mark his unique passage through this world. The footsteps once impacted by saints, in which Merton followed with joy, are retraceable today in impelling, new capacities for any eager specialist or layperson alike who wishes to go toe-to-toe with humble greatness and converse via the written word.

To be sure, Merton crossed paths with many of history's wise and spirited individuals, which is perhaps a source of his widespread appeal and readability. One notable Christian saint in particular, with whose path Merton converged, surfaces at first with subtle impact: St. Bonaventure.[4] Not unlike Merton's rapport among the Trappists, Bonaventure's thought and writings to this day undoubtedly remain the exemplar of Franciscan contemplative life.[5] In fact, his mystical theology was one of the most influential threads of its

[4] They both faced the University and cloister, were sophisticated voices of faith in and outside of religious community, experienced radical conversions, were great theologians in their own right, had an affinity for St. Francis, etc. For Merton's thoughts on the Poor Man of Assisi and the earliest Franciscan movement, see: Thomas Merton, "Franciscan Eremitism" in *Contemplation in a World of Action* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 273-81.

[5] J.Aumann, "Contemplation", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Ed., vol. 4 (New York: Thomson-Gale, 2003), 205-07. Zachary Hayes further proposes Bonaventure as a model for Franciscan theology, see: "Bonaventure of Bagnoregio: A Paradigm for Franciscan Theologians?", in *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: W.T.U. Symposium Papers 2001*, ed. Elise Saggau, OSF (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2002), 43-56.

kind in High Medieval piety.[6] Merton's insights too, permeate his (and our) contemporary theological *Zeitgeist*. Much like Bonaventure, he had an extraordinary gift in the ability to engage classical Christian texts and bring them forth into dialogue in both an enticing and highly intelligible fashion.[7] Among the spiritual classics from East to West, Merton read the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*[8], which is Bonaventure's *magnum opus* on the contemplative way of Francis:

> Look in Saint Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and you will find one of the best descriptions ever written of this highest of all vocations [contemplation]. It is a description which the Seraphic Doctor himself learned on retreat and in solitude on Mount Alverna. Praying in the same lonely spot where the great founder of his Order, Saint Francis of Assisi, had had the wounds of Christ burned into his hands and feet and side, Saint Bonaventure saw, by the light of a supernatural intuition, the full meaning of this tremendous event in the history of the Church. "There," he says, "Saint Francis 'passed over into God' (*in Deum transiit*) in the ecstasy (*excessus*) of contemplation...."
>
> Here is the clear and true meaning of *contemplata tradere*, expressed without equivocation by one who had lived that life to the full. It is the vocation to transforming union, to the height of the mystical life and of mystical experience, to the very transformation into Christ that Christ living in us and directing all our

[6] For a discussion on theories of mysticism in High Medieval piety, see: Bernard McGinn, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity: Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries," *Church History* 56 (1987): 7-24.

[7] Merton's *The Ascent to Truth* is exemplary of such a notion, see: *The Ascent to Truth* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1951).

[8] Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), 415-19. His comments are found in the epilogue entitled, "Meditatio Pauperis in Solitudine." This phrase is actually the title of an anonymous Franciscan work from the thirteenth century. For an English translation of this text, see: *A Meditation in Solitude of One who is Poor*, trans. Campion Murray (Victoria: The Franciscan Press, 1997).

> actions might Himself draw men to desire and seek that same exalted union because of the joy and the sanctity and the supernatural vitality radiated by our example – or rather because of the secret influence of Christ living within us in complete possession of our souls.[9]

Perhaps the Seraphic Doctor's most influential work, the *Itinerarium* is a textual flight that offers readers a glimpse, albeit complex and laborious on occasion, of the itinerant friar's spirituality through a series of varied images and guided reflections. Affinity for the image is yet another common bond which contemporary and classic theology both share, which provides a useful and opportune avenue by which to ease the contact of the present worldviews at play. This essay thus hopes to read Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* with Merton in order to undertake the contemplative journey back to paradise to retrieve and imbue an enduring Christian contemplation for today. Three images common to Christianity foster this approach: the desert through which one is lead by God to the refreshing oasis, the mirror in the delightful reflecting pool which inspires one to see God in oneself, and the sun, the source of light similar to God.

The Desert

To begin our discussion of contemplation, let us first look at Bonaventure's initial anthropology as embodied in his image of the desert.[10] The Latin heading that appears fixed atop the first chapter of the *Itinerarium* reads *Incipit speculatio pauperis in deserto*, or here "begins the speculation of the poor one in the desert." As Helmut Meinhardt notes, Bonaventure speaks here of a journey that, like every trek demarcated by an itinerary, must have a beginning and an eventual end.[11] For our journey with Bonaventure, the outset of our course en route to God[12] is the human condition – "the poor desert inhabitant" and our "loss of the garden of delight."[13] In the first chapter of his *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure suggests the fundamental importance of paradise with regard to matters of the spirit:

> According to the original plan of Creation, the human being was created with the capability of experiencing the quiet of contemplation. Therefore God placed the first human being in a paradise of pleasures. But turning from the true light to the changeable good, the first human was bent over through a personal fault, and the entire human race became bent over by original sin which infected human nature in two ways. It infects the mind with ignorance, and the flesh with concupiscence. The result is that humans, blind and bent over, sit in darkness and do not see the light of heaven....[14]

Bonaventure's astute anthropological insight leads first to the human person's absolute poverty[15] and need for God, which leave the spirit impotent and wanting in the absence of the Creator's aid.[16] The prayer for God's redeeming grace can alone reform the human soul and its faculties and "lift us up" so as to ascend in joint spiritual relation with the

[9] Merton, *The Seven Story Mountain*, 418.

[10] Medievals did not think of images or metaphors as mere literary adornment or flowery ornamentation, but rather they believed that Creation is so perfectly and intimately spoken into place that it reflects eternal, heavenly realities. That is, God's surrounding created order points beyond itself to its Creator. For more on this idea, see Helmut Meinhardt, "Bonaventura: Itinerarium Mentis in Deum" in *Reisen und Reiseliteratur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1992), 81-89.

[11] Meinhardt, "Bonaventura", 84.

[12] Bonaventure clearly sets out the destination for his spiritual wayfarers by the nature of his work's title, the *Soul's Journey into God*, which is a quite peculiar, uncommon name in the surviving corpus of medieval literature. See Meinhardt, "Bonaventura", 81.

[13] Meinhardt, 81. My translation.

[14] *Itin.*, c. 1, n. 7, 51.

[15] For a nuanced handling of poverty and its meaning for Bonaventure, see Timothy Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent: Bonaventure on Poverty, Prayer, and Union with God* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 2000), 9-50.

[16] *Itin.*, c. 1, n. 6-9, 49-53.

divine.[17] God's grace, then, is a *conditio sine qua non* for contemplation. Bonaventure holds tightly to the notion that humans too often have a misguided sense of contemplation and the genesis that renders possible its success. In our poor, wandering state (i.e. mendicancy) our thoughts and desires mislead unless we turn to God who, in his divine piety, not only hears the cry of the poor but in turn yearns for our sanctifying prayer.[18]

In search of Thomas Merton's comments on human poverty and contemplation, we find his *Thoughts in Solitude*, where he writes:

> Spiritual life is not mental life. It is not thought alone. Nor is it, of course, a life of sensation, a life of feeling – "feeling" and experiencing the things of the spirit, and the things of God.
>
> Nor does the spiritual life exclude thought and feeling. It needs both.... Everything must be elevated and transformed by the action of God, in love and faith.[19]

Merton reinforces Bonaventure's view concerning the poor state of humanity and contemplation. We must begin with and delve into ourselves as we are in our lowest state, he thought, in order to awaken and enliven the impoverished human spirit within us. To initiate the practice of contemplative prayer, we need not sense or think any strict, precise thing to contemplate.[20] While such meditation does not *de facto* exclude the intellectual and the affective, we need to further instill awareness as to our own human condition and ask God to enrich that poverty, allowing God to operate as an agent of grace.[21] Merton makes particular mention of this raising of the affective and intellectual powers to God when he writes that we should be "transformed ... in love and faith." The perfected intellect brings about faith, and the affections filled with grace naturally beget love. The parched desert traveler thirsts for such a state. Here Merton exhibits a somewhat Franciscan spirit when he describes the contemplative life with familiar language: "... the freedom and peace of a wilderness experience, a return to the desert that is also a recovery of (inner) paradise."[22]

Much like Bonaventure, Merton doubtless acknowledges in full that humans prefer a worldly good to that which comes only from the fruits of contemplation.[23] Quoting the work of Blaise Pascal, he discusses how people frequently live in a constant state of distraction. We often move from one discontent moment to the next in order to avoid dwelling on our own misery, our utter poverty as it were.[24] With such an elucidated image in the forefront, Merton then makes a somewhat nuanced, and yet familiarly medieval, theological move by setting the indulgent life over against excessive removal from the world. He thus proposes a critique of overly ascetic circles:

> Detachment is not insensibility. Too many ascetics fail to become great saints precisely because their rules and ascetic practices have merely deadened their humanity instead of setting it free to develop richly, in all its capacities, under the influence of grace.[25]

[17] *Itin.*, prol., n. 4; c. 1, n. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8; 39-41, 45, 47, 49-51, 51, 52, respectively.

[18] Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent*, 10.

[19] Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1958), 15.

[20] In fact, Merton believes that all too often devout Christians focus on the physical and mental affects (phenomena) of contemplation (e.g. sensations such as mystical visions, miracles, etc.) so popularly connected with saints and their hagiographies and not enough on day-to-day simplicity and prayer that brings about union with God. See Thomas Merton, *What is Contemplation?* (Springfield: Templegate Publishers, 1950), 8, and *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Direction Books, 1961), 246-47. Another author draws a connection from Merton to Bonaventure's thoughts on what he terms 'unknowing,' see: Raymond Bailey, *Thomas Merton on Mysticism* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 80.

[21] Merton, *Thoughts*, 37.

[22] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 36.

[23] Merton, *The Ascent to Truth*, 21-29.

[24] Merton, *Ascent*.

[25] Merton, *Ascent*, 12.

Just as countless great minds of the past, Merton offers his advice on the value of the middle way. He relays to us, with not so subtle rhetoric, that the initial meditative stage involves a fragile permeation of God's graces into the human mind and affective life. All this so that the human person might avoid traps and pitfalls, which arise in a false impression of the divine call. That is not to say, however, that he encourages the repression or complete denial of our inner selves as an attempt to hear God's voice. Continuing along the lines of our metaphor then, Bonaventure and Merton agree that the desert-bound soul is in dire need of sanctifying grace to balance and uplift the powers of the poor wayfarer. For there are mirages and other illusory diversions present throughout the desert terrain of the mind and soul that threaten to lead the spirit astray from the true source of refreshing light and wisdom, as if away from a spiritual oasis.

The poverty-stricken human soul, once reformed by God's graces, may then begin to see the world and the things present therein for what they truly are through newfound glasses of discernment.[26] Grace enables us to see so as to shy away from both extremes of embracing the world in order to feel complete[27] and retreating from the world as if it were an intrinsic evil. Living submersed in humility while lapping up God's grace is the state in which Francis of Assisi, *il poverello*, praises God by means of "brother sun" and "sister moon," etc.[28] The encounter with God's beauty and grace embedded in outer creation leads one, says Bonaventure, to begin to find peace and solace in their Creator as the origin of all the perceivable joy:

[26] Merton, *The Ascent to Truth*, 27-29.

[27] Karl A. Plank, "Merton and the Ethical Edge of Contemplation," *Anglican Theological Review 84* (2002): 117.

[28] For textual insights regarding *The Canticle of Brother Sun* among Francis's other writings, see *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents: The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, William J. Short, and J. A. Wayne Hellmann (New York: New City Press, 1999), 113-14.

> Therefore, if delight is the union of two beings that are proportionate to each other, and if it is only in the likeness of God that one finds that which is by nature supremely beautiful, sweet and wholesome; and if that likeness is united in truth, and intimacy, and in a fullness that transcends our every need, it can be seen clearly that it is in God alone that the true fountain of delight is to be found. So it is that from all other delights we are led to seek this one delight.[29]

The Mirror

At the sight of God's trace in the desert oasis and the surrounding created order, Bonaventure's itinerant way directs the human spirit, still in search of paradise, to refresh itself in and gaze upon this reflecting pool of grace as a mirror and focus on the likeness of God in his most beloved creation: the soul itself.[30] Humanity's innermost beauty invokes God's nature. And thus Bonaventure implores the yearning mind enlightened by grace to meditative introspection:

> Therefore, enter into yourself and recognize that your mind loves itself most fervently. But it cannot love itself unless it remembered itself, for we do not grasp anything with our understanding if it is not present to us in our memory. From this eye you see, not with the eye of the flesh but with the eye of reason, that the soul possesses a threefold power. Now consider the operation of these powers and their relation to each other. Here you can see God through yourself as through an image. And this is to see through a mirror in an obscure manner.[31]

[29] *Itin.*, c. 2, n. 8, 71.

[30] Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. makes note in his *Introduction* in St. Bonaventure, *Itin.*, 29.

[31] *Itin*, c. 3, n. 1, 81.

Turning inward, the eye of reason begins to speculate the *imago Dei* marked on man's soul by the dynamic powers of grace.[32] Bonaventure, drawing on notions of stark presence in Augustine, holds that God in his intimate, loving nature imprints his relational attributes – memory, intelligence, and will – as he forms and shapes the human person.[33]

Bonaventure notes in the *Itinerarium* that in the original Garden of Paradise, humanity was fit and inclined to fully acknowledge the reflection of God's image in their soul as the mirror was not yet blemished by the detriment of sin.[34] Having since traced the intellect only to conceive in part a reflection of the eternal God, Bonaventure proposes that the human faculties must continue to be utterly immersed and perfected in an inner- and inter-relationality, which takes place between the divine mirror image within and the human person's fractional, impulsive self-image. This inmost relational exchange comes about even with only the most blurred sight of God's reflection and is driven by a desire for the sweet, holistic vision of the divine.[35] This appealing portrait of God seen at once in the human person's interior nature, creates a positive, dynamic tension, Bonaventure suggests, that stays the soul in its journey toward the perfect, paradisiacal relationship. In their deep-seeded, interior yearning for paradise, humans then seek to develop the theological virtues of hope, love, and faith garnered in contemplative prayer through Christ, the ultimate truth, who is the way of ascent to God.[36] That is to say that Christ is

[32] Stephen Fields, S.J., "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," *Theological Studies 57* (1996): 234. En route to his comparison of the two eminent theologians, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Rahner, Fields sets up a selection of Bonaventure's theology and makes careful note of the ways in which they draw on diverse aspects of his thought.

[33] C.J. Chereso, "Image of God", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, 322.

[34] Johnson, *The Soul in Ascent*, 11-12.

[35] *Itin.*, c. 4, n. 1, 97.

[36] *Itin.*, c. 4, ns. 2-3, 97-101. Bonaventure, like other Franciscan mendicants orbiting about the University axis of Paris and unlike their Dominican counterparts, believed that the theological virtues are the necessary condition of proper prayer, see: Timothy J. Johnson, "The

the ladder by which the sanctified soul begins ascent toward reflection on God as First Principle.[37]

Maintaining the path of Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*, let us again look to Merton on the question of the human person as the image of God and the ascent in Christ. In Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*, he discusses how persistent dependence on oneself is futile in spiritual matters: "... Self-hypnotism is the exact opposite of contemplation. We enter into possession of God when He invades all our faculties with His light and His infinite fire. We do not 'possess' Him until He takes full possession of us."[38]

Contemplative prayer for Merton is not the result of gathering and composing ourselves in order to come before God – spirituality is by no means a beauty pageant – but rather letting God gather and compose our self in a sanctified and unified vision. Naturally, Bonaventure concurs with such a notion in the *Itinerarium*.[39] Merton in many ways buttresses and builds upon Bonaventure's steps of the mind's illumination and the purgation of the soul elicited by his images of God's "light" and "His infinite fire." In this frame of mind, Merton speaks of submitting our will entirely to God in Christ in *Thoughts in Solitude*:

> [W]e have to have enough mastery of ourselves to renounce our own will into the hands of Christ – so that He may conquer what we cannot reach by our own efforts.
>
> In order to gain possession of ourselves, we have to have some confidence, some hope of victory. And in order to keep that hope alive we must usually have some taste of victory. We must know what victory is and like it better than defeat.[40]

Summa Alexandri vol. IV and the Development of the Franciscan Theology of Prayer," *Miscellanea Francescana 93* (1993): 524-37, esp. 531-35.

[37] *Itin.*, c. 4, n. 2, 97-99.

[38] Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Direction Books, 1961), 64.

[39] *Itin.*, c. 4, ns. 2-3, 97-101.

[40] Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, 18-19.

Merton's contemplative grounding in the image of Christ as aid seems to re-present the Bonaventurian way of entrusting Christ as a ladder providing ample lift for the soul toward God whereby we are vivified and purified to our most sacred nature in his graces. The memory, the intelligence, and the will all become sanctified in the faith in, the hope for, and love of the victory in God through Christ; thus, the powers of the human soul long to return and reflect Christ in paradise. Much like Bonaventure, Merton suggests that we see ourselves as a microcosmic mirror image of the divine through whom we become a seemingly unscathed reflection of the divine. Bonaventure appears, however, to beg for further spiritual development than that found within the mere infinitesimal truth of which we have received an impression.[41] It comes then as little surprise that chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the *Itinerarium* speak of the ascent beyond the self. Merton offers us, in kind, an idea that the reflection of a dynamic spirit in contemplation concerns a deep-seeded desire for the joy and peace that can only come from the origin of surpassing transcendence. In moving toward mature reflection, Merton writes:

> There is a stage in the spiritual life in which we find God in ourselves – this presence is a created effect of His love. It is a gift of His, to us. It remains in us. All the gifts of God are good. But if we rest in them, rather than in Him, they loose their goodness for us. So with this gift also.
>
> When the right time comes for us to go on to other things, God withdraws the sense of His presence, in order to strengthen our faith. After that it is useless to seek Him through the medium of any psychological effect. Useless to look for any sense of Him in our hearts. The time has come when we must go out of ourselves and above ourselves and find Him no longer within us but outside us and above us. This we do first by arid faith, by a hope that burns like hot coals under the ashes of our poverty. We seek Him also by humble charity, in service of our brothers. Then, when God wills, He raises us up to Himself in simplicity.[42]

We must, therefore, not dwell in excess on our own brilliance through Christ and in God; rather in Merton's reading of the spiritual ascent, we must allow God to move in us, to pass over that self-elation, and then to dwell in the God of eternal light. Here we will find paradise. Following up Merton's thoughts in the context of our mirror metaphor, as Christian contemplatives, we ought not to linger in prayer and mystical reflection on our own body and soul. If we indulge in God's reflection in the mirror of our soul, though cleansed anew, then in the spirit of present-day automotive rear-view mirrors: "Objects may be other than they appear." We may also fix our eyes on our "I" to such an extent that we block out the source of light. Our prayerful eye must not gawk at what is but a reflection. We must rather turn from the image found within towards God who, similar to the sun, is the source of all light, the font of all truth, beauty, and delight.

The Sun

> Accordingly, the mind has reached the end of the way of six contemplations. They are like six steps by which it arrives at peace as at the throne of the true Solomon, where the Man of Peace rests in the peaceful mind as in an inner Jerusalem. They are also like the six wings of the Cherubim, by which the mind of the true contemplative, over-flooded by the light of heavenly wisdom, is enabled to soar on high. They are like the first six days, during which the mind must be trained so that it may finally reach the Sabbath of rest.[43]

[41] *Itin.*, c. 5, n. 1, 115-17.

[42] Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, 47-48.

[43] *Itin.*, c. 7, n. 1, 133-35.

Still in search of paradise, the enjoyment of truth, the human spirit now seeks to stare directly and unceasingly into God, as if into the sun. Humanity's inmost, essential being cries out and above all longs to be "over-flooded by the light of heavenly wisdom."[44] Having since parted from God's impression on our souls en route to contemplating the Creator, Bonaventure now leads us along the metaphysical-spiritual path to God as the divine First Principle.[45] Like the sun, God is the source of life for all existence as he emits divine light. When writing his spiritual theology for penetrating God's divine light, Bonaventure keeps a close eye on the two towers of contemplation; the spiritual and intellectual. The Seraphic Doctor gives weight to contemplative prayer directed towards God as "being" and as the "end of all things," which provides a thorough philosophical grounding for his contemplation. He also believes that contuition of God's goodness as Trinity represents a necessary tension between the rational and the relational union with God who both exists and thrives as a supremely good God, i.e. he is and is good.[46]

By fusing the two worlds of contemplation, Bonaventure presents his enticing Franciscan view that one ought to see God to the fullest extent, that is intellectually and relationally, in order to immerse oneself in God's himself, in his blinding light. Bonaventure's plain-sight eruditeness comes forth as he jogs the readers mind[47] with classical metaphysics and Christian mysticism.[48] His underlying Franciscan tendency

[44] *Itin.*, c. 7, n. 1, 133-35.

[45] Ilia Delio, O.S.F. points out that the Medievals were highly accustomed to combining the spiritual journey and the metaphysical stemming from the Early Fathers for whom the two were inseparable, see: "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," *Theological Studies 60* (1999): 228-46, esp. 230-31.

[46] *Itin.*, c. 6, ns. 1-2, 123-25. By its very nature, Bonaventure's theology of the Trinity seems to exhibit that God desires relationship because he is relational, even within himself.

[47] Mind and soul are somewhat interchangeable and synonymous for Bonaventure, so the intellect and affections are likely intimately linked at this point in his contemplation.

[48] *Itin.*, c. 6, n. 2, 123-25.

is to extend the mind and the affections as much as possible while attempting to reach God.

Here Bonaventure simultaneously speaks of contemplating God as being and as goodness. With his affinity for angels and forging angelic imagery, he then takes the winged Cherubim face to face atop the tabernacle to represent God's existence and God's goodness.[49] Those who venture toward either of the two, existence through metaphysics and goodness through prayer, will come eventually to truth.[50] Those who nevertheless envelope themselves in both modes of contemplation will notice that the two come together and point indicatively to Christ as the supreme agent between God and humanity, i.e. the center of paradise.[51] Bonaventure's notion of Christ as mediator compels us then to reflect more deeply on the significance of Christ, leading ultimately to the most intent stare into God that is possible. Looking directly into the face of God, it is as if gazing straight into the sun, that is to say, the Son of God.[52] He then utilizes the theme of light to personify his view of God and encompasses this emphasis on the search for Christ in paradise in order to enrapture readers and draw them beyond the senses, beyond any meditation on the human person:

> Our mind has contemplated God ... above itself through the similitude of the divine light shining on us from above in as far as that is possible in our pilgrim state and by the exercise of our mind. Now finally when the mind has come to the sixth step, in the first and highest Principle and in the mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ, it finds mysteries which have no likeness among creatures and which surpass the penetrating power of the human intellect. When we have contemplated all these things, it remains for the

Itin., c. 5, n. 1, c. 6, n. 1; 111, 123, respectively.

Itin., c. 6, n. 3, 125-29.

Itin., c. 6, ns. 4-7, 129-31.

On Christ as the "allegorical sun" in Bonaventure's theology, see: ...n, *Soul in Ascent*, 82-83.

> mind to pass over and transcend not only the sensible world but the soul itself.[53]

Returning to Merton at the culmination of the contemplative journey, we discern the struggle within Bonaventure's call to exhaust the mind and affections in the divine light. In an insightful theological move, Merton states in *What is Contemplation?*:

> Contemplation is the light of God playing directly upon the soul. But every soul is weakened and blinded by the attachment to created things, which it tends to love inordinately by reason of original sin. Consequently, the light of God affects that soul the way the light of the sun affects a diseased eye. It causes pain. God's love is too pure. The soul, impure and diseased by its selfishness, is shocked and repelled by the very purity of God. It cannot understand the suffering caused by the light of God ... This is a crucial point in the life of prayer. It is very often here that souls, called by God to contemplation, are repelled by this 'hard saying,' turn back and 'walk no more with Him' (John vi, 61-67). God has illuminated their hearts with a ray of His light. But because they are blinded by its intensity it proves to be, for them, a ray of darkness. They rebel against that.... To them, this darkness and helplessness is foolishness. Christ has given them His Cross and it has proved to be a scandal....[54]

Merton seems to light the road ahead on our journey with Bonaventure to union with God, for he claims that as we stare intently into God, the possibility arises that we might experience pain and discomfort and retreat immediately to our own sinful, blind, and prostrate state and thereby return to selfish tendencies. In turning towards God, we are forced to remove the fixation from ourselves to something completely divine and "other" than us. We consequently experience

[53] *Itin.*, c. 7, n. 1, 133-35.

[54] Merton, *What is Contemplation?*, 41-45.

Christ as though he betrayed us and led us to a restless, disparate state full of self-denial and shame, and not to his peace and joy as he promised us.

To mature from the sensual and intellectual vision of God to Bonaventure's mystical union with God we depart from the senses and the intellect[55] as they are blinded by our gaze fixed on the source of all light, the sun. This is not, however, a loathed blindness but rather an ecstatic blindness in which we are not returned to the state of original sin but we, in our willing immersion in God, are rather overcome with an excess of delight. In order that we might achieve union with God, therefore, we must now, as Bonaventure admonishes, use our mystical senses, which flow only from the gifts of grace acquired in enmeshment with God. They lead us towards Christ, the tree of life,[56] in whose loving shadow we are meant to live in the middle of paradise:

> In this matter of mystical visions, my friend, being strengthened for your journey, leave behind the world of the senses and of intellectual operations, all visible and all invisible things, and everything that exists or does not exist and being unaware even of yourself, allow yourself to be drawn back into unity with that One who is above all essence and knowledge in as far as that is possible. Thus, leaving all things and freed from all things, in a total and absolute ecstasy of a pure mind, transcending your self in all things, you shall rise up to the super-essential radiance of the divine darkness.[57]

[55] See Rahner's interpretation of Bonaventure employed here in the capacity of spiritual senses: Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner," 235-37.

[56] *Itin.*, prol, n. 3, 37-39. Christ and his Cross are the redeeming 'tree of life' for us just as Adam fell in original sin to the 'tree of death.' His Cross nourishes us and fosters the union to God as God's chief avenue of grace.

[57] *Itin.*, c. 7, n. 5, 137-39.

Conclusion

The imagery elicited by Christian authors through the ages helps to create an interior space for imagination and affords us a chance to embrace the freshness of this undervalued dimension of spiritual life. Fueled by personal encounter with the divine in the practice of contemplative Christian prayer, Merton and Bonaventure sought, in the foregoing texts and throughout their writings, to portray their discoveries to their fellow brother and sister with uncommon force. The itinerary begins with humanity as the poor person who is helpless in the desert, cries out to God, and in so doing is led toward God, the genuine oasis. Once at the oasis, the parched wanderer notices the glory of surrounding nature with joy but also recognizes it as a signifier and refreshes him or herself in the reflecting pool of God's traces within and without. While elated at the sight of God within but desiring an experience with God as he truly is, the human soul looks up fixedly toward God, who is the sun – the source of enlightenment, grace, and love.

The current reading of the *Itinerarium* reaches its fruition thanks to Merton's additions, be they particularly poetic or merely prosaic, to Bonaventure's thoughts. They provide a well rounded synthetic tapestry that occasions the retrieval of an innovative, medieval prayer for today from texts that may be problematic for contemporary readers. On a practical note, should we wish to read Bonaventure alone and omit the comments of Thomas Merton, the loss would not necessarily be tragic. Merton was not a Bonaventure scholar. He did, however, teach at Saint Bonaventure University and desire for a period of time to join a Franciscan community, from which he was eventually turned away. It does appear though that while Merton did not literally take the Franciscan habit he did in genial ways wear his spirit on his sleeve, and the Franciscan elements of that spirit are undeniable.

While a study of this nature looks first to illuminate a brief assortment of ideas on which our authors both touch, it in turn also echoes the still, small voice of the divine spirit to

our postmodern experience and calls us to task that we too might find ourselves on a pilgrimage within, on our journey through the desert. The resonance and constant presence of that echo at times constitutes a powerful critique, recognizable to the thoughtful and reflective person. The evident need of this critique is timeless, though it is especially relevant to our age, whose dreams are filled with total expediency and control instead of wisdom or obedience – an age which sings the praises of convenience and comfort rather than listening to the spirit's desperate cry. The busyness of our times have rightly taken on the term "rat race," for we proceed at an unruly, disorienting pace, measuring our moments by the number of coins that fill them. As a result, the boundaries in which we once lived are being ever pushed to the extremes. But what have we achieved in such an achievement? Could we be barking up the wrong tree? Could perhaps our energies be better spent elsewhere?

These questions lie at the very heart of the struggle that Merton and Bonaventure underline with remarkable grace. The rich images of which they make use highlight the voyage of Christian interior life with striking beauty and nudge us toward the horizon of thought and prayer. Through Merton's exacting contemplative lens, Bonaventure continues to dialogue with the world that he left over 700 years ago. The spiritual journey of both authors is a beacon of hope, whose light shines forth for the church and indeed for the world to see. For Bonaventure and Merton, human nature entails a significance which goes well beyond the jargon that advertisers shove down our throats. Their lives and stories are a testament that within the inner-presence of the human person lies an abiding wish for return to original community with God, a desire to undergo a pilgrimage of the heart and mind, a re-entry into paradise.

THE TREES OF SAN DAMIANO

Clare hears of the death of Francis

The same olive trees still grow
below the city gate on the hill
that slopes to San Damiano.

Older, their gnarled
fingers twist
upward to the sun, like
my heart
reaching again for that
sunlit tryst:

you and Philip, me and
my friend,
Bona, beneath silvered
leaves that
trembled after the hot
sirocco's end.

I look at the city gate that was closed
to us and what we talked of, beyond
their vision, those who had supposed

us outside what monastics would allow,
though we were in the poor God's Body
nailed to the tree that supports me now.

Murray Bodo, O.F.M.

THOMAS MERTON'S FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Timothy J. Shaffer

Introduction

The impact of the Franciscan tradition upon the life of Thomas Merton cannot be overlooked simply because his experience at St. Bonaventure College was brief in his pre-monastic years after graduating from Columbia. Many see this period of Merton's life, when he was more fully entering into his Catholic faith, as simply a small-town stop on his way to the spiritual "big city" which was Gethsemani. This Franciscan tile in the Merton mosaic can be easily misidentified or overlooked because it is not an aspect of Merton's life many think about. Lawrence Cunningham writes that, "It is curious, we might note in passing, how few commentators on Merton have noticed the influence of Bonaventure, whose writings Merton read when teaching with the Franciscans in upstate New York before he entered the monastery."[1] Along with Bonaventure, the Franciscan influence also includes Duns Scotus and Francis himself. With Bonaventure and Scotus representing the Franciscan intellectual tradition in Merton's life, Francis is for Merton the embodiment of what it means to be a Christian and he identified himself as being a "secret son of St. Francis" and

[1] Lawrence S. Cunningham, *Thomas Merton and the Monastic Vision*, brary of Religious Biography (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans ublishing Company, 1999), 206.

seeing him as the saint he most admired in the whole of the Church.[2]

The intention of this brief article is to illuminate the Franciscan influence upon Merton, which for the most part, has been overlooked, ignored, or unnoticed. It will first explore the ways in which the early life of Merton at Robert Lax's cottage in Olean, New York, and his time teaching and living at St. Bonaventure College were formative experiences for him as he was growing into a faith which would continue to mature and flourish later in life within the walls of the monastery at Gethsemani. Second, the later development of this exposure to the Franciscan tradition is lived out and articulated through Merton's own experience as a Trappist living as a hermit who engaged the world and had a unique understanding of the "evangelical life." He admired this life lived out by Franciscans both in the time of Francis and the early followers up through the time of his own life. The majority of this brief article will deal with this later aspect of Merton's life in the 1960s in contrast to the early developmental stages in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Concluding this essay will be an assessment of how Merton did in fact live out his Trappist vocation through a Franciscan lens as a person longing to be an involved member of the human race and the whole of creation. While Merton was himself not a Franciscan (although he did join the Third Order while at St. Bonaventure), his understanding and commitment to the Franciscan evangelical life challenges Franciscans and others to consider how they are living out a more contemplative experience of the tradition, while remaining actively involved in the life of the Church and the world around them.

Formation: Merton's Early Franciscan Life

Without going into great detail about the early life of Merton (there is a wonderful introduction to Merton reviewed

[2] Thomas Merton, *The Road to Joy: The Letters of Thomas Merton to New and Old Friends*, selected and edited by Robert E. Daggy (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989), 298.

elsewhere in this current publication), it is imperative to note that Merton sought many traditions in order to articulate deep truths within himself. While at Columbia Merton was introduced to medieval theology and philosophy via Dan Walsh and then later various Franciscans at St. Bonaventure would further explore with Merton the great medieval minds, especially Bonaventure and Scotus. His interest went beyond simply reading theological writings and more appropriately gave him a sense of direction during a period of his life when the various possibilities either became less interesting or impossible for him to continue pursuing.

Throughout his journals from this period (of which most have been published in *Run to the Mountain* and *The Secular Journal*), one is able to catch a glimpse at the real Merton, the one who scribbled and would journal about his daily life in contrast to the Merton who would later publish *The Seven Storey Mountain*. What is crucial to identifying the Franciscan aspect of Merton's early life is that while most of the journals from this period are recorded in the published collections of the time, there are a handful of entries which are only found in the Thomas Merton Collection at St. Bonaventure University.[3] In the "Fitzgerald File" one is able to see the English professor at St. Bonaventure College writing about Bonaventure and the broader Franciscan movement often in relation to Dante. The strongest examples for this early Merton-Franciscan connection remained unpublished and thus inaccessible to most who would want to further explore this influence in the writing and thought of one of the most prolific spiritual writers of the twentieth century. Furthermore, during this period with entries bearing such titles as "Dante and St. Bonaventura" and "Itinerarium – The Ascent of St. B and that of Dante," Merton was reading both Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and Scotus's *De primo principio*

[3] Thomas Merton, "Fitzgerald Notebook, 1939 (?)," AD, AMs, and TMs (photocopy), The Thomas Merton Collection, Friedsam Memorial Library, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

with Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., a great medievalist at the Franciscan Institute.[4]

In a journal entry dated January 21, 1941, Merton writes about Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*.[5] The second chapter, which Merton is writing about, is about seeing God in creation. The outside world enters into the soul through the five senses. Merton was not simply reading Bonaventure leisurely; rather he was reading the *Itinerarium* as a means to articulate technical theological points that had a clearly identified purpose and influence on his life. He employed Bonaventure's steps in his own journey.

Merton picked up again with the second chapter of the *Itinerarium* and quoted Bonaventure verbatim where he wrote about God the "Father" as fountain-source and object of the impression which is on all of creation as experienced in the world.[6] This is important because Merton identifies in Bonaventure's writing the central theme of God's outpouring love into the created world.

In the final pages of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton wrote as one who had found his place in the world, within the enclosure of the monastery. Yet, in the midst of Merton's praise for life as a monk, hidden away in his "four walls of ... new freedom,"[7] he turned again to Bonaventure as a guide in his spiritual life. The importance of this reference to the *Itinerarium* cannot be overlooked. Merton writes:

> Look in Saint Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and you will find one of the best descriptions ever written of this highest of vocations. It is a description which the Seraphic Doctor himself learned on retreat and in solitude on Mount Alvernia. Prayer in the same lonely spot where the great founder of his Order, Saint Francis of Assisi, had had the wounds of Christ burned into his hands and feet and side, Saint Bonaventure saw, by the light of a supernatural intuition, the full meaning of this tremendous event in the history of the Church. "There," he says, "Saint Francis 'passed over into God' (*in Deum transiit*) in the ecstasy (*excessus*) of contemplation and thus he was set up as an example of perfect contemplation just as he had previously been an example of perfection in the active life in order that God, through him, might draw, all truly spiritual men to this kind of "passing over" (*transitus*) and ecstasy, *less by word than by example.*"
>
> ... And notice the tremendously significant fact that St. Bonaventure makes no divisions and distinctions: Christ imprinted His own image upon Saint Francis in order to draw not some men, not a few privileged monks, but *all* truly spiritual men to the perfection of contemplation which is nothing else but the perfection of love. Once they have reached these heights they will draw others to them in their turn. So any man may be called at least *de jure*, if not *de facto*, to become fused into one spirit with Christ in the furnace of contemplation and then go forth and cast upon the earth that same fire which Christ wills to see enkindled.[8]

There are many examples of when Merton looked to Francis and his lesser brothers and saw examples for his own life. Other times Merton invoked Francis in prayer that "Holy Father Francis" might be a mediator for him to God so that he might be able to abandon the world though remain in the midst of it.[9] He saw the Franciscan life as a model for his own life, both as a layperson but then also after he entered the monastery and embraced the monastic life as a Trappist.

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[4] Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), 337.

[5] Merton, *Run to the Mountain: The Story of a Vocation*, Vol. 1, Edited by Patrick Hart, O.C.S.O. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 297-98.

[6] Merton, *Run to the Mountain*, 307.

[7] Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, 372.

[8] Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, 418.

[9] Merton, *Run to the Mountain*, 406.

The Franciscan roots Merton established at St. Bonaventure College by reading the Franciscan intellectual tradition and relating to Francis would remain, though perceivably dormant, as he embraced the monastic tradition and Thomism as the appropriate languages to speak theologically.

Franciscan Eremiticism and a Hermit Monk

As we move from the early period in Merton's life when he was at St. Bonaventure College to the last years of his life as a hermit at Gethsemani, there is a recognition that the time and space needed to address this aspect of Merton's life as it relates to this theme of Franciscan influence are not met fully. Nevertheless, there is a hope that a solid presentation of the material with explanation will indeed be captured in these remaining pages.

In 1966, Thomas Merton published a brief article in *The Cord* entitled, "Franciscan Eremiticism." In this brief essay (little more than eight typed pages as it would appear in *Contemplation in a World of Action*), Merton focused on a very important but often overlooked theme in the life of Francis and, more broadly, within the Franciscan tradition: the eremitical life.

This essay is important for two reasons: one is for the Franciscans and the other is for Merton. First, generations of Franciscans did not know about the eremitical component of the Franciscan way of life and it was during the period immediately after Vatican II that they began to seriously look at the life of the earliest Franciscans and how they expressed their commitment to living out the evangelical life while allowing periods of solitude in their own lives to reinvigorate them as they went out as itinerant preachers.[10] Merton was,

[10] Margaret Carney, preface to *Franciscan Solitude*, ed. André Cirino, O.F.M and Josef Raischl (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1995), xii. For an example of contemporary Franciscans seeking to reintroduce the eremitical component on the early Franciscan life into practice see William Short, O.F.M., "Recovering Lost Traditions in Spirituality: Franciscans, Camaldolese, and the Hermitage," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 209-18.

in this case (as with many other issues and topics), ahead of others and thus provided a source to the Franciscans.

Merton's contribution to the Franciscan rediscovery of the eremitical component of their life in this "foundational essay" has encouraged Franciscans today to engage more seriously the contemplative aspects of their life.[11] The Franciscan response to "Franciscan Eremiticism" is not limited to the recent past. Only a few months after publication, Dismas Sexton, a Franciscan novice, wrote to Merton noting that the Franciscans were exploring the possibility of "more hermitage-like living" which would not be completely eremitical living nor would it be simply "just another retreat house."[12] In less than four months Sexton again wrote to Merton expressing the eremitical movements within his own life as a Franciscan living within a community as a hermit in the "Projects" of "Black Chicago" based on the early Franciscan model of eremitical life as outlined by Merton.[13] Merton later responded to Sexton noting that his type of hermit life in the city belonged to "the tradition of the wandering hermit – hence more specifically Franciscan."[14] Merton went on to make reference to Brother Giles of Assisi and Blessed Ramon Llull, a Franciscan hermit of the Balearic Islands, as sources for Sexton to study in order to more fully understand his own tradition. Merton's understanding of the Franciscan eremitical tradition clearly went beyond a superficial reading of the material in order to write "Franciscan Eremiticism," and helped him shape his own spirituality.

[11] Short, "Rediscovering Lost Traditions in Spirituality: Franciscans, Camaldolese, and the Hermitage," 215. Here, Short uses the example of Mt. Irenaeus, a contemplative Franciscan community near St. Bonaventure University, to show the influence Merton had not only upon those within cenobitic communities in regards to eremiticism but also the mendicant Franciscans in their desire to more fully embrace the evangelical life they were given by Francis.

[12] Dismas Sexton, O.F.M., to Thomas Merton, 26 May, 1967, TL, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Ky.

[13] Dismas Sexton, O.F.M., to Thomas Merton, 15 September, 1967, TL, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Ky.

[14] Thomas Merton, to Dismas Sexton, O.F.M., 7 October, 1967, TL, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, Ky.

Second, the importance of this essay for Merton is imperative to note. As Merton sought to articulate his life as a hermit and recognize his place within the broader context of humanity and creation, it is easy to see how Francis's continued presence in his life manifested itself in this article. The implications of this essay in Merton's life are dramatic if one looks at the content of the brief pages, explaining how the eremitical aspect of the Franciscan life was for Francis "intimately related to his conception of a poor and wandering life."[15] Sean Edward Kinsella writes "There is both a tension and a complimentarity between Thomas Merton's yearning for the solitary life and his simultaneous desire to be immersed in the world."[16] Kinsella notes that Merton shared many of the same concerns as Francis (i.e., the desire for solitude while remaining actively involved with the life of the Church outside of the institutional framework of religious life), and this suggests a Franciscan influence.[17] Kinsella recognizes the Franciscan component of Merton's eremitical spirituality with a retrieval of early monastic life that saw the expression of that life leading monks out into the world to preach. Merton desired to more adequately understand both his life as a hermit and as a member of the human race, and drew heavily from Francis and his expression of life.

The content of Merton's essay demonstrates not only his interest in the Franciscan expression of the eremitical life, but the ways in which it was applicable to his vocation as a Cistercian monk. What distinguishes Franciscan eremiticism from monastic expressions of the hermit life is the reality that for a Franciscan the solitary experience of the (temporary) hermit in the "midst of nature and close to God" is related to the concepts of "poverty, prayer and the apostolate."[18] As eremiticism within the monastic setting was experiencing a

[15] Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 260.

[16] Sean Edward Kinsella, "'Where the Grey Meets the Green Air': The Hermit as Pilgrim in the Franciscan Spirituality of Thomas Merton," *Franciscan Studies* 55 (1998): 311.

[17] Kinsella, *Franciscan Studies* 55, 311.

[18] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 260.

revival, Merton thought it would be interesting to consider the historical context in which Franciscan hermits lived. Merton rightly connected the itinerancy of the mendicant Franciscans with the "pre-Franciscan movement of itinerant and preaching hermits in the tenth to twelfth centuries."[19]

The eremitical experience prior to the Franciscans was based on the notion that such a life was "considered higher because [it was] more perfectly and unequivocally 'monastic' and world-denying."[20] During this period, in addition to monks seeking more reclusive lives, many laypersons and secular clerics also embraced such a lifestyle though they did not first move through the prescribed monastic formation. This movement of both the laity and secular clerics into hermitages caused a dramatic shift in the role of the hermitage. These new hermits engaged the world in a "new and special way" because parish churches lacked the presence of preaching while the monks remained a self-contained community and did not reach out beyond their own cloisters.[21] The new hermits became the ones who embraced itinerant lives preaching to the poor in a language understandable to them. Peter the Hermit, an itinerant preacher during the time of the First Crusade, is an example of such an individual.[22] While there was great energy around this movement, by the thirteenth century the movement was reabsorbed back into cenobitic monasticism.[23]

The glorification of the monastic life, the "angelic perspective," was shattered by the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century.[24] For Francis, the world was not evil and the world was not unlike and distant from God, "because the world had been created by a God who was loving and good and, therefore, his presence was to be felt and experienced in the world and was not excluded from it."[25]

[19] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 260.

[20] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 261.

[21] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 261.

[22] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 262.

[23] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 262.

[24] Kinsella, "'Where the Grey Meets the Green Air': The Hermit as Pilgrim in the Franciscan Spirituality of Thomas Merton," 312.

[25] Kinsella, *Franciscan Studies* 55, 312.

While Merton saw the eremitical movement diminished within the monastic orders, Francis was "in the direct line of the earlier hermit tradition."[26] From early on for the Franciscans, the hermitage was a place in which the friars sought solitude in order to go out and preach the Gospel. Francis followed the earlier itinerant hermit tradition which was "completely open to the world of the poor and the outcast."[27] The hermit met with thieves and robbers and he was not to place himself above them or separate himself from them but must show himself to be their brother.

Francis's "Rule for the Hermitage" was more of a framework or guideline for those seeking to have a "practical guide" for life in a hermitage in contrast to a "Rule" in a strict or legal sense for the friars.[28] Merton recognized in the "Rule" given by Francis the spirit of simplicity and charity which "pervades even the life of solitary contemplation."[29] Francis was able to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory expressions of the Franciscan eremitical life: solitary prayer and fraternal love.[30] The Franciscan hermitage was one of "solitude ... surrounded by fraternal care and is therefore solidly established in the life of the Order and of the Church."[31] The solitary Franciscans are dependant upon one another in very practical ways to be able to enter into a contemplative state of existence.

While Merton outlined this component of the Franciscan eremitical tradition as found in the "Rule for Hermitages," this aspect of the Franciscan understanding of solitude is what was attractive to Merton. Merton wrote that Franciscan eremiticism had another aspect: "it was open to the world and oriented to the apostolic life."[32] Merton mentioned the role of Mount Alverna [sic] in Francis's own life and his founding of "at least twenty mountain hermitages."[33] The presence and

[26] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 262.
[27] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 263.
[28] Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., "A 'Rule for Hermitages,'" in *Franciscan Solitude*, 195.
[29] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 263.
[30] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 263.
[31] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 263.
[32] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 264.
[33] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 264.

impact of the eremitical and contemplative aspects of the Franciscan charism are vital in understanding how Francis and his followers engaged the world outside the hermitage. The purpose of the eremitical experience for Franciscans was always to renew oneself in order to return to ministering to the people of God as itinerant preachers.

Merton concluded the short essay with two suggestions, stating that the Franciscan life had always included the eremitical spirit which was *not* necessarily the spirit of monasticism or of "total, definitive separation from the world."[34] Second, the eremitism of Francis and his followers was initially and continues to be "deeply evangelical and remains open to the world, while recognizing the need to maintain a certain distance and perspective, a freedom that keeps one from being submerged in active cares and devoured by the claims of exhausting work."[35] These two points made by Merton are more than his assessment of the Franciscan eremitical tradition which, for the most part, had been absent from the evangelical life of the friars. Rather, this article published in December 1966 expressed his own eremitic life as he more fully embraced his place within the world as a marginal person who spoke out about issues of grave importance from his hermitage which separated him from a world not intrinsically evil but one that was embracing the illusion of the false self rather than the true self. Just as the Franciscan vocation is an evangelical life, a life of prayer and contemplation as well as action, Merton's later life reflected this eremitical expression more authentically than his own Trappist identity. From the very beginning, the Franciscans had the challenge of achieving not just a balance, but rather an integration or synthesis of these two elements, contemplation and action.[36] Fittingly, the title of the work in which Merton's "Franciscan Eremiticism" later appeared bears these words. If one is convinced that Merton was indeed influenced by Francis and those who

[34] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 267.
[35] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 267.
[36] Brady, "A 'Rule for Hermitages,'" in *Franciscan Solitude*, 205.

followed in his footsteps, then this essay on early Franciscan life within the hermitage speaks not only about medieval friars, but also about himself, a monk seeking to more fully articulate how he understood his life within the broader context of the world, a part of it rather than apart from it. Concluding "Franciscan Eremiticism," Merton wrote:

> Today more than ever we need to recognize that the gift of solitude is not ordered to the acquisition of strange contemplative powers, but first of all to the recovery of one's deep self, and to the renewal of authenticity which is twisted out of shape by the pretentious routines of a disordered togetherness. What the world asks of the priest today is that he should be first of all a *person* who can give himself because he has a self to give. And indeed, we cannot give Christ if we have not found him, and we cannot find him if we cannot find ourselves.
>
> These considerations might be useful to those whose imaginations and hopes are still able to be stirred by the thought of solitude, and of its important place in every form of the religious and apostolic life, in every age, especially our own.[37]

The importance of this essay cannot be overstated because it allowed Merton to articulate his eremitical life in a way that resonated within the Christian tradition, albeit Franciscan rather than Trappist. Merton looked at his life as a Christian through a Franciscan lens.

In the final part of *Contemplation in a World of Action*, Merton was speaking about the role of the contemplative life in the modern world. In a section entitled "What is Monastic?" Merton took as his starting point a quote from a Franciscan sister who wrote, "I think that what I am objecting most to is the monasticism that has been imposed upon us and has become part of our structure."[38] Responding to this statement

[37] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 267-68.
[38] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 355.

from a "Franciscan milieu," Merton noted that this imposition of monastic structure is seen by those within active orders and the laity to be something restraining. Here, Merton tried to clarify what he meant when speaking about monasticism and, by implication, the contemplative life. After speaking for a period about what monasticism was, Merton mentioned the Franciscans. To quote Merton directly:

> The Franciscan way came into the Middle Ages as a salutary revolt against the highly institutionalized monastic system. St. Francis made possible once again an open-ended kind of existence in which there wasn't very much predetermined for you. You were pretty free to do this or that or anything. You could be a pilgrim, you could be a hermit, and you could be a pilgrim for a while and a hermit for a while and then a scholar for a while. Then you could go to the Muslims in North Africa and get yourself martyred if you had the grace! And so forth.
>
> The Franciscan ideal could really be regarded as a return to the authentic freedom of early monasticism. I would venture as a kind of personal guess at this point that actually the ideal of St. Francis was more purely *monastic* in the true original primitive sense than the life lived by the big Benedictine and Cistercian communities of the thirteenth century where everything was so highly organized behind walls.[39]

Merton saw the return to the more primitive expressions of monasticism through this Franciscan lens. In a journal entry from July 27, 1966, writing in reference to Francis the "world-lover," Merton stated, "There is no question I too am really a world-lover after all: but what kind?"[40] Asking this question, the month after submitting "Franciscan Eremiticism" to *The Cord*, shows his struggle with articulating

[39] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 358.
[40] Merton, *Learning to Love: Exploring Solitude and Freedom*, Vol. 6, ed. Christine M. Bochen (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 103.

his place in the world, recognizing that indeed there is an important space for a hermit to engage others, yet his questioning and uncertainty around this question remained. The hermit is "hidden in Jesus Christ [and] he is therefore most intimately present to all the rest of the Church."[41] Even when not physically visible to the wider Church, the life of the hermit still plays a fundamental role in the Church as a pilgrim people seeking to follow Jesus Christ. The actively engaged life, the evangelical life, had a strong influence on Merton exemplified not only through his "quasi-apostolate" of writing in the general sense but specifically in his writing about Francis and the early Franciscans.[42]

In what Kinsella calls "profoundly Franciscan," Merton's writing during this period shows how the solitary is not alone because of the presence of God's grace, and by depending on God's grace and becoming abandoned to God's love, one realizes his or her inner poverty, "a poverty which is emptiness, nakedness, and minority."[43] Merton saw the place of the hermit as being beyond the monastic life and in the world, as exemplified by an individual such as Francis. The role of the hermit is not to hide from the world, but instead is called to be a bridge between the quiet solitude of the hermitage and the dynamic apostolate in the midst of the world.[44] The life of the hermit is directed toward other people through compassionate social awareness while also becoming more aware of one's own life and has accepted the rootlessness of such a life.[45] Solitude is "the very ground of ordinary life."[46]

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[41] Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, 258.

[42] Chalmers MacCormick, "A Critical View of Solitude in Merton's Life and Thought," in *The Message of Thomas Merton*, ed. Brother Patrick Hart (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 123.

[43] Kinsella, "'Where the Grey Meets the Green Air': The Hermit as Pilgrim in the Franciscan Spirituality of Thomas Merton", 314.

[44] Kinsella, *Franciscan Studies* 55, 316.

[45] Kinsella, *Franciscan Studies* 55, 318.

[46] Thomas Merton, "preface to the Japanese Edition of *Thoughts in Solitude*," in *Introductions East and West: The Foreign Prefaces of Thomas Merton*, ed. Robert E. Daggy, with a foreword by Harry James Cargas (Greensboro, N.C.: Unicorn Press, 1981), 97.

While this ground of life is in all persons, the hermit is open to learning how to accept this solitude as his or her ground of being. To most people, the notion of solitude as the ground of one's being "is unthinkable and unknown."[47] In a letter dated April 14, 1968, Merton wrote:

> The principle behind my answer is this: it is misleading to talk so much of the *contemplative* life in a way that obscures the face that what we need to renew is not so much the 'contemplative' and enclosed and abstract dimension of our life, as the *prophetic and eschatological* witness out of silence, poverty, etc. Merely to put up walls and grates and to live in formal poverty behind them does not give such witness. The reality of silence and solitude are of course essential. But it should be in a kind of dialectic which charity and help to your neighbors is there. In other words, the help you give should clearly proceed from a love that is nourished by silence and prayer; it should manifest a compassion that is rooted in an intimate awareness of the sufferings of Christ. The fact that you will see Him suffering concretely in the poor there ought to help your contemplative prayer to be deeper and more real. I don't know what else St. Clare or St. Francis could tell you! The original spirit of Franciscan eremiticism was certainly in a context of occasional going out among the poor, being definitely *of* the poor, and not just a symbol of established religion and a life of devotion supported by the rich.[48]

For Merton, the Franciscan expression of solitude provided a language in which he could articulate his increasing desire to speak out on behalf of and about the members of humanity who had been or were being marginalized by war, racism, or

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[47] Merton, *Introductions East and West*, 97.

[48] Thomas Merton, *The School of Charity: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Renewal and Spiritual Direction*, ed. Brother Patrick Hart (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990), 377.

any other injustice which he saw as deeply spiritual issues needing to be addressed. While others more actively engaged the world as members of the Church, Merton remained within the monastic enclosure, and more specifically, removed even from the monastery in the hermitage. Yet, while he maintained a distance from the forefront of action where there was always encouragement for him to leave the monastery in order to more fully participate in the social spectrum as Christians emerged from an individualistic sense of faith, Merton was fully engaged as a member of humanity because he sought to embrace the ground of his own being in order to relate to others, especially those unaware of the inner self which was the ground of their being. Shaped by such an understanding of the eremitical tradition, Merton's writings on justice and peace, among other topics, came out of this experience of what it meant to be an authentic hermit. Additionally, it is through this understanding of solitude as the ground of one's being that allowed Merton to embrace other religious traditions in a way that saw the sources common to them, while recognizing the distinctions that separate religious expressions from one another.

Merton's relationship with Thich Nhat Hanh, an exiled Vietnamese Buddhist monk, for whom he wrote "Nhat Hanh Is My Brother," is an example of how Merton sought to understand more fully the ground of being inside every person. Merton and Nhat Hanh were like brothers, even more so than those closer because of race or nationality, because, as Merton wrote, "he and I see things exactly the same way."[49] Merton went on to write that both he and Nhat Hanh were monks who had lived similar lives and that it was "vitally important that such bonds be admitted."[50] That which connected these two with one another was their mutual understanding and respect of religious traditions that sought to express the deep inner truths of contemplation,

[49] Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 106.

[50] Merton, *Faith and Violence,* 108.

but recognized the ways in which that impacted the way one lived in the world. In his work on Merton and Nhat Hanh as examples of "engaged spirituality," Robert H. King writes, "In noting the almost mythic status that Merton and Nhat Hanh have achieved in the eyes of many throughout the world, we should not fail to recognize their ordinary humanity."[51] Their meeting at Gethsemani on May 28, 1966, occurred roughly at the same time Merton would have been writing his essay "Franciscan Eremiticism." Lawrence Cunningham notes that "Nhat Hanh's worldview had something almost Franciscan about it. It was for that reason, among others, that Merton gave a series of Sunday afternoon talks to the monks on the poetry of this gentle Buddhist monk."[52] It would not seem outlandish to think that a Buddhist monk helped Merton clarify even more so the role of the Franciscan charism in his own life as he sought to more fully be human and more fully enter into the discourse about the world at the time.

Concluding his essay on Merton, Kinsella writes that "the themes of hiddenness and compassion – of homelessness, of solitude, poverty, nakedness, and minority – these are themes to which Merton returned repeatedly throughout his writings."[53] His delight in the writings and examples of the Desert Fathers to Zen masters "is a fundamentally profound appreciation of Francis' own appreciation of the foundational meaning of the monastic experience: the true solitary existing in prophetic dialogue with the entire world."[54]

Merton saw his own vocation as one that opened up to the world, a posture that allowed the prophetic voice to speak from inner silence. He followed "the dark path of contemplation, which even most monks would tend to eschew, and it opened up for him a depth of love he did not know existed, which he came to call 'the hidden ground of love.'"[55] It was this

[51] Robert H. King, *Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh: Engaged Spirituality in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 182.

[52] Cunningham, *Thomas Merton and the Monastic Vision*, 150.

[53] Kinsella, "'Where the Grey Meets the Green Air': The Hermit as Pilgrim in the Franciscan Spirituality of Thomas Merton," 322.

[54] Kinsella, *Franciscan Studies* 55, 322.

[55] King, *Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh*, 185.

understanding of a foundational ground of love for Merton that connected all peoples and things together, creating a fabric of life. Echoing Francis's commitment to seeing the world in a familial way, Merton challenged himself and his readership to consider the radical call of living such a way, searching for the true self and in that journey within one's own life recognizing the ways all peoples are connected and truly are one with each other.

A Franciscan Merton?

Merton not only found the Franciscan tradition to be an early vocational attraction shortly after his baptism, but one that would continue and would subsequently shape his understanding of who he was as a monk, and as a hermit. It is clear from his later writings, and the centrality of his essay "Franciscan Eremitism," that Merton embodied in his own life this evangelical life as exemplified in the person of Francis. By looking to a particular moment in the life of the Church in its expression of the eremitical life by the Franciscans, Merton continued to shape that which had been with him since early on in his spiritual journey. Merton did not only admire Francis as a spiritual father but also looked to the lives of his early followers for guidance. He applied their passion to follow simply the life of Jesus Christ in his own life as he tried to synthesize his commitment to life as a hermit, but one with a prophetic voice. Merton saw the wholeness of life which Francis lived and tried to emulate this within his own context, in a way staying true to his vocation as a Cistercian and Trappist monk while pursing the evangelical life.

It should be noted that this article has focused on one particular article written by Merton and has (sadly) not addressed the full depth to which Merton wrote, thought, and lived with a Franciscan tint because of the limitations of space. To note in passing, the *way* Merton lived as a hermit reflected greatly the Franciscan tradition by experiencing incarnational love through many different manifestations of life, e.g., the birds that would sing to him and the deer that

showed him its "deerness" or "spirit" (echoing Scotus's notion of *haecceitas)* which subsequently taught him more about himself as a human. Merton truly saw himself as a part of creation, a part of something much greater than himself.[56]

While Merton was shaped by many schools of thought throughout his life, it is apparent that in the last years of his life he sought examples of a life similar to his own but outside of the Cistercian tradition. The Franciscan lens provided a way to see the world. To call Merton a Franciscan is neither fair to the many strands that weave to form the fabric of Merton nor would it be accurate to give him such a title. In many ways, the Franciscans and Merton both sought to break out of categories and wanted to simply live a life committed to following Jesus Christ and participate in bringing about the reign of God more than bearing titles.

Returning to the comment by Cunningham when he noted that few have commented on the influence of Bonaventure on Merton, it is important to note that the ways in which Franciscanism shaped Merton were very subtle. The article "Franciscan Eremiticism" allows one to concretely identify an aspect of Merton's thinking in the midst of his struggle to live as a hermit in a broken world crying out because of war and violence. So, is there a Franciscan Merton? No, this is inaccurate. Is there a Merton gazing through a Francisca lens? This seems much more likely and as demonstrated throughout this article, there was a deep rootedness in Merton's own life in the Franciscan tradition. Right up until his untimely death in 1968, Merton wrestled with the question of what it meant to be a monk in the modern world and found that he could more clearly articulate that for himself through the language and life provided by the Franciscans because they embrace an evangelical life of contemplative prayer and active engagement in a world that begs for a blending of these two essential Christian qualities.

[56] I have written more extensively about this elsewhere, framing the content of this article within the broader context of this relationship between Merton and the Franciscan tradition. See Timothy J. Shaffer, "A Secret Son of Francis: The Franciscan Influence in the Thought and Writings of Thomas Merton" (Master's thesis, University of Dayton, 2006).

JESUS IN ISLAM

Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap.

The world today is faced with the problem of religious divisions that threaten war, suffering, and death to countless people around the globe. We seem to be engaged in yet another era of growing conflict between two of the major world religions, Islam and Christianity. Certainly not all, or even the majority, of the adherents of either of these religions is supportive of violence, however there are a growing and capable number of adherents who are bent on destruction. It is possible that through the gift of dialogue and understanding we can regain a much needed sense of peace and security in the world. The person Christians call the "Prince of Peace" is honored in both religions. Through the person of Jesus Christ, and a real understanding of who we each believe him to be, a doorway exists through which a genuine dialogue of peace can occur. To this end we will explore the Muslim understanding of who Jesus is, as his identity is found in the Koran.

"Jesus is not God. This is the essential difference between the Jesus of Islam and the Jesus of Christianity."[1] In these difficult days of religious fanaticism it is vastly important that we come to an understanding and some common language for dialogue. A key question engaging religious and secular thinkers throughout history and across many cultures in this dialogue is the question of who Jesus is. For orthodox Christianity Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. He is God, consubstantial with the Father, and his very being shares two natures in some mysterious way. Because of this Jesus is worshiped in Christianity as God. To the orthodox Muslim mind this is total heresy, or worse it is *shirk*: the "association of another with God".[2] To understand the identity of Jesus, or Issa in Arabic, within Islam it is necessary first to understand the notion of *tawhid* or the utter goodness and reality of God. From this it is possible to then look at the Muslim concept of the historical Jesus by considering his family of origin, the stories of his annunciation and birth, and importantly his own statements about his relationship with God as well as his prophetic purpose. We find ample discussion of all of these topics in the Koran.

The concept of *tawhid* is central to the Islamic understanding of who God is and how God relates to creation. *Tawhid* means that "everything real and good belongs to God, and everything other than God, by the fact of being *other*, is unreal, and hence it has nothing intrinsically good about it," further, "every trace of good and reality that can be found in ourselves and the world derives from God, the only true reality."[3] Therefore, we see that God is good and real while creation takes what reality it has from God. Nothing in creation, including humanity, is real in and of itself. This concept is more thoroughly explained by using the notions of *tanzih* and *tashbih* or the distance from or nearness to God.

The literal meaning of *tanzih* is "to declare something pure and free of something else," thus, "in the perspective of *tanzih*, God is so holy and pure that he cannot be compared to any created thing, including concepts, since all of our ideas are created."[4] From this we see that God is necessarily unique. Nothing of the created order, so nothing that is

[1] Ergun Mehmet Caner, *Unveiling Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002), 219.

[2] John Sabini, *Islam: A Primer* (Washington, DC: Amideast, 2001), 124.

[3] Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994), 68-69.

[4] Murata, 71.

not God, can in any way be compared to God. Therefore, even the most blessed of prophets in Islam is nothing more than a poor reflection of God. All of the blessings enjoyed by that prophet are pure gift, and are never to be mistaken as a human sharing in divinity. Ultimately this asserts the unquestionable and radical oneness of God. Thus, "God is one and God alone is Real."[5]

The literal meaning of *tashbih* is "to declare something similar to something else," thus, "it is to assert that God must have some sort of similarity with his creatures. If he did not, how could they have anything to do with him? God's signs within the cosmos and scripture designate his attributes, such as life, knowledge, desire, power, mercy, generosity, and provision. These attributes belong to God, but they are also found in created things."[6] According to this concept we see that creation exists in reality in as much as it is related to God. In other words, "God's oneness is such that his one reality embraces all creatures. The world, which appears as unreality and illusion, is in fact nothing but the One Real showing his signs. Rather than excluding all things, God's unity includes them."[7] From this we find that in speaking about the prophets of Islam, including Jesus, it is possible to speak of their enjoying existence, thus some minimal aspect of reality, from God.

Through the notions of *tanzih* and *tashibh*, "we see that each thing is at once near to God and far from him, at once similar to God and incomparable with him. Each thing is confronted simultaneously with mercy and wrath, gentleness and severity, life-giving and slaying, bestowal and withholding, reality and unreality. This is *tawhid*."[8] From this cosmological view we can come to understand the deep problem an orthodox Muslim has in hearing the belief that Jesus Christ could be the son of God, or that it would be at all conceivable that there could exist a being that shares

[5] Murata, 71.
[6] Murata, 71.
[7] Murata, 71.
[8] Murata, 73.

both humanity and divinity. For anything that is human is a creature, and all creatures are lacking. God would not belittle himself to become like one of his creatures. Thus, we can understand why "Muslims cringe at the thought of worshiping a mortal human being."[9] The Koran expresses it in strong language stating, "They say: 'The Most Gracious has betaken a son!' Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous! At it the skies are about to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin, that they attributed a son to the Most Gracious. For it is not consonant with the majesty of the Most Gracious that He should beget a son. Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to the Most Gracious as a servant."[10] Later we will address this at greater length from the perspective of the Koran. For now it is enough to keep the thought of *tawhid*, that all of creation, including humanity, exists at an infinite distance from God, and any similarity with God is simply God's concern for his creation.

We will now turn to the Koranic view of the family of Jesus. We read in the Koran that Jesus is from the family of Imran who is called the father of Maryam (the Arabic pronunciation of Mary). "Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imran above all people."[11] It is possible that the name Imran is an Arabic derivative of Amram, who was the father of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. Scholars believe that, "there may appear to be a blending of Mary, mother of Jesus (called Maryam in Koran and Greek Gospel) with Miriam, daughter of Amram."[12]

Mary (Maryam) figures heavily in the Koran. "Islam gives her extraordinary honors, calling her 'the chief woman of Paradise.'"[13] Jesus gains part of his unique relationship with humanity through the uniqueness granted to his mother

[9] Caner, 205.
[10] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, trans., *The Holy Qur'an* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1996), 19, 88-93.
[11] Koran, 3:33.
[12] Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 64.
[13] Sabini, 72.

Mary by Allah. We read that, "Jesus is described in the Koran as having been placed beforehand under the 'protection' of God against 'Satan the outcast'. This occurred when Mary, His mother, was born, since He was 'her offspring' declared by John to be 'truly a Word emanating from God'."[14] She is "the only woman who is called by her proper name in the Koran," and "the Koran uses the name Mary more times than does the New Testament."[15] The story of Jesus, who the Koran calls "the Son of Mary" twenty-three times, is inseparable from the story of his mother Mary.[16] About her conception and birth the Koran states, "Behold! Wife of 'Imran said: 'O my Lord! I do dedicate into Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: so accept this of me: for Thou hearest and knowest all things'...'O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!' – and Allah knew best what she brought forth – 'And is not the male like the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from Satan, the Rejected.'"[17] From this we see that the birth of Mary is a special and blessed event. We also read that her parents were good people when after the birth of Jesus the people said, "O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste."[18]

According to the Koran, Mary did not grow up in her father's house, rather she grew up in the house of a family member named Zakariya. We read that Zakariya did not have to bother with providing sustenance for Mary while she was in his house, "He (Allah) made her grow in purity and beauty: to the care of Zakariya was she assigned. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: 'O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?' She said: 'From Allah: for Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases, without measure."[19] This sustenance

[14] Maurice Borrmans, *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims.* (New York:. Paulist Press, 1981), 52..
[15] Parrinder, 60.
[16] Parrinder, 60.
[17] Koran, 3:35-36.
[18] Koran, 19:28.
[19] Koran, 3:37.

seems to have inspired Zakariya who then prayed for the gift of a child despite his advanced age and that of his wife.

We read in the Koran that Zakariya prayed, "O my Lord! infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head doth glisten with grey: but never am I unblest, O my Lord, in my prayer to Thee! Now I fear (what) my relatives (and colleagues) (will do) after me: but my wife is barren: so give me an heir as from Thyself, – (One that) will (truly) inherit me, and inherit the posterity of Jacob; and make him, O my Lord! One with whom Thou art well-pleased!"[20] This prayer is answered with the birth of a son, Yahya, who is called John the Baptist in the Gospels, and is regarded as a prophet by Islam.[21] We read, "Allah doth give thee glad tidings of Yahya, confirming the truth of a Word from Allah, and be besides noble, chaste, and a Prophet, – of the goodly company of the righteous."[22]

The Koran talks about the wisdom and obedience of Yahya who "was the first person to believe in Jesus and baptized him."[23] God said to the young John, "'O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might' and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth, and pity for all creatures as from Us, and purity: he was devout, and kind to his parents, and he was not overbearing or rebellious."[24] Here we come to understand that John was a holy man, a prophet, and a relative and follower of Jesus.

From these brief descriptions we see that, according to the Koran, Jesus is a descendant of a holy family. The patriarch of his family is Imran, a holy man, "chosen above all people" along with many of the great Hebrew patriarchs. His mother, Maryam, is the daughter of Imran, but grew up in the house of her kinsman, Zakariya. She enjoys special favors from Allah including an abundance of sustenance. As a gift for his holiness Zakariya is given the gift of a son despite his advanced age. His son is Yahya who is a prophet in his own right and a follower of Jesus. Thus, we see that Jesus is

[20] Koran, 19:4-6.
[21] Sabini, 72.
[22] Koran 3:39.
[23] Koran 3:39.
[24] Koran, 19:12-14.

given the benefit of a good family. However, recognizing that this family is blessed with a closeness to God, thus standing close to God according to the notion of *tashbih*, the family are still creatures, therefore, according to the notion of *tanzih*, existing at an infinite distance from God. So, the Koranic Jesus is blessed, but only as a human.

We will now look at the circumstances surrounding the annunciation, birth and work of Jesus in the Koran. Regarding the annunciation of Jesus we read, "Behold! the angels said: 'O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter and of the company of those nearest to Allah; He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be of the company of the righteous."[25] Here as in the Gospels Mary questions the possibility of this conception saying, "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?"[26] The angel then explains that God will do what he says. Here the virgin birth "was not to be a sign of Christ's nature and power, but a sign of Allah's omnipotence and sovereignty."[27] This leads to the difficulty of the birth of Jesus.

Mary was alone at the time of the birth of Jesus. We read that Mary, "withdrew from her family to a place in the East."[28] It seems that this withdrawal was a "journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem."[29] In this lonely place she began to suffer, but the God of Islam does not allow his servants to suffer in the Koran. So, we read, "the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree: she cried in her anguish: 'Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been a thing forgotten'. But a voice cried to her from beneath the palm-tree: 'Grieve not! For thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee; and shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree:

[25] Koran, 3:45-46.
[26] Koran, 19:19.
[27] Caner, 214.
[28] Koran, 19:16.
[29] Parrinder, 76.

it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. So eat and drink and cool thine eye. And if thou dost see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to Allah Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being.'"[30] Thus, Mary was comforted by God in the moment of giving birth to Jesus, and her sustenance was taken care of by Allah as it was in her childhood.

Once Jesus was born, Mary returned to her people who were amazed by what they saw, a talking infant. We read that, "They said, 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' And he (Jesus) said: 'I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet: And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me prayer and zakat (care for the poor[31]) as long as I live; He hath made me kind to my mother and not overbearing or unblest.'"[32] Thus, Jesus is a true miracle baby, talking while still an infant. We see this baby as someone both erudite and wise. These were not necessarily unique attributes for a child according to tradition. Baidawi, a Muslim scholar and cleric said that, "Mary also when small spoke as Jesus did later," and "another tradition said that eleven children had spoken in their cradles."[33] It is his next statement that brings us to understand his relationship with God in the Koran. Jesus says, "It is not befitting to the majesty of Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is."[34] Again, we run across one of the greatest difficulties between the Muslim concept of the person of Jesus and the Christian doctrine of the sonship of Jesus.

This leads us to consider what Jesus says about himself and his relationship with God in the Koran. We read that "Jesus came with Clear Signs, he said: 'Now have I come to you with Wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some

[30] Koran, 19:23-26.
[31] Sabini, 125.
[32] Koran 19:29-32.
[33] Parrinder, 78.
[34] Koran, 19:35.

of the points on which ye dispute: therefore fear Allah and obey me."[35] Maintaining the notion of *tawhid* we understand that, "to believe that God can partner and have a son is the ultimate irrationality; to believe that God's son acted as a slave and servant is only somewhat less irrational. (Thus) the Muslim is even less prone to believe that God will place himself within humanity. He is utterly removed and distinct from humankind and would never sink to the level of creation."[36] This makes sense of the sura from the Koran which states, "The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be': and he was."[37] Jesus is, therefore, one more creature of God. He is considered a great prophet, yet human. We read, "Say: 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismai'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in the Books given to Moses, Jesus and the Prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will in Islam'."[38] Jesus then instructs, "For Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord: so worship ye Him: this is a Straight Way."[39]

It is possible to remain within the Islamic tradition while calling Jesus, the "Word of God". This denotes the special relationship Jesus had with Allah, while remaining a creature. Murata writes, "the Koran refers to Jesus, alone among all the prophets and messengers, as God's 'word,' so he is comparable to a scripture." This relationship would never be considered something co-existential with God. The Koran explains this stating, "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His Word...."[40] Thus, a Christian who is interested in pointing out the similar title used in Christianity and Islam for Jesus, must realize that the intent is far different.

[35] Koran 43:63.
[36] Caner, 205.
[37] Koran, 3:59.
[38] Koran, 3:84.
[39] Koran, 43:64.
[40] Koran, 4:171.

To correct what is viewed as a distortion of the true faith by Christians, the Koran states, "There is a section who distort the Book with their tongues; so that you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is no part of the Book; and they say, 'That is from Allah,' but it is not from Allah: it is they who tell a lie against Allah, and they know it!"[41] Jesus then states, "It is not possible that a man, to whom is given the Book and Wisdom, and the Prophetic Office, should say to people: 'Be ye my worshippers rather than Allah's."[42] The Jesus of the Koran would never want to be worshiped as one with God. We read again, "Allah will say: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?' He (Jesus) will say: 'Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden.'"[43] This final statement is also a rejection of the Koranic understanding of Trinity.

Muslims, following the teaching of the Koran, understand the Trinity to be three gods, the Father, the Mother (Mary), and the Son (Jesus). This may have come from some interaction with a Christian sect. We read that, "A heretical sect of Christianity, the Choloridians, did teach such a doctrine, and Muhammad could have encountered them in Arabia."[44] This notion of Trinity is very much a rejection of the notion of *tawhid*. As a warning against this thought the Koran states, "they disbelieve who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity for there is no god except God. If they desist not from their word of blasphemy, verily a grievous chastisement will befall the disbelievers among them."[45] Again we read, "O People of the Book! commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which

[41] Koran, 3:78.
[42] Koran, 3:79.
[43] Koran, 5:116.
[44] Caner, 89.
[45] Koran, 5:73.

He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not 'Three': desist, it will be better for you: for Allah is One God, glory be to Him: far Exalted is He above having a son."[46]

From these statements it becomes clear that Jesus cannot in any way be considered one with God. The message of the Koran regarding Jesus is that he was sent as a servant of God. "He is a human messenger who will go to the dust from which He was created."[47] We read, "He was no more than a servant: We granted Our favor to him, and We made him an example to the Children of Israel."[48] We also read that after the time of the Hebrew patriarchs, "We followed them with Our messengers: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him Compassion and Mercy."[49] The message Jesus had to share was the *injil*, the Gospel, but that message is believed to have been distorted by later Christians.

The explanation for Christian teachings that seem to contradict the Koran is that the later followers of Jesus distorted his message for their own good. "The Old and New Testaments are seen to be divinely given but humanly corrupted. The Jew and the Christian are called by the Koran to recognize that the Bible was corrupted by lies and distortions."[50] Thus, we understand some of the suras mentioned above questioning whether Jesus ever asked his followers to worship him. We also read that, "the Monasticism which they (Christians) invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: we (Jesus and his mother) commanded only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their due reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors."[51] We also read that,

[46] Koran, 4:171.
[47] Caner, 217.
[48] Koran, 43:59.
[49] Koran, 57:27.
[50] Caner, 88.
[51] Koran, 57:27.

"The Jews call 'Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the Son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; in this they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords beside Allah, and they take as their Lord Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One God: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: far is He from having the partners they associate with Him."[52] According to the Koran, it should be obvious that Jesus was not God, and that those who worship him as God are committing the sin of *shirk*. We read that, Jesus engaged in such earthly pursuits as eating and drinking. We read, "They (Mary and Jesus) had both to eat their daily food. See how Allah doth make His Signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!"[53] Considering the notion of *tanzih* we understand that to require earthly sustenance is an unquestionable assurance of a lack of divinity in a being.

The fact of his unquestionable humanity should in no way take away from the works that Allah performed through Jesus. We read, "O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favor to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened thee with the Holy Spirit, so that thou didst speak to the people in childhood and in old age. Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the torah and the Gospel. And behold! thou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave. And thou breathest into it, and it becometh a bird by My leave, and thou healest those born blind, and the lepers, by My leave. And behold! thou bringest forth the dead by My leave. And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from violence to thee when thou didst show them the Clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.' And behold! I inspired the Disciples to have faith in Me and Mine Messenger: they said, 'We have faith, and

[52] Koran, 9:30-31.
[53] Koran, 5:75.

do thou bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims.'"[54] From this we read that the Jesus of the Koran was a true wonderworker. However we also read over and over again that every action was by the "leave" of Allah, thus the true wonders are still the works of God, not of Jesus. He was simply a conduit.

We even read in the Koran about a special meal. We read, "Behold! the Disciples said: 'O Jesus the son of Mary! can thy Lord send down to us a Table set with viands from heaven?' Said Jesus: 'Fear Allah, if ye have faith'. They said: 'We only wish to eat thereof and satisfy our hearts, and to know that thou has indeed told us the truth; and that we ourselves may be witnesses to the miracle.' Said Jesus the Son of Mary: 'O Allah our Lord! send us from heaven a Table set with viands, that there may be for us—for the first and last of us—a solemn festival and a Sign from Thee; and provide for our sustenance, for Thou art the best sustainer of our needs.'"[55] In this we gain a hint of an event akin to the Last Supper in which Christianity believes God cares for the sustenance of humanity on a deep and transformative spiritual level by feeding us with his own body and blood. This story from the Koran seems to be a warning against such an interpretation. We see this especially with the following sura in which God says, "I will send it down unto you: but if any of you after that resisteth faith, I will punish him with a chastisement such as I have not inflicted on any one among all the peoples."[56] It is after this that Allah questions Jesus about whether or not he asked his followers to worship him, as mentioned above.

This leads us to also briefly consider the disciples of Jesus, and their relationship with him. We read that Jesus found disbelief among the people to whom he was preaching. Thus, he asked of God, "Who will be my helpers to the work of Allah?" Said the Disciples: "We are Allah's helpers: we believe in Allah, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims. Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we

[54] Koran, 5:110-112.
[55] Koran, 5:112-114.
[56] Koran, 5:115.

follow the Messenger: then write us down among [illegible] bear witness." Allah then responded, "I will make those [illegible] follow thee superior to those who reject Faith, to the day of Resurrection: then shall ye all return unto Me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute."[57] Thus, we see that certain men, considering themselves Muslims, did choose to follow Jesus, and God blessed them. It is also interesting to note that in the Koran the Disciples of Jesus refer to themselves as Muslims, or those who submit to Allah. This is explained in that "all prophets submitted themselves to God's will and hence were *muslims*. In the same way, all those who follow the religions brought by the prophets are *muslims*."[58]

Another major concern is about the death and second coming of Jesus. Both are discussed in the Koran, although there is a definite difference from what is found in the Gospels. "One thing is absolutely certain to Islam – Jesus did not die on the cross. Although they cannot confidently say what did happen, Muslims boldly state what did not happen."[59] It is inconceivable to the Muslim mind that Allah would allow one of his prophets to suffer at the hands of others. According to the Koran it is true that Jesus was condemned to death, but "his likeness was put on another man who was crucified in his place."[60] The Koran states, "They said in boast, 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'; – but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not."[61] An interesting tradition says that, "Satan, who attempted to stop the message of Allah from being transmitted, was himself placed on the cross as punishment for his disobedience."[62]

[57] Koran, 3:52-53, 55.
[58] Murata, 4.
[59] Caner, 220.
[60] Sabini, 71.
[61] Koran, 4:157.
[62] Caner, 220-21.

The Koran does state that Jesus rose to God in heaven without dying. We read that after the assumed crucifixion, "Allah raised him up unto Himself' and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise; – And there is none of the People of the Book but must believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Judgment He will be a witness against them."[63] The fact that he did not die is an assertion that his ministry is not yet finished. "Tradition explains that he will appear to all just before the final judgment. He then will battle the Antichrist, defeat him, confess Islam, kill all pigs, break all crosses, and establish a thousand years of righteousness. Some expand on this notion and explain that Jesus will subsequently die and be buried beside the prophet Muhammad."[64] To this end the Koran states, "Jesus shall be a Sign for the coming of the Hour Of Judgment: therefore have no doubt about the Hour, but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way."[65] This anticipation led to the notion of the *Mahdi*, "the Guided One."[66] The *Mahdi* is especially important to the Shi'a branch of Islam. Throughout their history various Shi'a political leaders "preaching nationalism and Islamic reform have claimed to be the Mahdi."[67]

It is also important to note that the teaching that Jesus is not yet dead is important to the story of Muhammad, who is considered to be the greatest of the Muslim prophets. In the Koran we read that Jesus predicted the coming of Muhammad, "O children of Israel: I am the messenger of Allah sent to you, confirming the Taurat which came before me, and giving glad Tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad."[68] The Islamic tradition states that, "Before he left Mecca, Muhammad claimed to have been translated into the realm of heaven, passing first through the land around Jerusalem. Here he met all of the major prophets, including

[63] Koran, 4:158-59.
[64] Caner, 221.
[65] Koran, 43:61.
[66] Sabini, 71.
[67] Sabini, 46.
[68] Koran, 61:6.

Moses and Jesus."[69] Thus the three prophets who provided the world with the holy books acceptable to Allah all met in heaven. Neither Jesus nor Muhammad had yet died. These three are listed along with Noah and Abraham as the prophets who established the "major religions" of history according to the Islamic tradition.[70]

Throughout the Islamic tradition there are many similar stories to those found in the traditions of Christianity, but the conclusions are far from the same. To understand the Jesus of Islam we must remove ourselves from traditional Western Christian ideas of who Jesus is to recognize a prophet unique among humans and born of a much honored mother, but fully human none the less. The Koran seems somewhat conflicted about what to do with the Christians who follow the Bible as we know it today. In one place it states, "O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them for friendship is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust."[71] In yet another place it says, "Strongest among men in enmity to the Believers (Muslims) wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the Believers wilt thou find those who say, 'We are Christians': because amongst these are men devoted to learning. And men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant."[72] Thus, we see that in these difficult times between our religions, there are no easy answers. One of the figures who could be a great source of unity, Jesus Christ, is also a source of great division. Understanding the possibilities of unity offered by the person of Christ can aid in the effort toward an understanding dialogue and a much desired peace. The Sufi master Hallaj provides an open door for this possibility as he writes about the divinity of humanity,

[69] Caner, 46.
[70] Murata, 134.
[71] Koran, 5:51.
[72] Koran, 5:82.

"Glory to Him who revealed in His humanity
(i.e. in Adam)
The secret of His radiant divinity,
And then appeared to His creatures visibly in the
Shape of one who ate and drank (Jesus)"[73]

Thus, we see that in these difficult times between our religions, there are no easy answers. One of the figures who could be a great source of unity, Jesus Christ, is also a source of great division. Understanding the possibilities of unity offered by the person of Christ can aid in the effort toward an understanding dialogue and a much desired peace.

[73] Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London, Arkana:Penguin Books, 1989), 150.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

Joy Joseph Konnackal, T.O.R.

This year the members of the Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Order are preparing to celebrate the Eighth Centenary of the birth of their patroness, St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The centenary celebration began on November 17, 2006 and will conclude on November 17, 2007 and is an occasion for Third Order members to be inspired anew by the life and ministry of Elizabeth.[1] In India the major part of the celebration includes studying various sources on the life and ministry of St. Elizabeth and conducting seminars and study programs on Elizabeth. This brief reflection is inspired by recent study about Elizabeth's life and its significance for Third Order members.

Most often the lives of saints are concerned with a dramatic story of their conversion. For example, we have great conversion drama in the lives of our Holy Father Francis, St. Augustine, and St. Paul. However, when we read a biography of St. Elizabeth we do not find such drama. Instead what we see is the effect of a radical decision she made at a decisive moment of her life. Just as in the example of St. Clare, we see that Elizabeth made a radical choice to follow Jesus as literally as possible.

In 1227 Elizabeth's husband Ludwig died while on crusade to Palestine. The loss of her beloved husband was

[1] For extensive information about the early life of St. Elizabeth, see Giles Schinelli, "Elizabeth of Hungary: Medieval Princess or Sharper Image?", *The Cord*, Vol. 50, No. 6 (2000): 281-88.

a shattering experience, left as she was with three children to raise. In her grief, Elizabeth found little joy in her royal surroundings. Some sources hold that Elizabeth was expelled from court by her brother-in-law. Others hold the view that she left her home of her own volition.[2] However she left home, it was her decision to locate herself at the margins of society with those who were poor and suffering.

What was the reason for her choice to be like Christ in the virtue of poverty? What was the source of the outstanding quality that enabled her to be one among the poor? Finding answers to these questions we need to take a close look at her ministry. There we will perceive that it is a spirit of compassion that led her to a life of charity concretized in works of mercy. Among the many qualities she possessed, it was compasssion that was predominant.

We frequently use the word compassion in our prayerful reflections, homilies, and even in our everyday conversations. It is likely, however, that we have not really captured the in-depth meaning of compassion. In fact, this word stems from the Hebrew *rahamin* which expresses God's sentiments toward his creatures and connotes the love of a mother for the child of her womb. In our vocabulary it also means one's ability to suffer with and deeply entire into the experience of another. Naturally compassionate people see everyone in the world as brother/sister. So the sight of any suffering person is an occasion for alleviating the pain of that person. Compassion is also our ability to set ourselves aside and be attentive to the other. In this process the focus is on moving from self to the other – totally being other-centered.[3] This is what we see when we study the life of St. Elizabeth.

The whole commitment of her life consisted in living the compassion of Jesus. The self emptying of Jesus became a

[2] Cf., Nesta de Robeck, *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954), 97-98.

[3] For a more developed presentation on compassion see Michael Blastic, "Contemplation and Compassion: A Franciscan Ministerial Spirituality," in *Franciscan Leadership in Ministry: Foundations in History, Theology and Spirituality* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), 149-77.

reality in the life of Elizabeth. Marburg is the city where she spent her life as a widow, and it is there she lived her life of compassion. The sources describe the stained glass windows of her Basilica at Marburg as picturing Elizabeth in her works of mercy.

The extraordinary quality of Elizabeth's works of compassion did not just begin with her widowhood, however. Tradition tells of her wise and generous action in the face of a general famine which devastated the country during her husband's absence on crusade. After emptying the granaries and selling her possessions to aid the needy, she sold her expensive clothing and jewels to provide food for the poor and tools for those who could work. Raoul Manselli comments on her compassionate works thus:

> In her daily life there was her charitable assistance toward the poor. This was not a matter of occasional help or a sort of condescension, but rather a constant commitment to aid those in need, striving to conform to the general state of humanity and taking as her standard the lowest, even to the point of caring for lepers.[4]

While Elizabeth was engaged in the works of mercy the atmosphere of the court was one of envy and ambition, wars and conquest, luxury and wastefulness. Elizabeth's generosity and her bond with the needy created a scandal. While she went around begging for the poor, the citizens of Marburg did not treat her well. The society of her time did not value the virtue of compassion. She suffered many tribulations as she lived a life of charity: many of her vassals thought she was mad, she had to entrust her children to relatives because she had not the means to bring them up. Even her spiritual director, Father Conrad, added to her burdens. Through all her sufferings and tribulations Elizabeth found prayer and contemplation as a source of strength in her life.

[4] Raoul Manselli, "Royal Holiness in the Daily Life of Elizabeth of Hungary: The Testimony of Her Servants," trans. Edward Hagman, *Greyfriars Review*, 11.3 (1997): 319.

To be actively engaged in the world in love and selfless service one needs spiritual energy and strength. Ultimately the source of that energy and strength is found in an ongoing relationship with God nourished in prayer and contemplation. As Jesus said in the Gospel of St. John, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit ..." (John 15:5). Elizabeth was a true vine who bore abundant fruit because of her oneness with the Lord. The sources on Elizabeth's life document her time in prayer and contemplation which prompted her active works of charity. After her death Father Conrad wrote to Pope Gregory IX: "Before God I declare that I have seldom found a woman more given to contemplation."[5]

Authentic contemplative prayer leads one to others. By its nature it prompts one to be involved in the lives of others, to love as Christ loves, to see the world as God sees it, and above all to be compassionate like Jesus. In the life of Elizabeth we see a synthesis of contemplation and compassion. There is no doubt that it was through prayer that she was empowered to reach out to the least in society and to be one with them. Her intense prayer life fostered the development of a sense of interior detachment which led to her renouncing her luxurious home, her social position and all its privileges, wealth and security. She was not a traditional contemplative who would withdraw from the world, but she was a Franciscan contemplative who believed that when she attended to the needs of a suffering person she was attending to the Lord.

A reflective study of the life of Elizabeth shows us that she was a true Franciscan penitent who devoted herself to imitating Jesus in a radical way. In her Gospel-living we see her deep sense of prayer and contemplation which found expression in service to the poor. May the inspiring life of St. Elizabeth guide us to be God-centered, compassionate and prayerful.

[5] Robeck, *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary*, 102.

tree with birds

st francis saw the kingdom
sheltering the birds

its branches twisted
sideways

but reaching
toward the sky

he told the birds
be thankful

for the shade
and many perches

of the twisted
earthly kingdom

and they sat
and listened

and said amen
and flew

to the four branches
of the earth

perching on the kingdom
sitting in its shade

tree growing sideways
reaching for the sky

Murray Bodo, O.F.M.

About Our Contributors

Murray Bodo, O.F.M. is a frequent contributor to *The Cord* delighting readers with his insightful poetry. He is a friar of the St. John the Baptist Province and ministers in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M. is Director of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, Dean of the School of Franciscan Studies, and a member of the teaching faculty of the Franciscan Institute.

Kyle E. Haden, O.F.M. is a friar of the Holy Name Province. This is his first contribution to *The Cord*. He is currently teaching a course in the Clare College at St. Bonaventure University.

Elise Saggau, O.S.F. is a past-editor of *The Cord* and a frequent contributor to Franciscan Institute Publications in her editorial work on the WTU Symposium Papers. A Franciscan Sister of Little Falls, Elise works from her home in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Timothy J. Shaffer is a first-time contributor to *The Cord*. Besides being a Merton enthusiast he is Coordinator of Ministries, Programs and Activities for Mt. Irenaeus at St. Bonaventure University.

Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap. currently serves as DRE for two parishes in Hoboken, NJ. In his spare time he is in graduate studies at Seton Hall and also at the School for Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University.

Nicholas Youmans is a first-time contributor to *The Cord*. He has recently studied contemporary theology at Flagler College in St. Augustine, FL.

BOOK REVIEWS

William H. Shannon. *Thomas Merton: An Introduction*. Foreword by Robert Toth. Cincinnati, Oh.: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005. xiv + 199pp, $16.95 paper.

Written as a newly revised version of *'Something of a Rebel': Thomas Merton, His Life and Work, An Introduction* published in 1997, William H. Shannon takes on the daunting task of writing an easily accessible introductory book on one of the most complex and paradoxical Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century. While removing the use of "rebel" from the title, Shannon retains the core of his earlier work referring to Merton as one who "resist[ed] accepted conventions" and would not allow his life to be "bound by a past that was static and lifeless" (2). Shannon concludes the Introduction by noting that the purpose of this book is to, "introduce Thomas Merton to people who knew him but slightly or perhaps not at all" (4). He succeeds in this mission by writing about Merton's life and his voluminous corpus as a whole, introducing the person of Merton while also pointing out to the reader the major signposts in his writings and the works in which those markers are found.

Shannon guides the reader through four major chapters: first, Merton's life journey; second, the question of Merton's appeal to today's audience; third, the major themes in Merton's writings; and fourth, the "must reads" of the extensive library of Merton's own writings. Additionally, Shannon concludes with an Epilogue and an updated version of Merton's works cited and a newly included section of notes (in contrast to in-text citations in the earlier edition). The new collection of Merton's works is important because it gives the reader the most up-to-date listing of books from which earlier unpublished works have reached a broader audience.

In his first chapter, Shannon divides Merton's life into two halves: life before entrance into the community at Gethsemani and then life within the monastery as a Trappist monk. Throughout the chapter Shannon maintains a somewhat conversational style which is easy to follow, giving the reader a clear understanding of the various aspects of Merton's own life. Interestingly, throughout this chapter on Merton's life, Shannon continually comes back to the period of Merton's life while he was at the cottage in Olean, New York. It was during this time in 1939 that Merton gathered with Bob Lax and Ed Rice to write novels while also, "Eating, drinking, reading, writing, discussing art, literature, poetry and the war in Europe, playing jazz records, [and] staying up until all hours" (5). It seems this earlier period of Merton's life serves as an example of the multi-faceted nature of Merton's life as a monk entering into conversations on many topics. Foundational to this theme of the "cottage" is that Merton was a writer both as a twenty-something Columbia graduate and as a hermit living in the knobs of Kentucky. Merton was a "born writer" and it seems this is the reason Shannon returns to this early period in Merton's life. Merton's prophetic voice came via the pen, typewriter, and mimeographed letter. Shannon addresses the many dimensions of Merton's life that stem from his passion as a writer, highlighting the most important periods that shape the major themes addressed in chapter three and the central works found in chapter four.

In the second chapter Shannon asks the very important question of Merton's relevance for today's readers. He notes Merton's life has meaning in this new century because of the journey he embraced as a human seeking a deeper understanding of himself and the world around him. Shannon writes that Merton is "for today" because he was real and was able to articulate the human condition in a way that was accessible to many. His writings had an insight into the human condition that transcended his own tradition and time, and because of this he served as a spiritual guide for many peoples: those within institutional religious traditions and those whose only connection with spirituality was through this Trappist monk from Kentucky (55).

Shannon then explores in the third chapter the terrain of Merton's writings and notes the (multiple) ways in which Merton is read, presenting three ways of understanding the development of Merton's writings after *The Seven Storey Mountain*. These three interpretations include those who read a Merton *faithful* to the vision of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, a Merton *betraying* the vision of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, and finally those who read a Merton who *went beyond* the vision of *The Seven Storey Mountain* (60ff). These are important distinctions for reading Merton because he is able to be read, and also to be shaped by the reader, in differing ways. Here, Shannon writes succinctly about the contours or the Merton landscape, making accessible what would be nearly impossible without reading the entire corpus of Merton's writings. Shannon explores the depths of Merton's contemplative life as a way to understanding all aspects of his life and journey. This is one of best introductions to Merton's thought available because it rightly looks at the center of Merton's life and the search for the true self with the understanding that there is an orientation out towards the world when one finds his or her center, which is God.

There is a natural movement into the fourth and final chapter which looks at the Merton library and what books Shannon chooses as "must reads." Shannon begins the chapter by looking at the great collection of books by Merton through Merton's own eyes and evaluations of how he ranked these during his own life (122-129). It is after this useful evaluation that Shannon makes his recommendations for navigating through Merton's works. He suggests one begin with *The Seven Storey Mountain*, and then recommends one move through *The Sign of Jonas*, *No Man Is an Island*, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, and then finally *The Asian Journal*. Shannon provides helpful commentary to each of these works and then recommends Merton's letters and journals in addition to other works for those who have read through this list of books. Again, Shannon is succinct yet thorough in his descriptions of these works, greatly benefiting the reader who is just beginning to explore Merton or for the

one who is returning again to Merton. Little is said about Merton's poetry and this could be developed more, but overall Shannon captures the essence of Merton and his writings.

Throughout, Shannon writes in a way that is conversational and comfortable while academic in the sense that his positions are well researched. Few if any know more about Merton and have the facility to write about him as Shannon does. This book is an introductory text for undergraduates and all "students" who are looking for a well-researched and accessible book on Merton. Merton was indeed "something of a rebel" because he was one who challenged the conventions and complacency of his own time and continues to serve as a model for Christians and all other peoples who seek a deep understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.

Timothy J. Shaffer
Mt. Irenaeus, NY

Daniel Sulmasy, O.F.M., M.D., *A Balm for Gilead: Spirituality and the Healing Arts* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006). 173 pp., $16.95 paper.

Daniel Sulmasy, a friar of Holy Name Province, New York, brings to his writing and speaking a rich combination of gifts. Among them are the practical experience of a clinical physician, the articulateness of a passionate educator, the clarity of a serious philosopher, the depth of a well-formed theologian, and the religious and spiritual experience of a committed Christian and Franciscan.

In this book, Sulmasy draws on an impressive body of resources to analyze some of the major challenges confronting the practice of health care today in the United States. Being "one of them," he is able to offer a convincing critique of the present state of health care professionals, ringing alarm bells that warn of a critical departure from the fundamental purpose of this noble and essential profession.

Sulmasy is convinced that the practice of the healing arts must recognize and respect the spiritual dimensions of human illness and the genuine limitations of the health care professional. He begins by clarifying the distinction between ethics and spirituality: "People of all faiths and of no faith can engage in philosophical ethics, and so, in this sense, religion and ethics are distinct" (p. 2). From that point on, he unabashedly asserts that religious spirituality is foundational for health care because health care is necessarily relational. Practitioners and patients are brothers and sisters in the human community. The gifts and the limitations of this condition must be recognized in order to be in truth.

He cautions young health care professionals against expecting to build themselves identities and recognition in and through their work. He warns that such an approach to practice is merely a way of protecting themselves from nothingness and is not an appropriate use of their work. He asserts that the good results of professionals' work come about only through the activity of God in them (p. 18). Later in the book he excoriates situations where patients become

merely contexts in which physicians display their power (p. 48).

He goes on to offer a scientific, philosophical and Christian theological worldview that sees relationality as ontologically prior to particularity. Matter is "a set of temporary yet dynamic relationships in the electromagnetic field that is already given." "For the Christian," he says, "this truth is preeminently understood as the very nature of the Triune God. God is a relationship: Father, Son, and Spirit" (p. 23). Health care practitioners must recognize that illness profoundly affects human relationships far beyond the dysfunction of a particular human organism. "It disrupts families and workplaces. It shatters pre-existing patterns of coping. It raises questions about one's relationship with God" (p. 24). Healing is basically about who we are and to whom we are related. It is an announcement of "good news," and thus an evangelical ministry.

The author dedicates Chapter 9 to a consideration of "Franciscan compassion" as particularly applicable to the issues he raises. This spiritual tradition is personal, incarnational and imaginative (p. 97). As such, it is inherently hagiographic, best understood by considering the personal stories of real people who have lived the charism. He focuses on four significant episodes from the life of St. Francis of Assisi that demonstrate how Franciscans understand issues of illness, suffering and death – Francis's early illness, his embracing of the leper, his experience on Mount Alvernia and his own death (p. 99). From these reflections, Sulmasy demonstrates that Franciscans have something to say about the human condition. Franciscan spirituality helps one understand human suffering within the context of God's unconditional love. It directs one to serve the sick with profound reverence and compassion. Thus, it testifies to God's own activity within the human family.

In Chapters 11 and 12, Sulmasy offers a very impressive consideration of the Christian understanding of death, with its concomitant understandings of eternal life, the Communion of Saints and the Resurrection. His treatment of hope offers timely and much needed reflections. Drawing

on such luminaries as Thomas Merton and Vaclav Havel, he begs us not to trivialize this great virtue by comforting ourselves and one another with false hopes based on our natural desires. "Hope," says Havel, "is not prognostication" (p. 136). Affirming human freedom, Sulmasy asserts that the death of a human person is an event that offers a culminating moment of choice.

Reflecting on the Communion of Saints, the author asserts that memories are not adequate to provide genuine conversation with our departed loved ones. Yet these persons are accessible to us; they "have become a necessary part of who we are. They really are that close – close enough to talk to. They are part of what constitutes us as persons" (p. 44).

In summary, Sulmasy reminds us that "love is what lies beyond both the horizon before us and the horizon within us" (p. 145). This is what Christians believe and what undergirds a profoundly human, Christian way of engaging with sickness, healing, dying and rising. The reflections in this book far transcend issues of health care. They provide basic challenges for anyone seeking a meaningful way of engaging with our world today.

Elise Saggau, O.S.F.
St. Paul, Minnesota

The Franciscan Center of the Washington Theological Union

Announces its annual symposium

May 25-27, 2007

"Franciscan Evangelization: Striving to Preach the Gospel"

Francis of Assisi began his journey as a lay man striving to live a Gospel life, both by way of word and example. The lay character of the early movement, however, soon gave way to clericalization of the Order. How did clericalization affect the lay character of the Order with regard to living and preaching the Gospel? How does it impact us today in our efforts to live evangelical life? Here we will take up these questions and more as we explore the lay and clerical character of Franciscan life and the question, who preaches the Gospel?

SPEAKERS:

Dominic Monti, O.F.M.
"Gospel Preaching and Gospel Life: Similarities and Differences."

C. Colt Anderson, Ph. D.
"Clerics, Laity and Preaching the Gospel Among the Early Franciscans"

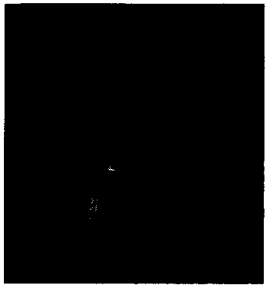
Darleen Pryds, Ph. D.
"Preaching Women: The Tradition of Mendicant Women"

Joseph Chinnici, O.F.M.
"The Impact of Clericalization on Franciscan Evangelization"

Canice Connors, O.F.M.Conv.
"Franciscans in Collaboration: Starts and Stops"

Cost: $180.00 [includes conference and registration fee]

For more information contact
Alyce Korba @ 202 – 541 – 5219 or Korba@wtu.edu



The Seventh National Franciscan Forum

Sponsored by The Franciscan Institute
of St. Bonaventure University

Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue

The Forum will address interreligious dialogue using the encounter between Francis and Sultan Malek al-Kamil as a poignant focus in considering the current conflict between Christians and Muslims. It will examine how the core values of the Franciscan tradition and of Christianity and Islam impel us to engage one another respectfully and cooperatively in rebuilding the world.

Thursday, June 7 (4:30 p.m.) – Saturday June 9 (9:00 p.m.) 2007

Please plan to depart on June 10. Arrangements may be made to arrive early and/or stay longer.

Franciscan Retreat Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Forum Cost: $299 (exclusive of room cost)

Presenters:

Michael Cusato OFM: Director of The Franciscan Institute and historian of medieval Franciscan history.

Michael Calabria OFM: Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies and Inter-religious Dialogue, St. Bonaventure University.

Madge Karecki SSJ-TOSF: Co-founder of the Franciscan Institute of Southern Africa and former associate professor at the University of South Africa.

Robert Lentz, OFM: Contemplative artist whose world-renowned innovative icons depict contemporary subjects. Forum will feature his latest icon (see above).

Irfan Omar, PhD: Assistant Professor of Theology at Marquette University. Teaches courses on Islam and World Religions and a graduate seminar in Muslim-Christian relations.

Kathleen Warren, OSF: Forum coordinator and specialist in Franciscanism and interreligious dialogue.

For more information and to register, see The Franciscan Institute website:
http://franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu

or contact:
Kathy Warren, OSF, Forum Coordinator
415 Silver Spring Avenue #505
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 301-578-8552; e-mail: kwarren@sbu.edu

The Portiuncula Center For Prayer

Mark your calendars for 2007:

40-Day Hermitage Experience Using Mary Elizabeth Imler's, *A Franciscan Solitude Experience: The Pilgrim's Journal*, this retreat is based on the Third Order Rule, draws from the writings and guidance of Francis and Clare, as well as our rich Franciscan heritage. Participants are invited into the freedom to simply be, using the journal as a guide, with a theme reflection every 10 days by Sr. Mary Elizabeth and opportunities to be companioned by spiritual director as one wishes. Time: February 17 to March 29 and November 4 to December 13. Fee: $1800 – $2500 (depending on choice of hermitage).

Annual Journey With Retreat.... **St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke** with Robert Karris OFM. This retreat will show how contemporary Bonaventure's interpretation and spirituality are. St. Bonaventure was a highly regarded commentator on Sacred Scripture. Since the liturgical year 2007 features the Gospel of Luke, we will sample some of Bonaventure's rich commentary on this Gospel of Mercy. We will find that his exposition, e.g., of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, has anticipated insights of contemporary commentators. We will also find that his commentary on Luke often reveals his Franciscan soul in the points he accentuates, e.g., the poverty of Mary and her newborn son, Jesus. Time: June 11 - 17. Fee: $450

Private Directed Retreat: with Sr. Corrina Thomas FSPA. Corrina's work, as spiritual and retreat director, centers around companioning individuals in transformational processes, including such approaches as enneagram, focusing, active imagination, guided imagery, and balancing of the chakras. She believes that each person and all of creation are living images and living process of the Divine, inseparable from the Source of all life. And that in discovering our deepest identity as part of the creative life force of God, we will find hope, healing and harmony for our selves and for our world. Time: July 16 – 22. Fee: $420

Relationships of Love with Fr. Don Blaeser OFM. As much as we may speak of the importance of having faith, our spiritual life is always lived out in relationships. Using Sacred Scripture, examples from the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare, and various other sources, we will focus on living our faith in relationships of love. Time: July 23 – 29. Fee: $375 for overnight $225 for commuter.

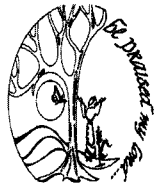
For more information contact: Mary Ann Hamilton at the
Portiuncula Center for Prayer
9263 West St. Francis Road, Frankfort, IL 60423
Phone: 815-464-3880
Email: info@portforprayer.org
Website: www.portforprayer.org

St. Francis Spirituality Center

200 St. Francis Avenue
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
419-443-1485

Enjoying God's Creation — June 10-15, 2007

Presenters: Ellen Lamberjack, O.S.F.
and Paulette Schroeder, O.S.F.



Come, listen to the sounds of creation. See and experience God in the breeze, the trees, the lake and the growth of woodlands. Spend time in the county and state parks, along waterways and trails. Transportation and food are provided. Registration begins 6:00 P.M. June 10. Suggested Offering $325.00. You may continue another day for an extra donation of $25.00.

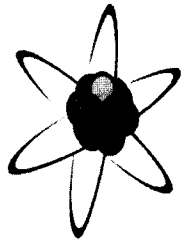
"A Single Branch of Flame: Meeting the Discerning Hearts of Francis and Clare" — June 18-24, 2007

Presenter: Sr. Clare D'Auria, O.S.F.

Retreatants reflect on and pray with their own foundational faith experience: the unmistakable initial encounter with God–the moment of conversion. By engaging the Tavolas of Francis and Clare, retreatants will discover how this experience of conversion becomes the touchstone or "single branch of flame" in the light of which we see all that comes to us–in the process of discerning significant decisions in our lives. Suggested offering $340.00. Registration begins at 6:00 P.M.; no evening meal on June 18, 2007. Retreat ends with brunch on June 24.

Radical Amazement ... Retreat to the New Universe — October 7-12, 2007

Presenter: Judy Cannato, mother, wife, author, spiritual director, retreat director.



As clearly as the parables told by Jesus challenged his listeners to ask questions about who they were and what their relationships meant, so the new universe story challenges us to expand the way we think about and respond to the life around us. Suggested offering: $325.00. Registration: October 7, 6:00 P.M. Retreat ends October 12 after dinner 12:00 P.M.

Experience the meaning of Conversion and Penance
in the Franciscan tradition

"Who Are You, O God, and What Am I?"
(St. Francis)

The Sisters of Saint Francis invite you to attend
The 14th Annual Central New York Franciscan Experience
where you will be invited to look at your image of God and that of Francis and Clare.

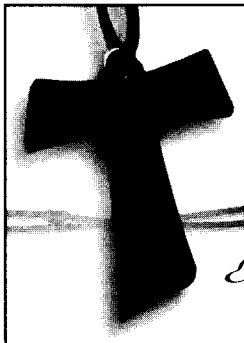
Facilitators:
Canice Connors, OFM Conv
Kathleen Osbelt, OSF

The Franciscan Center
2500 Grant Blvd.
Syracuse, NY 13208

Friday, March 23, 2007
Registration 5:30 –6:25
6:30pm – 8:30 pm
Saturday, March 24, 2007
8 am – closing liturgy at 3:45

$25 before March 1 or
$30 at the door

Mail fee, name, address, phone to:
CNY Franciscan Experience
2500 Grant Blvd.
Syracuse, NY 13208
plarkin@osfsyr.org
315-634-7019



Franciscan Life Center
2006-07 PROGRAMS

Energy, Spirit, Peace... THE FRANCISCAN WAY.

Advent Day of Reflection
Saturday, December 2, 2006, (9 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
Presenter: Elise Saggau, OSF

Theme: Becoming Who We Are: The Meaning of Advent in our Lives. God has come into our life; God is coming into our life; God will come into our life. Positioned in time, we discern where we are in our spiritual journey into God and recommit ourselves to our heart's desire. This day will incorporate reflection talks, personal and communal prayer, group sharing, a Eucharistic celebration and lunch.

Retreat: Peace Prayer of St. Francis: Lord, Make me an Instrument of Peace
Thursday, February 8 (7 p.m.) – Wednesday, February 14 (12 noon), 2007
Director: Charles Faso, OFM.

The "Peace Prayer of St. Francis" will be the focus of this retreat. Like St. Francis, we too can find the confidence and courage to offer ourselves to God's use as instruments of Peace! During the retreat we will listen to Francis' words and life to teach us how to sow love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy. Living such a life of consoling, understanding and loving others, we will be ready to be born into eternal life.

Retreat: Rules are Made to be Lived not Broken
Friday, July 20 (7 p.m.) - Thursday, July 26 (12 noon), 2007
Director: Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Third Order Regular Rule and Life. We will explore the text from beginning to end, review what it means to Franciscan penitents and hear the stories of how it came to be. Together, we will recommit to our evangelical life. We are trustees of our charism - responsible bearers of the good news. May we live the Gospel of Jesus so that "through Him, with Him and in Him" our lives may sing a song of praise!

FRANCISCAN SISTERS
OF LITTLE FALLS
MINNESOTA

For more information
on these or other programs, or to register, contact:
Franciscan Life Center
116 8th Avenue SE, Little Falls, MN 56345
320-632-0668 • franciscanlife@fslf.org • www.fslf.org

School of Franciscan Studies
Summer 2007: June 25th – July 27th

SFS	Credits	Course Title
WEEKS 1-5: JUNE 25th -JULY 27th		
507	3	Early Franciscan Movement
518	3	Franciscan Hagiographical Tradition
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies
528	3	Pre-Franciscan Religious Movements
505	0	Integration Seminar
597	0	Comprehensive Exams
WEEKS 3-5: JULY 9th – JULY 27th		
526	3	Clare and Early Franciscan Women
527	3	Rule and Life of the Third Order Regular
538	3	Development of the Franciscan Person
556	3	Foundations of Franciscan Spirituality
557	3	Franciscan Mystical Tradition
567	3	Franciscan Painting: Studio
ONE WEEK COURSES		
564-01	1	Constructing a Contemporary Franciscan Spirituality of Creation
564-02	1	The Prayer of Francis and Clare
GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES		
521	2	Francis: Life and Charism
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History

For more information see: franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu

A Franciscan Spirituality of Creation
June 25-29, 2007

This course will provide the intellectual tools for students to develop their own Franciscan spirituality of Creation, drawing from an array of sources: historical, scientific, and experiential. It will investigate the Franciscan spiritual, theological, and intellectual traditions and propose strategies for bringing these to bear on our contemporary environment crisis. The course will investigate the question: what is ours – from a Franciscan perspective – to do in light of these crises? Final projects will create a plan for bringing these resources to bear on an environmental issue in one's home community.

Keith Warner, O.F.M. Keith Douglass Warner is a Franciscan Friar, and the Faith, Ethics & Vocation Project Director in the Environmental Studies Institute at Santa Clara University. He is an interdisciplinary environmental scholar who studies how values, ethics, institutions and the expansion of knowledge shape nature/society relations. His areas of specialty include sustainable agriculture, sustainability ethics in science, and the greening of religions. More info: www.scu.edu/fevp.

The Prayer of Francis and Clare
July 2 – 6, 2007

With their creative and passionate love of Jesus Christ, Francis and Clare became great models of prayer. This course will analyze the experience of prayer that we find in and through their writings, with special attention to the images of Christ and of the human person that emerge. We will examine how the Church, the early fraternity, and their own personal encounters with Jesus Christ shaped the way that Francis and Clare prayed.

Richard Martignetti, O.F.M., is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province, New York. He has served his province both as Director of Post-Novitiate Formation and as Secretary of Formation and Studies. He served the Order for three years as Guardian of the OFM General Curia in Rome. He is currently living in Canada and working as Director of Pre-Novitiate formation. He is a guest lecturer at the Antonianum and at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury.

On the Franciscan Circuit

40 Day Franciscan Hermitage Retreat
Feb. 17-Mar. 9, 2007
Annual Journey with Retreat ... St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke
June 11-17, 2007
At the Portiuncula Center for Prayer
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A Word from John Duns Scotus

Which did God intend first, the union of this nature with the Word, or its ordination to glory? Now the sequence in which the creative artist evolves his plan is the very opposite of the way he puts it into execution. One can say, however, that in the order of execution. God's union with a human nature is naturally prior to his granting it the greatest grace and glory. We could presume, then, that it was in the reverse order that he intended them, so that God would first intend that some nature, not the highest, should receive the highest glory, proving thereby he was not constrained to grant glory in the same measure as he bestowed natural perfection. Then secondly, as it were, he willed that this nature should subsist in the Person of the Word, so that the angel might not be subject to a [mere] man.

***Four Questions on Mary*, Question One**

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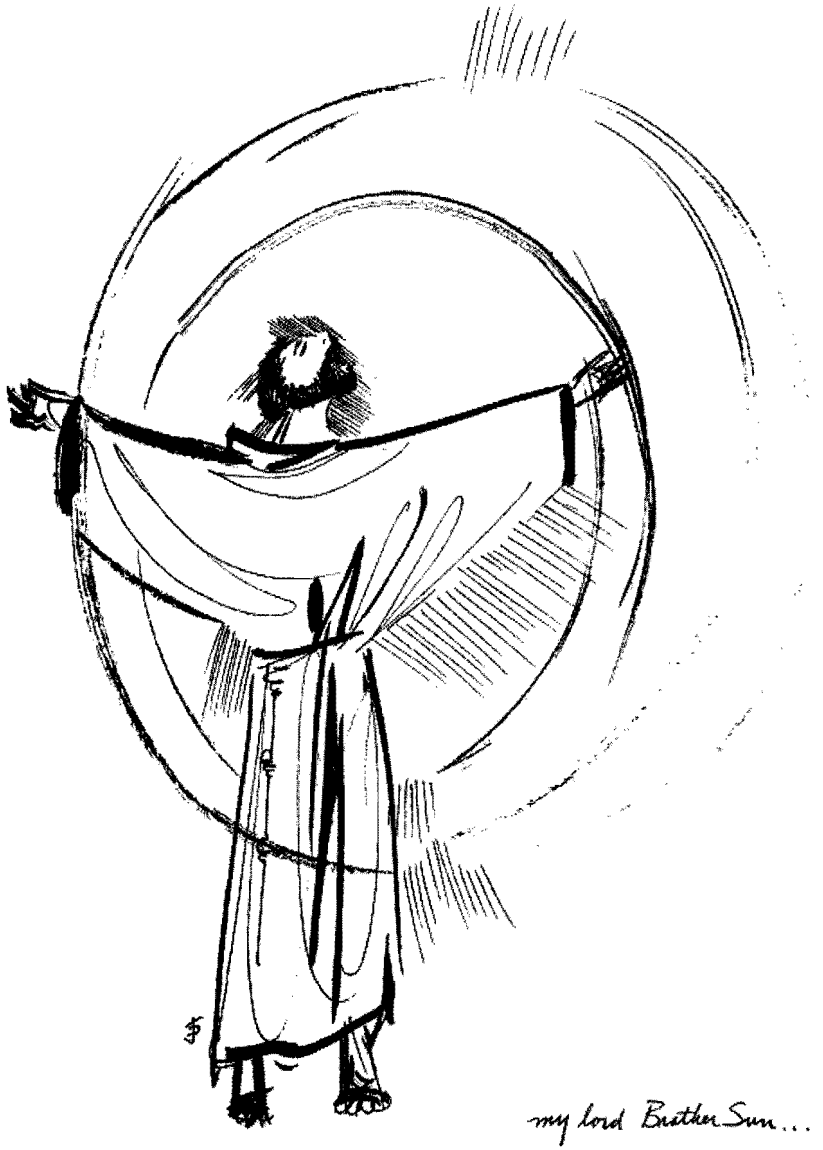

· A Franciscan Spiritual Review ·

THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Foreword

Will spring ever come to St. Bonaventure, NY? The calendar says mid-April, this issue of *The Cord* is scheduled for May release, but the skies and temperatures reflect November. If there's one thing the Feast of the Resurrection teaches us it's that appearances can often be deceiving. So we carry the promise of spring in our hearts and watch for Sister Mother Earth (as the commercial says) to come out to play.

This issue features several authors who have a lot to say about renewal: Margaret Magee, O.S.F. investigates the meaning of penitential spirituality for our century. David Flood, O.F.M. sheds light on the deeper relationship Francis shared with creation, and Charles Finnegan, O.F.M. explores our duty to care for creation. A short piece excerpted from the Chapter 2006 Preparation materials for the Order of Friars Minor looks at the foundation of our life and mission.

In keeping with our mission of relating our spirituality with our Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, Maria Calisi explores Trinitarian life through the lens of Richard of St. Victor and Bonaventure. Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap. presents more of his understanding of Islam, tracing its relationship–sometimes in harmony but frequently at odds–with the philosophers who shaped our western culture. A brief biography of Giles of Assisi compiled by Sister Frances Lea Laughlin, S.M.I.C. of happy memory, two poetic insights from Murray Bodo, O.F.M., and a book and film review round out this issue's offerings. The Announcements section provides information about a variety of opportunities for prayer and growth. We sincerely hope that our readers can find something in this potpourri to refresh their Easter joy and see them through the growing season.

As this issue goes to press we are confronted once again, in the tragedy taking place at Virginia Tech, with the seeming inability of our society to communicate respectfully and to solve problems without resorting to violence. Let us pray for those who are broken-hearted and for the broken spirits who need to find peace.

Daria R. Mitchell, OSF

Richard of St. Victor and Bonaventure: Living a Trinitarian Life

Maria Calisi

The doctrine of the Trinity, one of the central doctrines of the Christian faith, both alienates us[1] and resonates with us at the same time. It is a somewhat discomforting teaching for many people. Average Christians understandably find it difficult to explain their belief in one God who is nevertheless three distinct Persons. Yet for most of their lives, these same people have worshiped, prayed to, and had a loving relationship with this one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity stems from "three discordant truths:"

- Jesus is divine. The belief that Jesus is God incarnate is the sine qua non for becoming a Christian. Jesus' contemporaries came to know God, feel God, and experience God in him; they were forgiven, healed, and transformed by God in and through him. Their faith in Jesus has been handed down to us through the centuries in one articulation or another, and in each generation the claim is made anew that we have come to know God and have experienced God's forgiveness, healing, and power to change our lives for the better in and through Christ.

- Jesus related to God the Father and to the Spirit as "other." We know Jesus prayed to his Father, and spoke

[1] See for example "God in Communion with Us" by Catherine Mowry LaCugna in *Freeing Theology. The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, edited by Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 84. See also "Is the Doctrine of the Trinity Outmoded?" in *God as Trinity. Relationality and Temporality in Divine Life*, Ted Peters (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 17.

about both the Father and the Spirit as "other," not as if they were "modes" or "appearances" of his own divine existence. In other words, for Jesus to have had a loving, personal relationship with the Father and the Spirit, they each would have to have been another "Person."

- There is only one God. We identify God as the Holy One of Israel, Yahweh.

Individually, each of these truths is non-negotiable for Christians, but when we put them together, a discordance or illogic results. Throughout the centuries Christians have chosen to abide in the inconsistency, rather than compromise on anything they know in their hearts to be true. They have preferred to turn in simple humility to a fourth non-negotiable truth: the incomprehensibility of God, and to say that God is Holy Mystery, infinite, and beyond the finite mind's grasp. Nevertheless, this fourth truth has not precluded the need to formulate an official statement of our belief in the "three discordant truths," nor has it precluded the impetus for theologians in every generation to articulate their understanding of these truths. How are we to understand these "three discordant truths" in our day?

In the past the three-Personed God has been understood in abstract philosophical terms that spoke predominately of God's "substance" (or nature). It was an attempt to reconcile monotheism with the experience of three divine Persons, for its own sake. How can we best formulate that God is one and three? The question of how to understand the doctrine of the Trinity for our time is one of practicality: How do we practice the trinitarian life? And where in the tradition do we look for the foundations on which to build an answer to this question?

The Franciscan theologian, Bonaventure (d. 1274), offers a solid and sound tradition in which to explore this question of living the trinitarian life. Bonaventure is utterly unique in his teaching on the Trinity in that his understanding is an extraordinary synthesis of many theological components from Eastern and Western Christianity: the Cappadocians,[2] Augustine (d. 430), the Pseudo-Dionysius (d. c. 500), John of Damascus (d. 749), and Richard of St. Victor[3] (d. 1173). Unquestionably, Bonaventure's trinitarian theology can be very philosophically abstract as is the case with other medieval theologians (such as Thomas Aquinas, d. 1274, for example), but there is in Bonaventure a rich convergence of so many theological veins that we can certainly quarry out a small treasure that speaks to our hearts even today. His understanding of the Trinity reminds us who God is and what God is about, and therefore who we are and how we are to live a trinitarian life.

Richard of St. Victor

One of the contributors to Bonaventure's understanding of the Trinity is the highly original Richard of St. Victor. Bonaventure's Franciscan master at the University of Paris, Alexander of Hales, introduced him to Richard of the Victorine School. Richard employs a theological method in which he searches for the *rationes necessariae*, or the "necessary reasons," for the plurality of Persons in the Trinity. This method does not result in a "proof" for a religious proposition; it is a contemplation of the mysteries of the faith. Richard does not believe that one could arrive at the existence of the Trinity by reason alone, but only that one could come to a limited understanding of how a plurality of divine Persons can follow logically from the revelation that God is Goodness and Love.

Instead of turning to classical Greek philosophical categories, Richard uses the analogy of human relationships to understand trinitarian relations. He bases his understanding of the revelation of the Trinity on the human experience

[2] The Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century were Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. Their theology of the Trinity became what is known as the Greek or Eastern Orthodox approach to the Trinity in contrast to the Latin or Western approach.

[3] Richard was a contemplative at the Abbey of St. Victor at Paris, which followed the Augustinian Rule.

of relationships and on principles of logic. Richard begins with the belief that God is Goodness and that the perfection of goodness is love. Therefore, God is supreme and perfect Love, and in order to understand the nature of love better, he proceeds to discuss what can be learned about love from human relationships:

> We have learned above that in that supreme and altogether perfect good there is fullness and perfection of all goodness. However, where there is fullness of all goodness, true and supreme charity cannot be lacking. For nothing is better than charity; nothing is more perfect than charity. However, no one is properly said to have charity on the basis of his own private love of himself. And so it is necessary for love to be directed toward another for it to be charity. Therefore, where a plurality of persons is lacking, charity cannot exist.[4]

Love is by nature relational, and if God is Love, God is therefore by nature relational. Thus, there must be a plurality of Persons in God. God's love of Godself cannot properly be called love (in this context), for love must be directed toward another; nor is any creature capable of supreme love, for no creature is capable of the unimaginable heights and depths of this kind of intimacy. "In order that charity be supreme and supremely perfect, it is necessary that it be so great that nothing greater can exist and it be of such a kind that nothing better can exist."[5] A greater and more perfect love than the love between the divine Creator and the human creature can be conceived, and that is the love between two divine Persons. Thus, infinite, supreme, and perfect love cannot be realized in God's love of Godself nor in the love of a creature.

[4] Richard of St. Victor, *The Trinity*, III, 2 in *Richard of St. Victor: The Twelve Patriarchs, The Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover Zinn, Classics of Western Spirituality Series (New York. Paulist Press, 1979), p. 374.

[5] Richard of St. Victor, *The Trinity*, III, 2, p. 375. Even if a human being were capable of such a loving relationship, this would make God *dependent* on a creature in order to be God, i.e., in order to express Godself as love. This would also make a human being a necessary being.

In order for love to be infinite, perfect, and supremely divine, it must be mutual. Thus, there must be a distinction of Persons within the Godhead.

The human experience of love makes it clear that personhood is necessary for the perfection of love. No other word, concept, analogy, or metaphor signifies the values necessary for love, namely the capacity for: mutuality, self-transcendence, dynamic self-communication, self-expression, self-donation and reception, generosity, sharing, community, intimacy, and fulfillment.[6] Having made his case for the necessity of a plurality of Persons in God, Richard continues to search for the "necessary reasons" for a Trinity of Persons and he arrives at an astonishing insight:

> In true charity, it seems excellent to wish another to be loved as one's self. Certainly in mutual and very fervent love nothing is rarer or more magnificent than to wish that another be loved equally by the one whom you love supremely and by whom you are supremely loved. And so the proof of perfected charity is a willing sharing of the love that has been shown to you.... So a person proves that he is not perfect in charity if he cannot yet take pleasure in sharing his excellent joy.... Therefore it is necessary that each of those loved supremely and loving supremely should search with equal desire for someone who would be mutually loved with equal concord ...[7]

> In order for charity to be true, it demands a plurality of persons; in order for charity to be perfected, it requires a Trinity of persons.[8]

Perfect realization of supreme love, then, is not realized in the mutual love of two persons; there is still the slightest suggestion of selfishness, a possible self-enclosed *égoïsme à*

[6] These are the interpersonal values described throughout the article by Ewert Cousins, "Theology of Interpersonal Relations," *Thought* 45 (1970), 56-81.

[7] Richard, *The Trinity*, III, XI, p. 384 (emphasis added).

[8] Richard, III, XI, p. 385.

deux. A greater love can be imagined: Supreme love is realized in the love of two shared generously and equally with a third. This is self-transcending love which is fulfilled in the shared love of three Persons, that is, in a perfect community.[9] For all the emphasis and attention that our culture bestows on the ideal romantic/spousal love between two, Richard would concede that it is magnificent, but imperfect. Even the most fervent and deep love of two spouses is made perfect when they transcend their own mutual love and open their hearts to "being community."

Interestingly, nowhere in Richard's arguments in Book III for the necessity of a Trinity of Persons in God does he mention the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and except for the first chapter, neither does he mention the divine processions. The divine processions are precisely what distinguish one Person from another. The divine relations are based on origin: the Father is the one who eternally begets the Son and spirates the Spirit; conversely, the Son is the one who is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Spirit is the one who is eternally produced by Father (and the Son as one Principle).

Instead of these traditional concepts of the trinitarian relations, Richard uses the human experience of the mutual and shared love of friends to understand the divine relations, but his insights can be understood in the context of any loving relationship. Richard's depiction of God as "consocial love"[10] does not differentiate the Persons, but does repeatedly stress the divine Persons' equality, fellowship, and the sharing of omnipotence, infinite wisdom, majestic joy and glory.

[9] Richard does not address the question of why there are only three Persons in the Trinity. Why not four? It would seem plausible to answer that two would constitute mutual love, not perfect love, but more than three would be superfluous. Three makes the point, 3 represents community completely.

[10] Richard, *The Trinity*, III, 20, p. 393.

Bonaventure

Bonaventure incorporates Richard's understanding of the interpersonal relations of the Trinity into his own theology, but places it within the traditional context of the divine processions. Furthermore, he unites Richard's starting point for discussing the Trinity, God's Goodness and Love, with the Pseudo-Dionysian principle that the good is self-diffusive.[11] For both Richard and Bonaventure goodness and love are interchangeable; love is the highest goodness. The nature of goodness, as we know it, is that it is dynamic; it must give of itself, share itself, communicate itself, go out of itself, and express itself. In *The Soul's Journey into God* Bonaventure writes:

> For the good is said to be self-diffusive; therefore the highest good must be most self-diffusive. Therefore, unless there were eternally in the highest good a production ... as noble as the producer, as is the case in a producing by way of generation and spiration, ... so that there would be a beloved and a cobeloved, the one generated and the other spirated, and this is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit–unless these were present, it would by no means be the highest good because it would not diffuse itself in the highest degree.[12]

The traditional model of the Trinity is such that the Father generates the Son[13] from all eternity. The Son is the

[11] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, IV, 1 in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. by Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem. The Classics of Western Spirituality Series (NY: Paulist Press, 1987), p. 71.

[12] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, 6, 1 in *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, trans. by Ewert Cousins. The Classics of Western Spirituality Series (NY: Paulist Press, 1978).

[13] The terms "Father" and "Son" are not proper names, but metaphors which connote well a loving, intimate, and personal relationship based on origin. They are not literal, i.e., signifying that God is male. The pronoun "He" is used only when referring back to "Father" and "Son." If its antecedent may be used non-literally, then the masculine pronoun may be used non-literally.

Logos-the Word or "Expressed Thought." The Father's Word must be the perfect, eternal, and infinite self-expression for He is of the Father's own substance. All that the Father knows and all that the Father is, is communicated in the generation of the Word. Since divinity is love, and therefore personal, the Word must be a Person. The Son returns the Father's love as only an infinite Person can. This Love is also a Person, the Holy Spirit who is the mutual Love in the infinite self-donation of the Father's very being to the Son, and in the Son's returning Love to the Father. The perfect realization of supreme love is not realized with the two divine Persons of Father and Son, but in the self-transcending love which is shared generously with a third, that is in a perfect community in diversity.

Even though the Son and Spirit proceed from the Unbegotten Father as their Source, the Three must be equal for love to be mutually fulfilling. The processions are eternal, thus, there can be no time sequence-no first, second, nor third. None of the Persons is "greater" or has preeminence. The self-donation of the Father's very being is infinite and lacking nothing; only then can there be an eternally dynamic circle of infinite self-donation and infinite reception of divine life.

Limitations of the Trinitarian Model

Both Richard's and Bonaventure's understanding of the Trinity based on the analogy of human interpersonal relations is an imperfect understanding, as are all analogies for the divine. God is Holy Mystery and incomprehensible to the finite human mind. There is the danger of interpreting the term "Person" literally, especially in the modern sense of the word, meaning "individual center of consciousness" which possesses its own intellect and will. The discussion so far has been entirely on the divine Persons without even a nod to the divine unity. Richard would deny the charge of tri-theism by arguing that the Persons are consubstantial: " there is one God because the three Persons share a single divine substance. However, sharing the same substance (or nature) does not preclude the impression that the Persons are separate realities; people have the same nature and are, nevertheless, separate realities.

Bonaventure and Circumincession

Bonaventure's theology is well balanced in its treatment of both the divine unity and plurality. One of the ways in which he presents the unity of the three-Personed God is with his teaching on circumincession. Circumincession corresponds to the Greek word *perichoresis* which originated with John of Damascus.[15] *Perichoresis* refers to the mutual indwelling of the trinitarian Persons, as is suggested by Christ's words, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (Jn 14: 11). Although we say that there are three distinct Persons in the one God, we do not mean that there are "three centers of consciousness." There is but one divine intellect, one will, and one activity within the one God, because each Person abides eternally in the other.

Thomas Aquinas translates *perichoresis* as "circuminsession," from *cir-cum-sedere*, to sit around; this translation connotes an unquestionably static understanding of the mutual indwelling. Bonaventure, on the other hand, translates it as "circumincession," from *circum-incedere*, to move around; and this is a much more faithful rendering of the original dynamic sense of *perichoresis* which may suggest a "circular divine dance" (from "choreo," as in "choreography").[16] Thus, Bonaventure's understanding of circumincession is dynamic, consonant with eternal self-giving, self-emptying, self-transcending divine love.

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[14] Richard, *The Trinity*, III, VIII, p.381

[15] John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, I, 8 in *The Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers* vol. IX, trans. by S.D.F. Salmond (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983)

[16] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), pp. 272-73.

The only one in the Latin West who would have any real use for the doctrine of circumincession is Bonaventure. It is not found even in the writings of his teacher, Alexander of Hales.[17] Bonaventure's understanding of intra-divine life is such that it is the Person of the Father (not the divine substance) who communicates Himself perfectly. In the *Commentarius in librum sententiarum* he states:

> There is in the divine Persons supreme and perfect circumincession by reason of the unity of essence with the distinction of Persons ... it is called circumincession because each Person is in the others; and this is properly and perfectly only in God, because circumincession in being gives distinction and unity at the same time. And because there is the highest unity with distinction only in God, for this reason, the distinction is unconfused and unity is inseparable: hence for this reason, perfect circumincession exists in God alone. And the reason for this is clear, it is because circumincession is the perfect unity of essence with the distinction of Persons.[18]

In *The Soul's Journey into God*, Bonaventure demonstrates that circumincession is integral to the self-diffusive goodness of the Trinity. The highest, infinite, and most perfect self-diffusion of the good is the eternal communication of divine life from the Father to the Son and the Spirit.

> ... it is necessary that there be in the three Persons supreme communicability; and from supreme communicability, supreme consubstantiality; and from supreme consubstantiality, supreme configurability; and from these supreme coequality and therefore supreme coeternity; and even from all the above mentioned, supreme mutual intimacy, by which one Person is in the others necessarily by supreme circumincession; and one works with the others in all ways without division of substance, power, nor activity of the most blessed Trinity.[19]

The various aspects of Bonaventure's model of the Trinity seem very well integrated with each other, even though they come from different sources; for example, the Damascene's doctrine of *perichoresis* (circumincession) seems well suited to the Pseudo-Dionysian principle of self-diffusive goodness, as the quotation above demonstrates. These strands of theological insights are united with the Victorine principle of interpersonal love as the highest good, in order to produce Bonaventure's trinitarian model which is "well-rounded" and cogent.

Conclusion

Bonaventure's teaching on the Trinity is a sound foundation for exploring how we may live a trinitarian life because it is a model of dynamic interpersonal relations that holds community as the most perfect love. It is a model for the values that build community: self-transcending love, ecstatic sharing, equality, mutuality, generous self-giving, unity in diversity, and interdependence. It is a model that reveals to us a God who comes to be Godself through the love of another.[20] If we take seriously the proposition that human beings are created in the image of the triune God, then we are most like God when we transcend ourselves in the love of another person, and reach out to include others in a loving community.

[17] Jacques-Guy Bougerol, *Lexique saint Bonaventure* (Paris: Editions Franciscaines, 1969), p.34.

[18] *I Sent.*, d.19, p.1, a.u., q.4, concl. (Opera omnia 1). Translation mine. Cf. also *In hexaem.* 21.19.

[19] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, 6, 2, p. 125.

[20] As Richard says, "... nothing is sweeter than charity; nothing more pleasing than charity. The life of reason experiences nothing sweeter than the delights of charity; enjoys no pleasure more pleasing than this. He [God] would lack these delights in eternity if He remains all alone on the throne of majesty because He lacks fellowship ... we can realize ... how great the defect of such benevolence would be if He should prefer to keep for Himself alone in a miserly fashion the abundance of His fullness, which He could communicate to another with such an accumulation of joy and such an increase of pleasure" (*The Trinity*, III, 4, p. 377).

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.

The Mystic Saint Clare

I strain from womb to womb,
each passage leaving the tomb
behind I thought was all
there was, a world small
as what it hid, enclosed.

Just as I supposed,
when I died, the strain
upon the merest membrane
broke the tissue of night;
I fell into light within light.

Murray Bodo, O.F.M.

Recovering a Lost Horizon of Franciscan Evangelical Life: Reclaiming Penitential Spirituality for the 21st Century

Margaret Magee, O.S.F.

In the current experience of Franciscan life, particularly within the Third Order Regular tradition, there is a real desire to identify and recover the values of the Evangelical Life project begun by Francis, Clare, and their first followers. This quest began with the call of the Second Vatican Council for religious institutes to return to the spirit and charism of their founders and foundresses.

Later this pursuit, coupled with the revival and publication of the new Franciscan sources, brought about a greater awareness that Evangelical Life did not fit within the context of either the monastic or the apostolic expressions of religious life. While claiming a distinction, some elements of both expressions were seen as integral to this way of life. Evangelical Life then is seen as different, not better, than the monastic and apostolic expressions.

The current effort to define Franciscan Evangelical Life and to identify its fundamental values is not an easy task. It is generally affirmed as the call to live the Gospel life, while some also speak of a desire to reclaim the original articulation of the lay movement inspired by Francis and Clare and their early followers. As we prepare to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Third Order Regular Rule, promulgated on December 8, 1982, is it time to reflect on the four values, contemplation, conversion, poverty and minority, with eyes and hearts focused on new and broader horizons? These values, which have been identified as integral in shaping Franciscan

TOR life, must be seen and experienced within the context and foundational value of penitential spirituality. Further, if we are to understand and recapture the full essence of Franciscan Evangelical Life, it must be through reclaiming and yielding to this foundational value and its implications within our world today.

Often in congregational gatherings and meetings with religious men and women, one hears it avowed that our place within the church, as religious, is with the laity. It is not always clear whether this is a conscious recognition of our status as lay persons or simply an endeavor to distance religious life from the clerical, hierarchical, and institutional structures that often come across as overbearing and bureaucratic.

As Franciscans, and particularly as women and men of the Third Order Regular tradition, it is not enough for us to simply recover and affirm a tradition of being a lay movement. Further attention and consideration must be given to the evolution of the lay penitential movements that came to the fore within the culture and climate of medieval Europe, which influenced and inspired the dynamic conversion and faith journey of Francis of Assisi.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and explore the centrality of the penitential spirituality within the writings of Francis and the Franciscan sources. The retrieval of this foundational value is indispensable in addressing the issues of aggression, violence, and isolation in a world where we are losing our humanity and so our potential to incarnate Christ. If we truly are to participate in the return of all creation in wholeness and fullness to God, we must find ways of touching and reverencing our humanity with the audacity and boldness of love that is willing to lay down our very lives in the image of Christ's crucified love.

First we will explore the importance of reading and understanding history, as a way of locating our current lived experience of Franciscan religious life. Then we will identify some elements within our religious memory that may have triggered a shift away from the significance of historical study and inquiry. This openness to inquiry with renewed curiosity

is essential if we are to understand the original faithfulness and driving impulse which drew many people to embrace a penitential spirituality.

Continuing to mine this historical vein, we will consider the origins of the penitential life from its awakening within the spirituality of the primitive Christian community through its development as a way of life within the church. Focusing specifically on the events of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we will trace the cultural, social, and economic dynamics which gave birth to the many lay penitential movements. The Franciscan movement was simply one expression, but one that embodied a durability and conviction of Gospel perfection which allowed it to speak and witness to the dynamic love of God long after other movements had died out.

We will then move to an exploration of the effects and implications of Francis's distinctive expression of the penitential life which awakened, within people of various walks of life, a vibrancy and dynamism for this spirituality. Of special import in this study is an examination of the discord and conflict within the early brotherhood between those who aspired to preserve the primitive lay penitential life and those drawn to the clerical and ministerial endeavors which gave rise to the Order of Friars Minor. The effect this had on the whole Franciscan movement, especially on the Third Order, deserves attention.

In conclusion, we will identify some central characteristics of a contemporary expression of Franciscan penitential spirituality, while exploring how this might be lived and witnessed in our world today. The task of clarifying and interpreting its value, which must find expression in this twenty-first century, will continue beyond this modest academic exploration and inquiry. The real life discernment and conscious embodiment of the penitential spirituality will be essential if we are to retrieve and reawaken our true heritage and patrimony which is both Franciscan and foundationally Christian.

New Historical Perspectives

Because the insights and anxieties of the medieval mind are so close to our own, the discovery of the Middle Ages is an extensive and continuing process.[1]

What is our understanding of history? Do we live with a consciousness of history continuing to unfold and evolve? Often we, as religious today, almost have an aversion for anything that smacks of history or the retrieval of anything from times past. Perhaps this is due to memories, prior to the Second Vatican Council, when some aspects of religious life seemed steeped in the tradition of monastic life of medieval Europe. During these years one left "the world" to seek and find oneness with God. Religious life was clearly identified by the habit, communal convent living, and the *horarium*, the daily schedule which included liturgical, communal, and contemplative prayer, meals, recreation, and night silence.

Vatican II ushered in sweeping changes within the church and especially within religious life. Many religious communities no longer felt bound to the former structures in their desire to live a vowed Gospel life. In many ways, these changes have put us on a path with a stronger momentum and conviction to press forward, without looking back, and to be the prophetic "voice crying in the wilderness" (Matt 3:3). But for many people, both sisters and those outside vowed life, the lack of clear external symbols and the structure of former days, is seen as religious life set adrift. With no clear identity and even less clear purpose, how can the life attract and invite new membership?

The challenge before us is not to focus on the life, that is, the externals and structures. We must ponder and consider the insights and values that awakened the initial fervor and intense desire of Francis, Clare and the unnamed faithful men and women whose surrender in love and penitential Gospel living transformed society and the world in such a way that it left a mark, their footprints, in history.

[1] Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1991), 42.

To embark on the challenge of locating the foundational value of penitential spirituality in the Franciscan tradition, we must begin by reading and exploring history with a new perceptiveness and imagination. The study of history is not simply looking back in time as through a magic mirror and seeing the isolated actions, behaviors, and deeds of those who have gone before us. Norman F. Cantor states,

> The historian encounters the "tracks" of people only in the past, not their immediate presence, and he must in consciousness reconstruct from these traces what the people are like. In this work of imaginative reconstruction, the concepts of the behavioral and social sciences are critically valuable.[2]

In our Franciscan memory, this means that we cannot look at the events, the choices, and the actions of Francis, Clare and the early followers in isolation or simply as historical facts. Much consideration must be given to the cultural, social, and economic dynamics which gave birth to the many lay twelfth century penitential movements of which the Franciscan movement was simply one expression, albeit one that continues to speak and witness to the dynamic love of God.

We must set aside previous notions and often romantic ideas of medieval Europe that gave birth to the saints of Assisi. If Franciscan Evangelical Life is to move effectively and dynamically into the future, we can no longer teach and tell our Franciscan stories detached from the culture and times from which it was birthed. This limited view often encourages a pietistic spirituality and detachment that enshrines and imprisons the Poverello in birdbaths and gardens.

A pietistic spirituality often neglects the wealth of Francis's writings and exhortations beckoning all people to recognize the generous love of God. As Francis of Assisi modeled through deep, personal, and contemplative prayer, all Christians and all Franciscans are called to embody the Incarnate

[2] Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 141.

Christ by walking in the footprints of penitential and crucified love.

The Origins of Penitential Spirituality

The term *metânoia* has deep meaning and significance within Franciscan history and spirituality. This Greek word, meaning conversion or change of heart, finds its biblical roots in the Septuagint and the books of the New Testament written in Greek. "The Vulgate or Latin version generally translates this with the words *paenitentia* or *conversio*. The three words have much the same meaning and may be used interchangeably."[1]

Within the experience of the New Testament communities, *metânoia* was marked by a person's commitment to follow Christ in a new and radical way of life. Choosing to be a follower of Christ involved the renunciation of status and rights within society and the refusal to engage in certain professions, such as military service and politics, as these were seen to be in opposition to the moral teachings of the Gospel.

Gospel life is characteristically penitential,

> while the New Testament stresses the need for conversion or the demand to do penance, it offers little specific detail concerning the external actions involved in doing penance. Rather, the New Testament focuses upon the efficacy of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for the repentant sinner. However, one action is mentioned consistently as an external manifestation of the person's internal conversion: Baptism.[2]

[1] Raffaele Pazzelli, T.O.R., *St. Francis and the Third Order: The Franciscan and pre-Franciscan Penitential Movement* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 1.

[2] Robert M. Stewart, "De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam" *The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation* (Roma: Istituto Storico Dei Cappuccini, 1991), 95.

The baptized faithful, persecuted for following the crucified Christ, gathered and organized their life in close-knit communities, house churches, often gathering in secret. This faith commitment was not simply adhering to religious practices and creeds, rather it implied a total commitment to a way of life lived in relationship with one another. Faith demanded a personal relationship with God and with the community in strong familial bonds. So, when these early believers were faced with the reality of sinfulness that became disruptive of the faith and the relationships of community, they were called upon to find ways to respond and to bring about reconciliation and healing.

The common practice was to isolate the sinner from the community until a specific penance or reparation was fulfilled and the person was welcomed back into full relationship. Soon these practices of reconciliation were ritualized and incorporated into the liturgical life of the community. "The sinner was excluded from participating in the Eucharist. This same assembly, the Eucharistic one, decided the nature and duration of expiation. Once the expiation had been completed the sinner was readmitted into Eucharistic participation. If the sinner refused to do penance, that is, the prescribed expiation, he was excommunicated: that meant that he was not only cut off from the cultic life of the community, but from its social life as well."[3]

By AD313 and the Edict of Milan, which ended religious persecution and raised Christianity to a state recognized religion, the Church had become more organized and institutionalized. This rapid growth in membership and structure did not diminish penitential practices with its call to *metânoia*. Rather these practices were more clearly ritualized and delineated with the establishment of the Order of Penitents. Those seeking reconciliation and re-admittance to the community and sacramental life submitted themselves to periods of public fasting, prayer, and other ascetical practices.

[3] Pazzelli, *St. Francis and the Third Order*, 8.

As these practices of penance and expiation evolved they became more stringent and in some cases were imposed upon the penitent for life. This severity brought about a shift in practice with some people choosing to postpone reconciliation until later in life. Interestingly, an alternate aspect began to arise with some penitents choosing to remain within the Order of Penitents even after they had been reconciled and returned to full membership of the community.

The Order of Penitents continued to evolve. Some members of the faithful not bound by serious sin, desiring to dedicate their lives to greater purity and Gospel perfection, embraced penitential spirituality as a way of life. These voluntary penitents publicly and willingly committed themselves to mortification, fasting, and prayer. This new manifestation within the Order of Penitents pre-dates and in some ways could be seen as the precursor to the later development of monastic and eremitical life.

Prior to the medieval era, penitential life and spirituality became synonymous with the monastic and eremitical lifestyles. The call to dedicate one's life to God in prayerful service meant renouncing the world and leaving behind all material attachment. This total detachment could only be attained by entering a monastery or going off into the wilderness and becoming a hermit. "Monastic profession rapidly became analogous to 'penance' and was also considered a second baptism,"[9] this detachment set up a dualistic approach to spirituality and religious life, making a distinction between what was sacred and what was profane.

The twelfth century ushered in sweeping and vibrant reforms and advancements that touched every aspect of life. Elements which contributed to these changes include a rapidly increasing and mobile population due to a rise in trade, commerce, and the organization of religious pilgrimages and military crusades to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim invaders.

The increase in economic trade and commerce also enhanced the exchange of religious and intellectual thought. Education, once the wealth and treasure of ecclesial and monastic schools, became more widespread with the rise of scholastic institutes and universities centered within developing city-states. These new centers of life and learning encouraged and engaged people in all aspects of the political, economic, social and eventually the religious milieu.

In terms of religious and spiritual life, this reform can be seen as a response and reaction to some monasteries and to the church itself, which were seen as enclaves of privilege and status, tied to the feudal structures and to a society ruled by aristocratic nobility. This new religious fervor and reform surfaced among the people as a desire to live Gospel perfection in the world. This fervor sparked a retrieval and commitment to a more primitive expression of baptismal commitment and the renewal of the Order of Penitents or *conversi* that was voluntarily and freely chosen. Through conscious renunciation of one's place and stake in society, penitents became free for the Gospel. Poverty and penitential life became positive values that were sought after and expressed in a plurality of forms.

History indicates that the members of this renewed Order of Penitents, the Patarini and Humiliati, wore simple and modest attire and the sign of the tau, the sign of the cross, as an external sign of inward *metánoia*. This penitential life was also expressed by the call to itinerant preaching by the laity. All the baptized were called to live, preach, and witness to the Gospel of crucified love. It is interesting and significant to acknowledge the many connections between what was already developing and happening within the faith and life of the common people and what Francis, Clare, and their companions embraced in their evangelical expression.

This time of renewed religious fervor also saw the rise of many anti-clerical and heretical movements. Groups like the Cathars, Albigensians, Waldensians, and the *Pauperes Catholici*, became influential among the poor and working class people. Raffaele Pazzelli, T.O.R. highlights two factors which gave rise to the heretical groups, acknowledging "the lack of religious instruction on the part of the Christian people, especially those of the uneducated and illiterate lower

[9] Pazzelli, *St. Francis and the Third Order*, 11

classes, due in turn to the lack of preaching on the part of the clergy."[7]

Pope Innocent III, a strong opponent to heresy and the movements it spawned, instituted a program of renewal and reform within the church. Innocent especially looked to increase the number of clerics who, as itinerant preachers, would live among the people giving witness by their very lives to the message of the Gospel.

Francis, under the guidance of Bishop Guido and perhaps the Benedictines in the area, can be seen as a prime candidate for the reform of Innocent. But as Pazzelli further points out, Francis lived the penitential life for two years before he began to seek approval from the Pope for his way of life. Understanding Francis, the penitent, is critical in comprehending his conversion, his spirituality, and ongoing transformation.

> The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin doing penance in this way: for when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. And the Lord Himself led me among them and *I showed mercy* to them.[8]

Francis did not set out to be a reformer, nor did his actions indicate a conscious decision to found a religious order. Rather, in giving himself over to Christ, in allowing the Lord to lead him, Francis was transformed and compelled to image Christ and serve others as an *alter Christus*, another Christ. He became a model of *metánoia*.

> Francis' life of penance became more clear to him though he would still work out the details of that life for the friars, the sisters, and the penitents in the years to come.[9]

Clearly the authenticity of his life, his desire to dedicate his life to following the poor Christ in faithfulness to the church, the scriptures, and the sacramental life, stands as witness, even to this present day, of how others are drawn to share in his penitential spirituality.

The foundational value of penitential spirituality is integral to the continued development of Franciscan life and spirituality. This penitential life is not a matter of "doing penance" or accomplishing penitential acts, rather it is the openness to grow, to be shaped, and formed in a life that reflects the dynamic movement and presence of Christ within. *Metánoia* is not something we do; it is God's generous gift. Our participation in *metánoia* depends on our capacity to be receptive, bent low in prayerful and contemplative love, to dwell in Christ, and with Christ live in bountiful love and service of others.

From Penitentially Inspired to Institutionally Ordained

Monastic spirituality defined and mapped out the spiritual journey as an ascent to God, out of and away from daily life. In contrast, the lay penitential spirituality expressed by Francis was more of a horizontal movement of conformity to Christ in imitation of his poverty and suffering on the cross. This new movement drew men and women to live the Gospel literally and radically in the world. The more they personally encountered God through Christ, the more they were drawn into dynamic and compassionate relationships with the poor, the lepers, and those who were invisible and unwanted.

As in earlier centuries, *metánoia* was once again seen as the calling of all the baptized to a deeper, personal expression of faith and contemplation in the world, and in service of the Gospel.

> Penitents are those who have discovered their own identity in the light of God, and who decide to change their own heart and actions, to make themselves con-

[7] Pazzelli, *St. Francis and the Third Order*, 96.
[8] Test 1-2, *FAED*, vol. 1, 124.
[9] Stewart, "De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam," 132.

sistent with that identity, acknowledging the fact of the Lordship of God in their own lives.[10]

Retracing the recovery of Francis's identity, we have only to look at some of the central events which changed him inwardly and reoriented his life. First, his relationship with Christ became alive and personal, and so could no longer be simply an expression of religious devotion. In the chapel of San Damiano the crucified Christ spoke and awakened the yearning of his heart. "And we honestly believe the wounds of the sacred Passion were impressed deep in his heart, though not yet on his flesh."[11] Second, those who were poor and unwanted became visible and he could see his humanity in their faces. As recorded in his *Testament*, Francis wrote, "... what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body."[12] Third, renouncing all his possessions he saw himself as poor, dependent on God and in need of God's mercy. Standing naked before the bishop and the gathered townspeople of Assisi, Francis declared, "From now on I will say freely: 'Our Father who art in heaven', and not 'My father, Pietro di Bernardone.'"[13] Francis's continuing conversion was a reordering of his identity and the values that shaped his life.

Further documentation in *The Anonymous of Perugia* illustrates that the identity of being penitent was not simply the ideal of Francis; it also became the identification of the brotherhood. On one occasion as some of the brothers entered a city they were asked, "To which Order do you belong?" They answered simply: "We are penitents and were born in Assisi."[14]

Later, as Francis began to write a rule of life, the collection of Gospel verses reflected his single-mindedness in following Christ as the only true guide which could shape and give meaning to his life. Upon his arrival in Rome to seek approval of this rule,

> the Bishop of Sabina, a far-sighted and discerning man, questioned him about many things, urging him to turn to the monastic or eremitical life. But Saint Francis, as much as he could, humbly refused his urging. He did not despise what was urged on him, but he was intently seeking other things, moved by a loftier desire.[15]

Thus steadfast in his conviction, Francis and the penitents of Assisi came before Pope Innocent III and received the desired approbation. Innocent, praising their evangelical form of life, gave them the tonsure which allowed them to preach the Gospel in a spirit of penance.

This latter factor has been largely overlooked by Franciscan scholars, while actually it signals a moment of great importance: the company of the poor passes from the state of penance to the clerical state, from a spontaneous group to an institutionalized Order, thus changing substantially its character.[16]

Historically, it is important to acknowledge this moment of approbation as being an event that will set the stage for further developments in the clericalization of the Order. More importantly we need to recognize that this approbation, which is cited as a clerical shift, did not immediately change the life and activities of Francis and the brothers. Consider the questions posed by Francis and the brothers as they journeyed back from Rome.

> How could they sincerely keep the rule they had accepted and steadfastly safeguard it? How could they walk before the Most High in all holiness and religion?

[10] Prospero Rivi, OFM. Cap. "Francis of Assisi and the Laity of His Time," *Greyfriars Review* 15 (2001): 55.

[11] 2C10, *FAED*, vol. 2, 249.

[12] Test 3, *FAED*, vol. 1, 124.

[13] 2C12, *FAED*, vol. 2, 251.

[14] AP19, *FAED*, vol. 2, 43.

[15] 1C33, *FAED*, vol. 1, 212.

[16] Lino Temperini, T.O.R. "The Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis from its Origins to the Present Day," *A Statement of Understanding of Franciscan Penitential Life* (The Madrid Document). (Rome: Commissione Storico Internazionale T.O.R., n.3, 1979), 77.

> Finally, how could their life and conduct, by growth in holy virtues, be an example to their neighbors?[17]

These are not the questions of those concerned with juridical or canonical approbation. Rather, these questions underline the desire to preserve their ideal and identity as poor penitents and lesser brothers following in the footprints of the crucified Christ.

In the latter part of the life of Francis, the currents of change began to surge wildly, impacted by the increased number of brothers from the initial twelve to over five thousand, in the short span of ten years. This rapid growth called for defined structures in the formation of the brothers and for their work and life together. The fraternity drew men who were educated and interested in a clerical lifestyle. This influenced the relationship of the brotherhood to the Church and the Church's desire to channel their energy and imagination for the spiritual renewal of the people. As their esteem and recognition grew, the previous identification of being poor lesser brothers and penitents also shifted; the term "friar minor" became a distinctive title.

For Francis, there was only one way to personally navigate these growing torrents of change and clericalization. In 1220, while on a missionary journey he received word of growing discord within the order. This discord arose from a faction considered to be "wise and learned" whose desire was to bring the brotherhood in line with the monastic structure. Upon his return to Assisi, Francis called an emergency chapter and resigned as head of the order with the discordant words, "From now on, I am dead to you."[18] The brothers responded with weeping and uncontrolled grief at the thought of loosing their seraphic father. Francis's resignation was not simply a response to the growing changes and modifications of his original desire; it was also a witness to the brothers of true obedience and humility. Beside this event being recorded a number of times in *The Remembrance of a Soul*, Bonaventure's *Major Legend*, and in *The Assisi Compilation*, this last source also recounts Francis's prayerful and sorrowful conversation with God, giving the Order back, "Lord I give back to you the family You gave me."[19] His true and only consolation was in God, with the deep trust that the loving providence of God would continue to guide the Order.

The importance Francis placed on poverty, penance, and being lesser brother was lived out even to the point of being able to let go of his dream for the brotherhood. This further reveals that his was not a religious response of ascetical and devotional practice; rather it was a personal response to God's invitation and gift of generous love. It was the fullness of life he experienced by uniting himself in prayerful imitation of the humble and crucified Christ. Modeling Christ's poverty and humble submission to the will of the Father became for Francis the way to experience liberation, freedom and peace. This is the paradox of the Gospel. "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."[20]

Francis and Franciscan Life

Franciscan life, with its new spiritual vision, its simplicity and its optimism, did not shut the friars away from human association, but brought them into close communion with the popular life of the times, which became morally elevated from this contact.[21]

The life project that Francis, Clare, and their early communities lived must be seen first and foremost as a penitential movement. Their penitential spirituality of prayer, poverty, and humble service in the mundane and ordinary events of life was authentic, mirroring for others the compassionate love of the incarnate and crucified Christ.

[17] 1C34, *FAED*, vol. 1, 213.
[18] 2C143, *FAED*, vol. 2, 340; AC11, *FAED*, vol. 2, 125; AC39, *FAED*, vol.2, 142.
[19] AC112, *FAED*, vol. 2, 219.
[20] Mt 16: 24-25.
[21] Rivi, "Francis of Assisi and the Laity of His Times," 51.

Men of every class and situation in life began to gather around Francis, the penitent, in the first stirrings of the brotherhood. Francis's insight into living *fraternitas* and *minoritas* created a uniquely Gospel way of living, of being in relationship, and of service to all people. Those who came sought to share in this new vision of Christian life that was unfolding. "The decision of Clare to follow him was a surprise, which only his extraordinary ability to love manages to overcome."[22] Along with the developing brotherhood, the conviction of Clare and the women who joined her in the life of radical poverty at San Damiano brought renewed faith and a vitality to follow Christ in new ways. It also awakened a spiritual hunger that for many men and women had gone unnoticed and unnourished for too long.

In the historical writings of the time, and specifically the Franciscan sources, the details regarding the exact foundation of a third order remain vague. This vagueness is further characterized by the variety of titles used to distinguish the presence of a third order. Titles such as, the Order of Penitents, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, or simply the Penitents cannot really be used to distinguish lay followers of Francis, as these were names used for the many penitential movements present at the time. "There was already the canonically recognized penitential state as well as, for example, The Third Order of the Humiliati, whose *forma vitae* called the *Propositum* had been approved in 1201 by Innocent III."[23] Further the *Memoriale propositi* issued in 1221 by Cardinal Ugolino outlined norms for the penitential life and granted canonical status to the various fraternities and communities.

Amidst this ambiguity though, there can be no doubt that Francis's spirit of penance, poverty, and minority ignited and enlivened others to embrace lay penitential spirituality.

[22] Raoul Manselli, "Francis of Assisi and Lay People Living in the World: Beginning of the Third Order?," *Greyfriars Review*, 11, 1 (1997): 46.
[23] Giovanna Casagrande, "An Order for Lay People: Penance and Penitents in the Thirteenth Century," *Greyfriars Review*, 17.1, (2003): 47.

> That he wished to attract to himself the faithful, that he wished the brothers to remain very close to them, that these brothers were to follow the Gospel and be salt of the earth and light for the world, that they must plant a mustard seed in Christian society—all this is beyond question.[24]

Men and women, clerics, married, and virgins, joined in this evangelical life project that remained Catholic and orthodox.

The desire of Francis to nourish the Christian faith of the people and to instill a deep love for the crucified Christ is best seen in his writing not one but two letters specifically addressed *To All the Faithful*. These letters, among the earliest writings of Francis, focus on living true faith and penance by radically living the Gospel in imitation of "our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life."[25] Penitential life is *metánoia*, totally turning one's life and will over to the God of merciful and generous love so that we may know our true identity, as spouses in our faithfulness, brothers when "we do the will of the Father who is in heaven,"[26] and mothers when we bear Christ in our hearts and give birth to him through our humble and generous love.

As history confirms, the First Order was not alone in experiencing a shift toward institutionalization and its eventual incorporation within the church. One has only to ponder the conviction and long-suffering faithfulness of Clare and her sisters as they endured the ecclesial attempts to impose a rule of life and dissuade them from their embrace of "the privilege of poverty."

The lay penitential movements, inspired by Francis, Clare, and their early communities would be no different. Their membership and influence grew rapidly, which continually brought them under the watchful eye of the hierarchy. In 1289, the Franciscan, Pope Nicolas IV issued the papal bull,

[24] Manselli, "Francis of Assisi and Lay People Living in the World," 47.
[25] 2LtF3, *FAED*, vol. 1, 45.
[26] 1LtF9, *FAED*, vol. 1, 42.

Supra montem, which "definitely confirmed the institution of the Order of Penance/Franciscan Third Order, the first third order officially linked to a mendicant order."[27] As with many religious groups and secular organizations, institutionalization brought to the forefront juridical issues of structure, regularizing its community life and its charitable works. While this may be seen as giving new life, validating the mission and commitment of a particular group, it may also and often reorient the identity and founding memory that gave birth and shaped the life and spirit of its members.

The Third Order would continue, under the same rule, to develop in its local fraternities and its new congregations of men and women who wished to live in a community of "religious regular life." In 1521, Pope Leo X conferred a new rule, *Inter cetera nostro regiminis* for the Franciscan Tertiaries Regular. This new rule instituted the profession of the three vows and living in community under the guidance and jurisdiction of the Observant Friars.

Eventually in 1927, another rule by Pius X, *Rerum conditio*, was given to all Third Order Regular Congregations of men and women. This rule met with much dissatisfaction, not being inspired clearly by a Franciscan spirituality nor providing for the formation of new members in that tradition. This dissatisfaction and the winds of change spurred by world events and the promulgation of Vatican II instituted a series of Interobediential Congresses. These congresses set about formulating the current document, *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis* which has as its prologue *The First Letter to the Faithful.*

[27] Casagrande, "An Order for Lay People...," 47.

Characteristics of Contemporary Franciscan Penitential Spirituality

What happened to the vibrant expression of voluntary penitential life which stirred the hearts and imaginations of so many, giving birth to not one but three expressions of the Franciscan way of life? Many authors point to the Church's juridical influence, reigning in the free expression of the Franciscan movement into the three Orders, clerical, cloistered, and lay penitents, we know today. Lino Temperini, T.O.R. offers another possibility when he states,

> All religious orders in the course of their history, in the course of time, have the tendency to both drift from their initial thrust and to become somewhat similar in many aspects, such as apostolates and formation.[28]

He further suggests that we, as Franciscans, have forgotten the values of our origin and our own unique charism.

After reviewing the history of our tradition, its institutionalization and the various documents and rules which have given shape to the Third Order over the years, it is easy to see that drift from the original charism of lay penitential spirituality. We have become very similar, in our apostolates, formation, convent or communal living, to other religious institutes and congregations. Our current Rule with its emphasis on Franciscan and Gospel values has brought us back to a clearer expression of penitential spirituality. The Rule focuses on four fundamental values, poverty, minority, contemplation and conversion, understood as biblical *metànoia*. The commentary on the Rule points to other values, characteristically Franciscan, expressed as joy, simplicity, charity, and the pursuit of peace through justice.

[28] Lino Temperini, T.O.R, "Penitential Spirituality in the Franciscan Sources," *Franciscan Publication*, July, 1983, 48.

> Fraternity/community is regarded not as a value, but as the social reality of committed relationships in which we live out our gospel witness.[29]

With the great work of this reformulation of our Franciscan fundamental values behind us, the next critical task is to recapture and to reorient our identity as penitents in this twenty-first century. Discovering and deepening the meaning of penitential life and our identity as penitents, will only become clearer if we are willing to dive into the deep waters of our Franciscan spirituality.

Recovering our Franciscan penitential identity must become the personal and communal journey of faith, reflected for us in the cruciformed love of Francis of Assisi. Francis, himself became dependent on the goodness of God and open to relationship with others as sister and brother. First, penitential spirituality and identity will become our reality the more we live our lives in prayerful consciousness of the crucified love of Christ. The Word made flesh for us must become enfleshed in us and expressed by our lives of reverence and humble service to others. Second, penitential spirituality and identity will become our reality when we begin to see ourselves in the faces of the poor, the unwanted, the invisible, and the enemy. We will begin to taste the sweetness of love and affection when we can recognize Christ in every person and in every aspect of creation. Third, penitential spirituality and identity will become our reality when we can accept our true poverty and renounce the need to possess, to control, and to dominate. We will see that our poverty is not determined by material goods or by limiting the use and quantity of possessions. What is needed is the poverty that reflects the Trinity's self-diffusive love and goodness, which calls us to bend low, never desiring "to be above others, but, instead, we must be servants and subject to *every human creature for God's sake.*"[30]

[29] *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary*, (Franciscan Federation: Typecraft Press, Inc., 1982), 13.

[30] 2LtF47, *FAED*, vol. 1, 48.

This is the path that not only led Francis but drew him inwardly and outwardly to find fulfillment in union with God through all of creation.

Conclusion

To conclude this journey of reclamation, owning the foundational value of penitential spirituality will truly help in clarifying a Third Order Regular identity, and refocusing on the horizon of Franciscan Evangelical life will teach us what is ours to do in our world today. Too often when we think of the word horizon, our minds wander to distant places, or to far off vistas or goals that we feel we must set out to conquer or achieve. The true horizon is not outside or beyond but within us. It is the horizon of our true identity as image of God. Too often we lose sight of this image because we have lost sight of Christ in our lives. We allow this image to become dim or covered over with our own sin and selfish desires. We distort this image by anger, mistrust, and an often uncaring and sometimes violent response to others in our words and actions. The path to recovering the lost horizon of our image in God will only be through our surrender in prayer and contemplative love that will lead us, like Francis, to the burning love of God in Christ. May His love mark us inwardly and outwardly so that we may be the peace of God for others and for all of creation.

Vivere secundum formam sancti evangelii
A Time of Grace to Re-situate
our vocation and mission

This reflection was originally published by the Preparatory Commission of the 2006 General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor.

What are we celebrating?

Through diverse initiatives, individual and communal, we are preparing, three years beforehand, to celebrate a centenary of a particular nature in 2009. Our celebrations usually regard some figure: Francis, Clare ... This time, however, we are not remembering a personage or his activities, but an historical fact: the recognition on the part of the Church, back in 1209, of the "form of gospel life" presented to Pope Innocent III by a small group of Friars gathered around Francis. Therefore, we are not making a memorial of Francis, but celebrating, in thanksgiving and in joy, the anniversary of the birth of the fundamental and original nucleus of the "charism" or Franciscan spirituality, which the Church recognizes as its own. "Written down simply and in a few words" (Test 14), the *proto-rule* did not propose anything other than a style of life in conformity with the Gospel of Jesus (Test 14). Even though it was addressed to the Friars first of all, it is an "open" proposal addressed, as subsequent history would reveal, to all categories of people and to all the states in life.

Sanctum evangelium observare: the essential content of the Rule

The original text, a project and description of a life rather than its regulation, was taken up, made more precise and enriched later: above all in the *Regula non bullata*, in its diverse **redactions**, subsequently confirmed by the written pontifical **redaction** (*Regula bullata*, 1223) recalled by the Testament of

Francis (14-23). When it is a matter of indicating its fundamental content in brief, or of giving it a title, the word "gospel" appears each time. And so, the Rnb defines the life of the friars as *vita evangelii Iesu Christi* [the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ] (Prol. 2), reminds the friars to draw close to this kind of life which they undertake before the Gospel: *promiserunt per sanctum evangelium et vitam ipsorum* [as they have promised by the Holy Gospel and their life] (5, 17), and exhorts them to remain faithful to the *verba, vitam et doctrinam et sanctum evangelium* [words, the life, the teaching and the Holy Gospel] (22, 41) of Christ. The definitive Rule, like that of Clare, is put into context, from beginning to end, by the same terse expression: *regula et vita minorum fratrum haec est: Domini nostri Iesu Christi evangelium observare* [The Rule and Life of the Lesser Brothers is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ] (1.2); *ut paupertatem et humilitatem et sanctum evangelium ... observemus* [we may observe poverty, humility, and the Holy Gospel] (12,5). In the Testament, as he describes in detail the style of his and the Friars' life, chosen through divine inspiration, Francis sums it up as *vivere secundum formam sancti evangelii* [life according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel]. The Letter to All the Faithful extends the invitation to observe the *praecepta et consilia* [commands and counsels] of our Lord Jesus Christ (2LtF 39) to all believers. To present, therefore, the primitive Franciscan project in a global form, to summarise it, synthesise it, to highlight the central nucleus, the heart of it, the word *Gospel* is used.

The *Gospel* in the Rule and in other writings of Francis

What did Francis mean by this word "gospel," to which he tends so much and through which he summarises the life described in his Rules? Did he, perhaps, restrict it to some excerpts relative to poverty, itinerancy and preaching? A careful examination of all the passages of the writings in which the word appears, shows that, according to Francis, life according to the Gospel cannot be reduced to a list of

behaviors such as "sell everything you have" (Rnb 1,2) or "take nothing for the journey" (Rnb 14,1), or even the greeting "may the Lord give you peace" (Rb 3,13; Test 23). "To observe the Gospel" means to accept the message of the revelation of Jesus in its fullness: his revelations, promises, diverse demands, without excluding or giving privilege to any one of them in particular. In its fullest meaning, the Gospel is Jesus himself, who, through his life and word, reveals to us the profound being of his Father, his Name, and makes it possible for us to experience communion with him: *Teneamus ... verba, vitam et doctrinam et sanctum eius evangelium qui dignatus est pro nobis rogare Patrem et nobis eius nomen manifestare* [Let us therefore, hold onto the words, the life, the teaching and the Holy Gospel of Him Who humbled Himself to beg His Father for us and to make His name known ...] (Rnb 22, 41). The concluding phrase of the Rb (12,4) *paupertatem et humilitatem et sanctum evangelium... Iesu Christi... observemus* [we may observe poverty, humility, and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ] links the Gospel to poverty and humility; it would seem to concern not only the attitude requested of the Friars, to live as poor men, minors and servants, but rather to indicate the supreme model of the "humility of God," "the Word of the Father ... [who] received the flesh of our humanity and frailty... choosing poverty..." (2LtF 4,5).

According to these texts, the Gospel – the Good News which gives its origin to joy – is, first of all, the *revelation of the mystery of the Trinitarian God* who, spurred by his holy love, makes us capable of sharing his very life (Rnb 17,23; PrsG; 2LtF 4-11, 48-53) and who must remain at the heart of all our seeking and efforts (Rb 10, 8-10). This Most Holy and Most High God is, at the same time, a God "impassioned" with humankind, discrete and humble ("You are humility" – PrsG), he bent over the feet of His disciples to wash them. Secondly, the Gospel is *knowledge of self*, "the most worthy of creatures" (Letter of Clare), the image and likeness of God and of his Christ (Rnb 23,1; Adm 5,1), created in a sublime condition, and, at the same time, paradoxically, limited, poor and a sinner, such as to arouse pity (Rnb 17,7; 23,8).

Recognizing and accepting this twofold condition constitutes the root of true poverty and of every authentic relationship to God and one's neighbor, *minores et subditi omnibus* [the lesser ones and be subject to all in the same house] (Rnb 7, 2). *The love of neighbor*, whoever he may be, "friend or foe, thief or brigand," Christian or other, is of capital importance: it must be concrete, operative, composed of service [washing the feet], marked by a "maternal" tenderness, capable of excluding all forms of domination. In this way it permits the creation of a fraternity, the name which Francis gave to the group, constructed, above all, by the friars among themselves, and yet open, extended to all human beings and even to all the beings and elements of creation. *The mission* which, according to different situations, will assume the most diverse forms, is rooted in a visible, always-to-be-begun-again community realization of a triple demand, powerfully enunciated by Rb 10, 8-10. According to this passage, the Spirit of the Lord, which is to be desired above all other things, spurs the friars to experience God (*always praying ... pure heart*); to deepen the knowledge and acceptance of self (*habere humilitatem et patientiam in persecutione et infirmitate*) [to have humility and patience in persecution and infirmity]; and to establish relationships of love with all, even if they should be enemies (*diligere eos qui nos persequuntur et reprehendunt et arguunt*) [to love those who persecute, rebuke and find fault with us].

Only on the basis of these gospel foundations, lived and interpreted by Francis, can the concrete commitments of Franciscan poverty, obedience and chastity be assumed; only on this basis is it possible to construct an authentic community and, in the service of the Church and by paying attention to the modern world, to identify possible apostolic and missionary trajectories even in the present-day.

Living the Gospel today

A hurried and superficial reading of the Rb, the official document which gathers, condenses and abbreviates the preceding versions, does not permit us to grasp the vibrant

appeal for the acceptance of the Gospel in it, all the more since we, however, are inheritors of a long tradition of canonical and casuistic interpretations of the text. But if the explicit intention of Francis, developed in the various writings which he left us, and the ways in which he referred to the Gospel according to the early biographers (*vir evangelicus*) are taken into account, there is no doubt that *Gospel* meant, for him, the totality of the message which God addressed to humanity, rooted in history, and brought to a climax in the coming of the Son made flesh and in the gift of the Spirit to the Church and to the world.

For us, this means that the Rule, in its different written stages (which Francis considered, in his Testament, as a totality which remained identical) continues to be a finger pointed at the Gospel of Christ, a doorway which allows gradual access to its fullness, a permanent appeal or challenge to manifest his presence through our personal and community behavior. The fact that Francis defines the life of the friars as *vita evangelii Iesu Christi* (the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ) (Rnb), *sanctum evangelium observare* (to observe the holy Gospel) (Rb), *forma sancti evangelii* (the form of the holy Gospel) (Test), that is, as an acceptance and practical incarnation of the Good News, exactly indicates this perspective. All that he proposes in the rules, and more diffusely in the collection of writings, consists of an immense space open to the joyful annunciation of divine love and benevolence towards humankind; all his exhortations and reflections look towards this. We are invited to grasp the ultimate foundation of our life and vocation: the inexhaustible gift of God to humanity, the call, together with creation of which it is a part, to "share the divine joy of existing" (E. Leclerc).

We are called on to live all this at the beginning of the third millennium. The Christian faith, faced by a technological, computerized world and its crises; underground wars, terrorism and globalization, is exposed to all the questions and challenges about God, about His entry into history in the person of Jesus, about the nature of man and about the meaning of his life and death. The Church also is questioned; its role and influence in the world are reduced to banality

and opposed. Our Franciscan Family is marked by crisis; numerical reduction, uncertainty about our identity, the temptation of abandonment and of discouragement. Only our referral of self to the Gospel, of which the Rule wishes to be a vital summary, can help us to respond with confidence, imagination and courage to these multiple challenges.

A Gospel for all

The celebration of the eighth centenary of the approval of the Rule evidently regards, first of all, the friars of the First Order who, through their religious profession, commit themselves to assume it as the foundation of their personal and community life. But the central nucleus of that text, its reference and, in some way, its identity, which is the Gospel, is addressed to all Christian believers. The appeal to live the message of Jesus radically, which Francis with his first companions had accepted, remains current for all times and for every state of life. A few years after Francis, about 1212, Clare of Assisi also became fascinated, and later, taking the Rb of Francis almost literally, initiated the feminine Order of the Poor Clares. Very soon others, individuals or masculine and feminine groups, though remaining in their own state of life (family, profession), felt provoked by the gospel proposal of Francis, as the writings Francis destined for them bear witness (Rnb 23; LtF). Today, the Franciscan Family, composed of the laity of the SFO, by the members of Secular Institutes, by the Religious of the TOR, by the Poor Clares and by the three Families of the First Order, continues to refer to the gospel inspiration which is the basis of the Franciscan identity and spirituality.

This eighth centenary is not, therefore, the "particular property of the group of Friars Minor, it is a festival, a giving of thanks by the whole Family. And it is, especially, an appeal that Francis addresses to us, an invitation to "incline the ear of our heart to obey the voice of the Son of God" (LtOrd 6), which makes the joyful announcement of the love of God for humanity resound.

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Francis of Assisi
who loved animals

David Flood, O.F.M.

Saint Francis loved animals, Lawrence Cunningham writes in his little book, *Francis of Assisi. Performing the Gospel Life* (Eerdmans, 2004). He has no fear of contradiction, he says, for that is the Francis of Assisi known to our contemporaries. When one day Francis found no hearing from people and turned to preach to a flock of birds, he was surprised by his success. He chided himself for having till then neglected them. He praised them for their obedience: they were obedient, for they fit into the grand scheme of things, just as God created them. In that sense, Cunningham affixes his theological *placet* to Francis's behavior.

Like most contemporary writers taken with Francis of Assisi, Cunningham has nothing to say about Francis's education in the brotherhood. As Venus to beauty, so was Francis, it seems, birthed to goodness. All the same, a little background on the *vita* he shared with his brothers would have helped Cunningham with Francis and animals.

Once Francis and his companions reached the decision to live apart from communal Assisi (the world), he involved himself in an intensive educational process. Quite rapidly, he and his brothers made good on their desire and their resolution to live a life open to others and open as well to the world about them. We find the process clearly reported in their vita, a piece of writing that grew in detail and in depth from 1209 to 1221. In 1221, Francis urged all his brothers to study and discuss it. Nothing else could assure a happy continuation of the process to which they had committed themselves. In 1226, in a final message, he exercised his memory of the early days one last time to help them recall the *vita*. (As an historian, I cannot accept that this, his Testament, was not

edited. The writings as a body arose out of a common elaboration of the brotherhood's principles and practices. It was not unnatural to help Francis with such a statement.)

The *vita*, as text, spawned a number of other writings. These pieces contributed to the brothers' education. Admonition VII, for example, laid down the role of study in the life of the brotherhood. Admonition XII helped a brother see if he was properly sensitive to the workings of "the Spirit of the Lord" in his life. In one of these pieces there is a reference to animals, and consequently Francis was not the sole brother who reflected on his relations to the beasts of the world, both wild and domestic.

The reference to animals occurs at the end of the Salutation of the Virtues. The Salutation celebrates Franciscan action and the various ways in which it confounded the world. The jubilant recognition of the movement's dynamics ends with this encompassing proposal of Franciscan obedience: "Holy obedience confounds all worldly and selfish pursuits. It makes a brother's action obedient to the spirit and obedient to his brother. It is wholly at the service of all the people of the world, and not only human beings, but all beasts domestic and wild as well. They are free to treat with him as they wish, insofar as it fits what comes upon us from above." If we consider how Francis and his brothers found their way to this bold assertion, we will understand what is going on between Francis and animals and will have then to face the challenging actuality of his practice.

The Salutation of the Virtues is not the sole list of admirable traits of Franciscan action in the early Franciscan writings. We have Admonition XXVII as well. There we read that quiet reflection (*quies et meditatio*) dissipates busy distraction (*sollicitudo et vagatio*). We have a summary of Franciscan practices at one moment in the Message of Exhortation and Encouragement, the *Commonitorium*. It occurs at verses 45 to 47, after Francis, as the spokesperson of the movement, has shared the story and the outlook of the brothers with the people whose attention they had won. We can draw up our own list by extracting the various ways of virtuous works proposed to the brothers in the Admonitions. We can

also hark back to the original list, which is quite close to the Salutation's conclusion, and figure out where all of it comes from, including the Salutation's way with animals. We find the original list in Early Rule XVII 14-16. It is not strange that we find it there, for the Early Rule acquaints us with the basic story of the movement and with the detail of the movement's mind as manifested in its language.

If we go along with the description of the brotherhood's beginnings sketched above, that is, the resolve of Francis and his companions to invent a new way of life, we have to wonder how far they got and when it came to some sort of confrontation with communal Italy. Social systems either eliminate or domesticate and absorb vital elements within the sphere of their rule. We can say that all the more easily, seeing as we can watch the effort occur in Chapter XVII of the brothers' *vita*. In several lines of that text (10-16), the brothers reject the role of holy men offered them by their Christian context and profess themselves led by "the Spirit of the Lord." They are pursuing true peace. They then complete the theory and practice of their *vita* by committing themselves to return all good things to God (*bona Deo reddere*). This includes both distributive justice and the herding of all creation to its final destiny.

When Francis and his companions spoke about "the Spirit of the Lord," they had in mind God's guidance in their lives. Although they did not express and develop it, they meant as well the set of understandings they shared together; they meant the spirit and the dynamics of the movement they had become. If we want to reflect on this moment historically, we can turn to Hegel. Hegel supposed that the spirit of a new and promising current in history expresses itself through its ethical culture (*Sittlichkeit*). I think it is important to turn to someone like Hegel to reflect on this distinction and separation between the Christian world of Francis's day and the Christian life he and his brothers lived. We need terms of historical analysis that draw out the maturation of the movement's dynamics and fit it into a reflection on history's course. The rapid integration of Franciscan life into the pastoral policies of the church of that day hides its original

promise as a force of transformation, both civil and religious. Prior to that change, which generated the turbulence of the 1230 general chapter, the brothers had brought along well the economics of justice while confessing God's goodness. Seeing as the new age turned on the historical *caesura* of two spirits, as phrased by the brothers in their *vita*, if not Hegel, who? Hegel recommends himself all the more, as we have the brothers regularly spelling out their ethical culture in contrast to the spirit of their age. That is what is going on in the Salutation of the Virtues, in Admonition XXVII, and in the summary of spiritual action in the Message of Exhortation and Encouragement (*Commonitorium*) (45-47). It occurs for the first time, consciously, in the passage of Chapter Seventeen, in the distinction drawn between the two spirits. (More on Hegel another time.)

Seeing as we can follow the course of the brotherhood to the clear conclusion of their search for historical direction, which they reach in Chapter XVII of their *vita*, we can readily look in the *vita* for the practices that set them on their journey. When Francis and his companions set out together, they concretized their basic decision by going to work and putting themselves at the service of others. Although they were brothers to one another, within the course of events they termed themselves servants (*servi*), subject (*subditi*) to all there where they labored. That characterization of themselves occurs again and again in the early writings. It is not that they subject themselves to others by doing whatever they are told. Rather, they consciously and readily assume the tasks that see to the ways and means of truly human lives. That notion of service arises out of Chapter VII of the Early Rule, the *vita*.

Servus belongs to a cluster of Latin terms around two verbs, *servire* and *servare*. *Servare* gave rise to *servire*, as we see by exploring the etymology of the terms. Language scholars have traced the term *servare* back to the Avestan term for guarding and protecting. Originally the term meant to "watch over the herd" and so assure (pre*serve* and con*serve*) the welfare of the tribe. Francis and his companions found their way to that sense of the term, not, I protest, by study

ing Avestan etymology, but by working among others while seeking the guidance of the Spirit. Seeing as they relied on one another for the means of life, and not on the system of appropriation favored by Assisi, they opened themselves to the joys and the promises of work. By working they involved themselves in the return of all good things to God. When the brothers talk about being subject to others, they have in mind their lives of service as they open a new chapter in history. In the Salutation, they declare that they obey the spirit by being subject to others, sort of taking upon themselves the challenge of making the world work for everyone.

So Francis and his brothers felt alive in the world. Their openness to the world resulted in the clear eye of Admonition XVI. In the brief statement they rejoiced in the lasting quality of what they did (*caelestia*) as opposed to the passing achievements of the society they had set aside (*terrena*). It had to do with seeing God. (They were certainly not playing down the world sung by Francis in his Song to Brother Sun.) With that clarity of vision they rejoiced in the good getting done (Admonition XVII, with its so human *correctio fraterna*). In such terms they educated themselves to the clarity of Admonition XVI. Out of that simplicity of vision Francis wrote the Song to Brother Sun. At verse six he celebrated the weather that feeds all God's creatures: living creatures, that is. So Francis sings his animality, a gift of his creator he shares with all beasts, wild and domestic. He does so as the brother he has become, alongside the same process maturing in his companions. Francis had the gift to say it and the good fortune of his poem surviving. We have good reason to stress its acuity in his life, but no good reason to push that to extremes. The brothers were making the world work for everyone and for all animals, as stewards of God's creation. (Steward involves responsibility, however different etymologically from *servare*.)

Martha Nussbaum approaches the conclusion to the Salutation of the Virtues from a different direction. In her book *Frontiers of Justice* (Harvard, 2006), she has a chapter on justice for nonhuman animals. If we hail our animal companions on our journey in time, we want them to flourish. If we want to see them flourish and manifest God's goodness on their return to God, then our care and service must extend to them. Nussbaum examines what that involves. It involves justice, to put it simply, unto their flourishing. As she knows, we have difficulty working that out in practice. Lions are not going to lie down with sheep. They are going to ingest them, while tearing them to shreds. Before we get to that theoretical twist, however, we have to cast our critical eye on an economy, and on a deeply rooted concentration on our privileged selves in the Western world, that tortures animals and rips earth apart for excessive gain and not merely for our sustenance. How can a Franciscan feel at home in such a world? We approach the incisive discrimination of Chapter XVII of the Franciscan *vita* mentioned above. At that moment we need the vision of a Hegel and a Nussbaum's sense of justice.

A little Francis stands on many a birdbath, welcoming his friends to both drink and bath. The practice irritates many who know and esteem Francis, for they see it as a wanton reduction of his way with the world. I propose we cheer such practice, taking it as a symbol of the justice due God's creatures. Perhaps we could send one to all who write on Francis and his love for animals, without broaching the question of the justice due them.

Note. In *The New York Times* of April 1, 2006, we read that Maine's governor has signed a bill that allows animals to be included in protection orders in domestic violence cases. Francis of Assisi, who loved animals, would applaud.

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Caring for "Our Sister Mother Earth"

Charles Finnegan, O.F.M.

We are being made aware increasingly of the gravity of the ecological crisis and the urgent need to address it. This is surely one of the new "Signs of the Times," that is, Signs of the Spirit, raising our consciousness to new levels of awareness. We can say *new* Sign because until relatively recently we were unaware of its urgency. One need only recall that Vatican II said nothing about the need to address an ecological crisis. It is generally claimed that the modern ecological movement began with the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962, the year Vatican II started.[1]

Michael McCarthy, environment editor of the British publication, *The Independent*, recently published a succinct, and sobering, expression of our newfound awareness:

[1] Many studies deal with the phenomenon of environmental destruction and its dire consequences. To cite a few recent publications, see *The Tablet*, especially the series by Michael McCarthy, e.g., "Planet Earth – Its Fate Is In Our Hands" (21/02/04) and "On the Edge of the Precipice" (25/03/06). The internet has much valuable information, e.g., "Research and Learn" on AOL and *fightglobalwarming.com*. The documentary films "An Inconvenient Truth" by Al Gore and *Global Warming: What You Need to Know* (Discovery Channel) by Tom Brokaw have done much to inform us of the need to address this threat. Unfortunately not all are convinced, as was evidenced by the astonishing statement of Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, Australia, in an address to *Legatus* (a group of Catholic businessmen organized by Pizza magnate Tom Monaghan). The Cardinal described concerns about global warming as "hysterics and extreme" and even "a sign of pagan emptiness." (Cited: *The Tablet*, 3 June 2006, p. 16.) The neglect by the present Administration in Washington can only be called extreme, as they go even to the extent of censoring articles and speeches by NASA scientists who wanted to call attention to these issues, as was reported by a NASA scientist on CBS' "60 Minutes," 30 July 2006.

> The significance of the environment is changing profoundly: it is going from being a quality-of-life issue to being a life-or-death issue. The underlying thesis of all three thinkers (Jared Diamond in his book *Collapse*; Lester Brown in *Plan B*, and James Lovelock in *The Revenge of Gaia*) is that in the course of the twenty-first century the seemingly unstoppable assault on the natural world may very well encompass the end of human civilization. It will certainly affect society everywhere. And this means that the environment is about to go from the human margin to the human mainstream; it is about to become history.[2]

Examples

We rightly focus our attention on the harm done by water and air pollution, and especially its harmful manifestations as global warming and the destruction of the ozone. Yet, the complex effects of a broad range of ecological damage resulting from our relentless assault on nature – the destruction of the earth's rainforests illustrating only one example – remain incalculable. For example:

> More than half of the world's 10 million species of plants, animals and insects live in the tropical rainforests. One hectare (2.47 acres) may contain over 750 types of trees and 1500 species of higher plants. At least 80% of the world's diet originated in the tropical rainforest: fruits like avocados, figs, oranges, bananas, pineapples, mangos and tomatoes; vegetables including corn, potatoes, rice, squash and yams, spices like black pepper, chocolate, sugar cane, coffee, and vanilla and nuts. At least 3000 fruits are found in the rainforest; of these only 200 are in use in the western world.
>
> A single rainforest reserve in Peru is home to more species of birds than are found in the entire United

[2] "On the Edge of the Precipice," *The Tablet*, 25 March 2006, p.5.

States. The number of species of fish in the Amazon exceeds the number found in the entire Atlantic ocean.

Currently, 121 prescription drugs currently sold worldwide come from plant-derived sources. And while 25% of Western pharmaceuticals are derived from rainforest ingredients, less than 1% of these tropical trees and plants have been tested by scientists.

The US National Cancer Institute has identified 3000 plants that are active against cancer cells. 70% of these are found in the rainforest. Twenty-five percent of the active ingredients in today's cancer fighting drugs come from organisms found only in the rainforest.[3]

Yet in spite of all their many contributions and their vast and still unexplored potential, the destruction of the world's rainforests continues unabated.

> In 1950, about 15% of the earth's land surface was covered by rainforest. Today, more than half has already gone up in smoke. Unbelievably more than 200,000 acres of rainforest are burned everyday. That is more than 150 acres lost every minute, and 78 million acres lost every year. It is estimated that the Amazon rainforest [called the "lungs of our planet" because over 20% of the world's oxygen is produced there] is vanishing at the rate of 20,000 square miles a year – the entire Amazon could well be gone in fifty years.
>
> In Brazil alone European colonists have destroyed more than 90 indigenous tribes since the 1900s. As their homelands continue to be destroyed by deforestation, rainforest peoples are also disappearing.
>
> Scientists estimate that 80 to 90 percent of tropical rainforest ecosystems will be destroyed by the year 2020. This destruction is the main force driving a species extinction rate unmatched in 65 million years.[4]

[3] Summarized from information on *www.rain-tree.com/facts*.

[4] *www.rain-tree.com/facts*. Much of the information on this web site on the importance of the rainforest was taken from the book "The Healing Power of Rainforest Herbs" by Leslie Taylor. See also *nationalgeographic.com* on the Amazon, pointing out that one hectare of Amazon rainforest contains more plant species than all of Europe!

Ecological conversion

As happens often in God's providence, this environmental crisis too presents us with an opportunity: ecological conversion. Pope John Paul II addressed this issue, stating that ecological conversion was making humanity "more sensitive to the catastrophe towards which it has been heading."[5] We should be "stewards" of creation he claimed, but instead have become "autonomous despots" who are finally beginning to realize that we must "stop at the edge of the precipice." Might it not be that the unusually violent storms we have recently experiences (*Katrina*, for example, and the tsunami that ravaged the South Pacific in 2004) as well as extremes in temperature (e.g., of the 21 hottest years ever measured, 20 have occurred within the last 25 years. Thousands died from the record heat wave that struck the U.S. Midwest in 1995, while an incredible 35,000 died from the monster heat wave that hit Europe in 2003) are signs that we are indeed "at the edge of the precipice" as the Pope warned? The World-Watch Institute, an environmental research organization based in Washington, has given similar warnings while some scientists have estimated that we have about 20 years to address these issues, before the damage becomes irreparable and we will be faced with ecological catastrophe.[6]

The U.S. Bishops issued a similar urgent appeal for ecological conversion in their Pastoral Letter, "Renewing the Earth" (1991):

> The environmental crisis of our own day constitutes an exceptional call to conversion. As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart

[5] In an address given at public audience on 17 January 2001.

[6] Sean McDonagh reports this claim regarding the harm done by global warming in "Can You Hear Creation Groaning?", *The Tablet*, 3 June 2006, p.16. Treatment of concrete steps that need to be taken to stop environmental destruction, while of obvious importance, is beyond the scope of this brief essay. Material on this is abundant. See, for example, the web sites and the instructional documentaries mentioned above in footnote 1.

to save the planet for our children and generations yet unborn. So vast are the problems, so intertwined with our economy and way of life, that nothing but a wholehearted and ever more profound turning to God will allow us to carry out our responsibilities as faithful stewards of God's creation.

Interestingly, in January of 1990, a group of three dozen eminent scientists issued an "Open Letter to the Religious Community" claiming that the threat to our planet must be recognized as "having a religious as well as a scientific dimension."[7] In response, four major faith groups, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, the Consultation on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network, formed the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, committing themselves to raise the consciousness of their congregations on environmental issues. At a time when religious divisions are blamed for so much violence and hatred in our world, it is exciting to think of the rich benefits religion can offer to the world through ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation among the churches and faiths in addressing this serious challenge.

Conversion means above all a *change of heart and mind.* From that deep change follows changed conduct. In facing the ecological crisis, we must look on ourselves as stewards of God's creation. We have been entrusted with its care and preservation for future generations. This conversion also means adopting a simpler lifestyle according to the adage: Live simply so others may simply live – an adage attributed to our first native-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton.

We in North America have a special responsibility here, for although we comprise 5% of the world's population, we use 25% of its resources and, producing one fourth of the world's greenhouse gasses, we are the world's largest polluter.[8] As our bishops noted: "Consumption in developed nations remains the single greatest source of global environmental destruction. We in the developed world therefore are obligated to address our own wasteful and destructive use of resources as a matter of top priority."[9] We need to think of progress more in qualitative than in quantitative terms, seeing that it consists in improving the quality of life rather than in acquiring ever more goods. In our teaching and preaching ministries we need to invite people to this "ecological conversion."

[7] Cited in the *National Catholic Reporter*, May 6, 1994.
[8] Cf. Editorial in *America*, December 12, 1998, p.3.

A Franciscan Contribution

Have we, from our Franciscan tradition, something specific to contribute in addressing this serious challenge? While most Franciscans may not have the expertise to address ecological concerns from a scientific perspective, we can offer St. Francis's vision of profound respect for creation and this vision goes to the very heart of solving the ecological crisis. In a destructive and wasteful society it is precisely the lack of respect for creation that causes much of the problem. As Peter Raven, a botanist and member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, said, we have "violated the Genesis trust." He claimed that "we have gotten carried away with the concept of dominion and subjugation, and have lost the concept of caring."[10] In the creation narrative described in Genesis, the author emphasizes repeatedly how God takes delight in creation, seeing how "good" and even how "very good" it is. God then hands that marvelous work over to human beings

[9] United States Catholic Conference, "Renewing the Face of the Earth," p. 16.
[10] Cited in *National Catholic Reporter*, May 6, 1994. Raven made the claim that "The way we are treating the world is not sustainable." He gave some examples: Since 1950 our planet has lost 20% of its topsoil – 25 billion tons each year. Since 1950 we have cut down about one-third of the world's forests without replacing them. Since 1950 we have put most of the world's species at risk, with as many as 20% perhaps already extinct. He concluded, "To continue to shuck our clear obligation in what often seems to be nothing more than a relentless quest for material prosperity must eventually come to seem unacceptable to any moral person."

to carry on the work of creation by their own work, caring for it. However, God does not hand complete ownership over to us: "[The Lord says:] I own the world and all it contains" (Ps. 50) and "the world and everything in it belongs to the Lord" (Ps. 24). Not to us but to the Lord! In making use of God's creation for our needs we humans are only administrators of what in the first place belongs to God.

We might also recall the New Testament teaching found in Colossians, a text on which the Franciscan School has based its teaching on the absolute and unconditional primacy of Christ the Incarnate Word: "Everything in heaven and everything on earth was made through him and for him; he is before all else that is" (Col 1:16). For him! Creation was made in the first place not for us but for Christ. It begins with him and finds all its fulfillment in him: God decreed in Christ his saving plan "to be carried out in the fullness of time, namely, to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship" (Eph 1:10). That is God's plan for creation: **the recapitulation of all things in Christ.** Similarly the Gospel of John: "All things were made through [the Word], and without him not one single thing came to be" (John 1:3). In his goodness Christ shares his creation with us to meet our human needs. Human *needs*, not human greed or human lifestyles that are wasteful and destructive. Is this not also why St. Francis so consistently forbids us to "appropriate anything" – everything that exists already has its Owner, and therefore must be used according to the mind of the real Owner.

St. Francis's Approach to Creation

In the Apostolic Letter *Inter sanctos praeclarosque viros* of 29 November 1979, Pope John Paul II declared St. Francis to be the patron saint of those who devoted themselves to ecology. He did this because St. Francis "offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation." St. Francis's attitude of profound respect for creation is what is often missing today and needs to be recovered if we

are to address the current crisis. If anyone did not want to dominate and control, much less destroy, it was St. Francis. It may seem that he even goes to an extreme in his desire to be a *lesser* brother and subject to all creation, as when he described the truly obedient friar as one who is "subject and submissive ... not only to people but to every beast and wild animal as well" (SalV 14).

The Canticle of the Creatures

About a year before his death, while ill and in great pain, Francis wrote one of his best known prayers, the *Canticle of the Creatures*. With the Italian language still in its infancy, Francis wrote the Canticle in the Umbrian dialect; the 19th century philosopher Ernest Renan called it "the most beautiful piece of religious poetry since the gospels." Francis told his brothers he wanted "to compose a new hymn about the Lord's creatures, of which we make daily use, without which we cannot live, and with which the human race greatly offends it creator" (AC 83). In this Canticle Francis invites *all creation* to join him in a cosmic liturgy of praise and thanksgiving to God who created this marvelous array of beauty and splendor: "Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures." ... "Praise be you, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth."

The biblical inspiration for the Canticle can be found in the song of the three young men in Daniel 3 ("Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord ...," prayed at Morning Prayer on Sundays of Week I [and therefore on Solemnities and Feast Days] and Week III) and in psalms such as 136: 1-9 and 148.

In one important aspect, however, Francis goes beyond the insights of the biblical authors, who recognize God as the Creator of all, and invite all creatures "to bless the Lord." Francis does that, but in addition he sees these same creatures not only as objects of God's creative power, but also as his very brothers and sisters. Hence, he humbly and lovingly addresses them: Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Fire,

Sister Water, Sister Mother Earth. The Canticle is the song of a man totally reconciled. For some twenty years he had been living a life of continual conversion, with the "good God" becoming ever more the center of his life; as he now approaches the end of his journey he finds himself totally reconciled with God and with all God's creation. The Canticle is a song of universal brother/sisterhood, witnessing to the universal *Abba*-hood of God.

Long before writing the Canticle, however, Francis had come to look on God's creatures as brothers and sisters. As his first biographer explains: "He used to call all creatures by the name of 'brother' and 'sister' and, in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the hearts of creatures like someone who has already passed into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (1C 81). He would speak of "our sisters, the larks" and even the vicious wolf of Gubbio was addressed "Brother wolf." Francis wanted his presence in the world to be marked by *cortesia:* humble, welcoming, reverent, grateful. Not interested in building a kingdom for himself, he was free to be the "herald of the great King," "God's minstrel" and the "little brother" in God's magnificent creation. St. Bonaventure explained how this approach continually nourished his life of prayer:

> Aroused by all things to the love of God, he rejoiced in all the works of the Lord's hands, and from these joy-producing manifestations he rose to their life-giving principle and cause.
>
> In beautiful things he saw Beauty itself, and through his vestiges imprinted on creation, he followed his Beloved everywhere, making from all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace him who is utterly desirable (LMj IX,1).

St. Bonaventure's mystical vision was very much the same: "Every creature is a word of God, because it speaks of God."[11]

[11] *Comm in Eccl. C.1, q.2*: "Verbum Dei est omnis creatura, quia Deum loquitur." English translation in *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Works of St. Bonaventure VII (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005),

Concluding Suggestions/Question

1. While obviously the Scriptures do not treat of the ecological crisis we experience today, the gospels do indeed inculcate the *attitudes* needed to address it. "The Sermon on the Mount could be not so much a counsel of perfection as a programme for survival."[12] Ecology is indeed a pro-life issue of the greatest importance.
2. Evangelization today requires that we address ecology. The Liturgy offers a number of opportunities, such as "Masses and Prayers for Special Occasions" in the Missal, e.g. Mass for Justice and Peace; Beginning of the New Year (World Day of Prayer for Peace); For the Blessing of Human Labor; For Productive Land; After the Harvest, with the corresponding Readings in the Lectionary. Other days, such as Thanksgiving Day and the Feast of St. Francis lend themselves to ecological reflections and homilies as does Eucharistic Prayer IV ("You have created all things to fill your creatures with every blessing"; "You formed us in your own likeness and set us over the whole world to serve you, our creator and to rule over all creatures"; "He sent the Holy Spirit ... to complete his work on earth"; "we shall sing your glory with every creature.")
3. Pope John Paul II made a number of important statements on ecology that deserve wider dissemination, including his Message for the World Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1, 1990, "The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility" with the sub-title *Peace with God the Creator, Peace With All Creation.* These statements can be found on www.conservation.catholic.org. Similarly, our Bishops' Conference through its Environmental Justice Program has published a number of educational resources, including the St. Francis Prayer Card with the Canticle of the Sun. Especially helpful are their booklets "Re-

[12] Editorial, *The Tablet*, 16 August 2003.

newing the Face of the Earth" and "Let the Earth Bless the Lord." For their catalog call: 1-800-235-8722.

4. In 1994 our Bishops Conference offered to grant parishes a Certificate naming each a "St. Francis Model Parish" when parishioners made a covenant to undertake 11 specific steps to "pray, educate and act on behalf of the Lord's Earth." Should we not be promoting this initiative? For information on this call 202-541-3160 (USCC Environmental Justice Program).
5. "The beauty, majesty, and timelessness of a primary rainforest are indescribably. It is impossible to capture on film, to describe in words, or to explain it to those who have never had the awe-inspiring experience of standing in the heart of a primary rainforest."[13] Granting that, imagine yourself, say, in the midst of the grandeur of the Amazon rainforest, marveling at the chirping and singing of new species of birds beyond counting, the sheer abundance of plants and flowers of brilliant color, thousands of species of animals and insects unknown elsewhere, and invite that whole marvelous creation to sing with you St. Francis's cosmic liturgy of praise. (And don't forget Brother Anaconda and Sister Alligator, as well as Brother Tiger and, in the river basin, Sister Piranha. After all, they too, like everything else in heaven and on earth, "were made through Christ and for Christ."
6. As we prepare to celebrate 2008-2009, the eighth centennial of the beginnings of the Franciscan movement, recovering the dynamism and vitality of "the grace of our origins," we can **offer the church and world a greatly needed centennial gift:** St. Francis's vision of the grandeur of "our Sister Mother Earth" and the need to take better care of her.
7. Reflective Question (best done in community): What can I, individually and as a community, do to "pray, educate and act" on behalf of "our Sister Mother Earth"?

[13] www.rain-tree.com/facts.htm

Prayer:
God our loving Father
open our eyes to see your hand at work
in the splendor of creation,
in the beauty of human life.
Touched by your hand our world is holy.
Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us,
to share your blessings with our brothers and sisters,
and to experience the joy of life in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.[14]

[14] Alternative Opening Prayer, Mass of Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Giles of Assisi, The Ecstatic Knight

†Sr. Frances Lea Loughlin, S.M.I.C.

When Brother Leo, the beloved *Pecorello* of Saint Francis, wrote the life of his friend and confrere Blessed Giles of Assisi, he gave us one of the most curious and fascinating chapters in the history of Franciscan spirituality. The story of Giles, from the day of his first meeting with Francis to the day of his death, is the story of a soul advancing steadily toward high perfection but battling every inch of the way.

Leo calls Giles a most holy and contemplative man, yet few of the incidents described in the early part of his life suggest much of either quality. He was an eager and impulsive youth when he sought out Francis on Saint George's Day in 1209, and Francis received him with joy. "Beloved," said the holy Francis, "God has given you great graces. If the emperor came to Assisi and wished to receive one of the townsfolk into his service to be his chamberlain or his familiar friend, would he not rejoice? Far greater, then, should be your rejoicing; for the Lord has chosen you as his own knight and most beloved servant."

Saint Francis was quick to perceive the chivalrous qualities in Giles's soul. "Knight of my Round Table," Francis called him, and in truth his life became one divine adventure in the service of the Great King, though toward the end his knight-errantry was not on the highways of this world but on the obscure paths of mystical life.

For a time Francis and Giles traveled together. People who saw the hardships they endured wondered at their high spirits. They were laughed at, suspected, stoned, treated as rogues and vagabonds; and their happiness grew with abuse.

But when gentler souls began to pity them, Giles grew uneasy. "Father," he said to Francis, "our glory is already waning." Francis, though his heart rejoiced at Giles's high chivalry, assured him with sadly prophetic vision that the hour of trial would never be wanting. On these journeys with Francis, it was the part of Giles to gather the people and tell them that the Poverello was worth listening to. Freed from the burden of possessions – how much Giles sacrificed is unrecorded, but it was his all – and freed from the heavier burden of self-esteem, he was enjoying a glorious holiday. But it was only a holiday. Soon his real mission began. Francis, already embracing the world in his magnificent sweep of vision, was eager to send the young knight on a quest more suited to his temper and talents. So Giles became a votary of the saints, visiting their shrines, carrying the message of Francis over the highroads of the world.

The plan of Giles's life on his wanderings was always the same. He earned his bread; he gave his services freely wherever he could; he brought the good tidings of joy in the Lord and preached prayer and penance and peace. He was an effective preacher – pungent, witty, a jester and an actor. His success was great; his converts were many; and the varied human contacts added shrewdness to the natural quickness of his mind. There were even a few miracles to his credit. But he could never be away from Francis for any great length of time; he must always return to Saint Mary of the Angels to refresh his soul with the holiness of his Father.

It may well be that Giles had a restless spirit, that the free wandering life exactly suited his vigorous mind and body. But the opposite may just as well be true. If Giles loved the roads and towns and the exotic splendor of distant lands, he also loved the solitude of fields and forests and mountains where prayer came easiest. Perhaps Giles, like Brother Lucido, nourished a wholesome fear of coming to feel at home in this world, and perhaps in his own soul echoed the cry of ever-wandering Lucido: "Not here our home, but in heaven!" Whatever the truth may be, Leo tells us that Giles began to grow uneasy about the complete liberty Francis had given him. "Go wherever you will," said the trustful Francis. "But

Father," replied Giles, "in such free obedience I cannot find rest." And Francis understood and sent him in obedience to a hermitage in Perugia.

Giles set out at once. The winter was exceedingly cold, but he went barefoot, as always, with only his rough gray habit to protect his body from the freezing blasts. A certain Perugian met him and wondered whether paradise was worth all that. Giles thought it was; and as he considered with tender compassion how Christ had trod rougher roads for him, barefoot and cold and hungry, his near-frozen body grew warm with love.

Although Giles had been sent to a hermitage where he could find peace and solitude for contemplative prayer, he alternated prayer with manual labor. He could do anything with his hands and do it supremely well. Cheerful, capable, always helpful, always ready to give of his physical strength and spiritual richness, small wonder the people clamored for his services.

Meanwhile Francis was planning a mission in Mohammedan Africa. He sent word to Giles that he wished him to join the little band of missionaries. Giles ran to the perilous enterprise as to a feast. The friars reached Tunis and began a vigorous campaign, but a fanatic inflamed the people against them and they preached with knives at their throats. At last Christian merchants seized the brothers and forced them to safety on their ships. It was a bitter blow to Giles. He had fully hoped for martyrdom, considering only his desire and not his possible unworthiness. He went back to Francis humbled because he had been deemed unfit to die for Christ. But humiliation was necessary for him, for he was soon to enter the lists with sorrow and anguish, and all the pride and arrogance in his soul, all the scorn and contempt, would rise in rebellion and join the enemy against him. Ultimately humility conquered, but had he lost the battle against pride he would have lost the battle for his soul. It was not for play that the devil tempted him to vainglory.

The African episode marked the end of Giles's wanderings. Troubles in the Order had drawn Francis home from the East about the same time Giles had returned from Tunis.

The little band of faithful companions, zealous for the integrity of their ideal, instinctively gathered around their Father. In his last years Francis suffered indescribable agony of body and soul; and Giles, who loved him so deeply, who was so completely one with him in spirit and desire, could not go far away. If Giles had been merely an exalted vagabond – as indeed some of the brothers had already become – he might have gone on tramping the roads, heedless that he belonged to an Order and that the Order was in travail and pain. But the sufferings of Francis were his sufferings, and the growing discontent and ambition among the brothers weighed heavily upon his chivalrous heart. He fought quietly and stubbornly. Then, in 1226, Francis died. The beloved companions awoke from their grief to find the masterful hand of Brother Elias guiding the Order where he would, far from the Poverello's ideals.

Elias had the support of the Church – or at least of high ecclesiastics – and Giles would not rebel. Instead he retired to the Perugian hermitage and for the next twenty years, until Blessed John of Parma brought back the Rule of Francis, the battles he fought were within his own soul. He changed much during that critical period. The simple directness of his youth, the high-minded knight-errantry that had characterized him while Francis lived, was replaced by the scorn of the fighter whose opponents are not worth the effort of combat. Sorrow and indignation burned in his heart, but his contempt for the *mitigati* went too deep for controversy. The gentle and tender souls, like Leo, were rushing in on bared knives in defense of what they loved. Leo, the little sheep of God, ran up to Giles in Perugia and told him of the marble vase Elias had set up in Assisi. The people were throwing money into it to build a rich basilica and convent for the brothers. Giles was shocked; he wept with Leo, but disdained to fight. "Let them build a house as long as from here to Assisi," he growled, "my little corner is enough for me." Then he added: "If you are a dead man, Leo, go and smash the vase that sins against holy poverty! But if you are still living, refrain; for the punishments of that Elias will be heavier than

you can bear." Leo, dead or alive, smashed the vase. He was beaten with rods and exiled from Assisi.

Giles seems to have remained on fairly good terms with the *mitigati*. He had no affection for their doings, but he kept aloof and caused no disturbance. Yet perhaps they even loved him. He was never sullen or sensitive. He laughed – though there was a sting in his wit – and held his ground at ease. He would not have been the true knight of Francis had he not fought with all his strength to possess his soul in peace. After a time he went down to Assisi to pray at the tomb of Francis. He seems to have sincerely admired the basilica – he was generous enough for that – and the brothers were eager to show him their new convent. It was all quite sumptuous and Giles was obviously impressed. Everyone awaited his comment. It came. "I tell you, my brothers," he said suavely, "you lack nothing now – except wives." Of course the brothers were shocked, but Giles was not retreating. "My brothers," he repeated gravely, "you know very well that to dispense yourselves from poverty like this is no more lawful for you than to dispense yourselves from chastity. Once you have cast out poverty it will be very easy for you to cast out chastity."

For all his ardent love for the Order, Giles seems to have had none of those delightfully comforting visions in which the salvation of the Friars Minor is assured and their place in heaven established on angelic thrones. He had seen too much. Once a certain friar came to him in high spirits. "Father," he cried, "I have good news to tell you!" "Tell it, my son," said Giles. "Father, in a vision I was taken to hell, and although I looked most diligently I saw not one brother of our Order there!" Giles sighed deeply and replied: "I well believe you, my son; I well believe that you saw none of our Order there." The brother persisted: "Why do you think it is, Father, that none of our brothers are in hell? Or if they are, why didn't I see them?" "Because, my son, you didn't go deep enough." If Giles had no visions, neither did he have illusions.

The years spent in the hermitage in Perugia were apparently years of spiritual development. It is difficult to follow Leo's chronology, but it would seem that the best stories about

Giles – and they are very good indeed – belong to this period. Looking up at the great hills and over the plains, the aging knight found contemplative prayer easier and ever more delightful, and the Holy Spirit, to Whom he had a special devotion, was adorning his humbled soul with ever greater gifts. Yet he was not wholly apart from the world. He was still a missionary, a street preacher of wonderful power and appeal, and a most enthusiastic gardener. He seems to have found something of his Father's love of nature. The little creatures spoke to him of God and eternal things; he embraced rocks and trees; much of his wisdom seems to have come from his close contact with the earth. Flowers loved his care. They not only bloomed in his garden but sprang up miraculously to lend strength to his words. When the brothers of Perugia lacked water, Giles struck the ground with his stick and a lovely violet sprang up showing the brothers where to dig. A Dominican, in doubt about the virginity of Mary, came to Giles with his doubt. "O Brother Preacher," cried Giles, "she was a virgin before giving birth." He struck the ground with his stick and a beautiful lily appeared. "O Brother Preacher, she was a virgin while giving birth." He struck the ground and a second lily sprang up. "O Brother Preacher, she was a virgin after giving birth." Again he struck the ground, and there was a third lily. Giles was indeed convincing.

Though always an ascetic, as he advanced in holiness Giles advanced in mortifications. His wattle hut, his single tunic, his one meal a day no longer satisfied his passion to share in the sufferings of Christ. But he had the strong Franciscan bent against asceticism for its own sake. And he always preferred hard work to mere self-laceration. His scorn for the idle prayerful man, the "Brother Flies" of the Order, was deep and constant. "Do you think," he once said to a brother, "that by doing nothing you are being spiritual?" To Giles, physical work was as indispensable for a healthy soul as for a healthy body.

As the years passed, Giles came to possess ever more of the sweet reasonableness, the understanding tolerance, of the Seraphic Francis. He had learned that whatever might befall the Order, a man could still be faithful to the ideals

of Francis. The affairs of others troubled him less and less. He watched and prayed, and avoided the brothers who murmured. Whenever anyone came to him with an evil report, Giles would say: "I do not wish to hear of the sins of others; but take care, brother, that you do not burden your own conscience." In case of real calamity, however, Giles was a marvelous comforter. Tempted men fled to him, the tortured begged his prayers, and his charity never failed. Once a brother priest, driven almost to madness by a violent temptation, cried out in the depths of his soul for Giles to come for him. And Giles did go, not in the flesh, but in a dream; and when the brother awoke the temptation was gone and his soul was wonderfully refreshed. To those who came to him in sincerity of heart, Giles had the tenderness of Francis himself; but to those who affected a stuffy or lachrymose piety, he was disconcertingly gruff. A priest approached him with lugubrious solemnity. "Pray for me, Giles," he sighed. "Pray for yourself," was the retort. A young man announced to Giles that he had decided to give up everything and enter the Order. "Then first go and kill your parents," snapped Giles. The young man clasped his hands in horror and began to weep. "O Brother Giles," he cried, "how can I do such a wicked thing?" Giles called him a simpleton. Learned theologians and eloquent preachers had to be cautious with Giles. If their holiness of life was not in due proportion to their learning and talent, the keen-witted brother was quite likely to make fools of them.

The last stage of Giles's life seems to have begun with a vision of Saint Francis. It happened at the hermitage in Cetona that Giles saw his holy Father in a dream. "I wish that we might speak together, Father," cried Giles with humble longing. And Francis replied: "Be zealous for yourself, if you wish to speak with me." After this Giles must have doubled his efforts, for his life becomes an almost uninterrupted account of visions and raptures and ecstasies. Leo recounts on especially significant and beautiful incident. Shortly after the apparition of Francis, a certain holy religious living in the neighborhood had a dream in which he saw the sun rise and set over the place where Giles had built his cell. When he met

Giles afterwards and noted the change in him, the meaning of the dream became clear. Drawing near to Giles he whispered: "Porta suaviter Filium virginis" ("Bear gently the Son of the virgin"). From then on Giles lived in almost constant communion with God; his knightly joustings were now on mystic fields. We do not know what he suffered, but Leo gives us glimpses of demons tempting and torturing him. Once when Giles left his brothers to return to his cell at night, he spoke of going to his martyrdom. On another occasion a brother heard such terrifying screams issuing from Giles's cell that he rushed to him in alarm. Giles was unharmed; he thanked the brother for coming to him, but sent him away quickly. He had to fight this enemy alone. Yet Giles was supremely happy. He spoke rapturously of the joys of contemplation; but if the brothers questioned him too closely, he fell silent. He could not reveal the secrets of the King.

The transition between the various stages of Giles's life – between the joyous adventurousness of his youth, the deep sorrow and bitterness of his maturity, the mystical experiences of his old age – were doubtlessly not so abrupt in reality as they seem in narrative. Giles was always the poet, always the knight of the Great King, just as he was always the contemplative and always the ascetic. His biting humor remained to the end, and to the end he was Giles the unpredictable jester, the disconcerting pricker of bubbles. But most of all he was always the true follower of Francis, his good brother, his gallant Knight of the Round Table.

On the Eve of Saint George, fifty-two years to the day after he had entered the Order, Giles died. He was buried in Perugia, and the citizens put a sculptured tomb over his body and called him a saint. But the Church did not beatify him until 1777.

> The plan of Giles's life on his wanderings
> was always the same. He earned his bread;
> he gave his services freely wherever he could;
> he brought the good tidings of joy in the Lord
> and preached prayer and penance and peace.

Causality and Islamic Thought

Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap

Preface

Philosophy throughout the ages is a conversation about ideas. At times the conversation takes the form of teaching. At others it is a friendly discussion, and often it becomes an argument between contrasting ideas. In Islam the conversation involved many great thinkers. Two of the great orators of the conversation, proposing differing views were Ibn Sina, often called Avicenna in the West, and al-Ghazali, who is known by a host of similar names in the West. This paper will attempt to expose some small part of their conversation.

In reading and writing about the philosophy of the Muslim world, it is important to make a mental cultural shift. Many of the terms used are quite familiar to us with our Western mindset, however subtle cultural nuances may exist. For the most part, the thought of Ibn Sina follows closely that of Plato, Aristotle, and al-Farabi, while the thought of al-Ghazali is much more in line with traditional Islamic thought. Concepts such as reality and the soul require far more discussion than is possible in this paper, so I will offer a simple explanation of these notions as understood in traditional Islam and by Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali.

Throughout this paper the English word "God" will be used rather than the Arabic "Allah" as both have equivalent meaning and God is a far easier word for use for an English speaking reader and writer. The third person singular masculine pronouns he and his will be used when referring to God, because in Arabic only the third person singular pronoun "hu'a" is used in reference to God.

Any quotes from the Koran come from the translation by the Indian Islamic scholar Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Pope John Paul II begins his encyclical *Fides et ratio* by stating,

> Faith and Reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.[15]

Faith understood by the gift of reason is strengthened and finds new life. The Islamic religious tradition is rich in the development of philosophy aimed at such strengthening and revivification.

The history of medieval Islamic philosophy boasts two major schools of thought, the neo-Platonists, commonly called the *falasifa*, and those who rejected the neo-Platonists of the Ash'arite school who grew out of the older Mu'tazilite school. For the purpose of this paper we will concentrate on the Sufi tradition loosely connected with the Ash'arites. The star of the school of *falasifa* was Ibn Sina who followed in the footsteps of al-Farabi. His chief critic in the Sufi/Ash'arite school, rejecting the neo-Platonism of the *falasifa*, was al-Ghazali. Their work and debate is vital in that the conclusions drawn in their thought regarding causality greatly influenced the understanding of the way in which God relates to and interacts with creation.

In this paper we will first consider the relation of God to creation in the cosmos according to common traditional Islamic *kalam*. *Kalam* is loosely translated in English as "theology." We will then explore the cosmological structure of creation as understood by Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali and consider the manner in which God, as understood in Islam, is

[15] John Paul II, *On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason* (Washington, D.C.: US Catholic Conference, 1998), 3.

able to relate to, and interact with creation according to such cosmology. In so doing we will discover how each understood causality. Finally, we will explore the notions of what God is able to know according to the respective understandings of causality.

The most fundamental tenant of the Islamic faith is that God is one. In Arabic, this absolute oneness is called *tawhid*. Considering God as the only necessary existent, it is easy to understand the notion of *tawhid*. When only one being exists, and only that one being need exist, all that can be spoken of is oneness, but when that being creates other beings, a relationship arises which offers some confusion expressed in the ancient problem of explaining the one and the many.

The notion of *tawhid* attempts to avoid confusion by expressing the relationship of God with creation according to two models. In the first of these models,

> *tawhid* means that everything real and good belongs to God ... everything other than God, by the fact of being other, is unreal, and hence it has nothing intrinsically good about it.[16]

Thus, all of creation in some sense is other than God and unreal. In the second of these models,

> *tawhid* means that every trace of good and reality that can be found in ourselves and the world derives from God, the only true reality.[17]

Thus, there must exist in creation some aspect of God.

We should take a moment here to consider the incredibly slippery subject of reality. Contemporary Western philosophers continue to argue over just what reality is, if it exists at all. Philosophers who follow the teaching of the neo-Platonists and the Scholastics accept the existence of reality. Muslims also accept the existence of reality; however, their acceptance of the notion of reality is not derived from philosophical musings, rather, it is rooted in the pages of the Koran and it is spoken in one of the most basic tenants of the Islamic faith, the *Shahadah*. In Sura 69, entitled *al-Haqqa*, or "The Sure Reality," the reader is presented with images of a reality that is interwoven with God's final judgment of creation:

> The Sure Reality! What is the Sure Reality? And what will make thee realize what the Sure Reality is? The Thamud and the 'Ad people disbelieved in the day of Noise and Clamour! But the Thamud, – they were destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning! And the 'Ad, – they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying overthrown in its (path), as if they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down![18]

The discussion of the Thamud and 'Ad people, both of whom rejected God's prophets, is followed by a description of the obstinacy of Pharaoh when he ignored the prophets of God. This is then followed by a description of what will occur on the Day of Judgment with a special emphasis on the destruction of those who do not properly worship God. From this reading one might understand the Koranic concept of reality, at least from the human perspective, to be deeply enmeshed with the notion of God's judgment of humanity. This is in no way satisfying as it does not offer a concrete sense of what reality is, nor does it present any understanding of the purpose of God's judgment.

To further consider the Islamic notion of reality it is important to consider the notion as presented in the *Shahadah*. As an introduction to the Muslim notion of reality Murata writes,

> If we are to investigate the nature of reality, the question becomes, 'What kind of knowledge allows me to understand reality as it truly is?' He then points out

[16] Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994), 68.

[17] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 69.

[18] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1996), 69:1-7.

> that Muslim thinkers all accepted that there is an ultimate reality – as is demanded by the first *Shahadah*. Without that acceptance, they would not be Muslim thinkers. Hence, in contrast to the modern West, one rarely finds a person who questions the existence of a supreme Reality or who is skeptical toward the possibility of knowing anything of ultimate significance.[19]

Here we must look at the first *Shahadah*. The *Shahadah* is a statement, that, when said with sincerity, in the presence of another believing Muslim, is the rite of initiation into Islam. It is also, traditionally, the first words said in the ear of a new born baby, and, when possible, the last words said in the ear of a dying person. Again, we turn to Murata:

> The Shahadah consists of two statements, which we can call the first and the second *Shahadahs*. Through the first *Shahadah*, one bears witness that 'There is no god but God,' and through the second, one testifies that 'Muhammad is the messenger of God.' The first *Shahadah* expresses *tawhid*, while the second speaks of prophecy.[20]

In this, we see that the first *Shahadah* recognizes the existence of God, and that this existence is unique. It is in the acceptance of *tawhid*, the unique oneness of God, that a Muslim accepts the existence of the Real.

Thus, we see that simply accepting the Islamic faith one believes that reality does exist. Three paths are open to Muslims who wish to know reality. These paths, as defined by Murata, are the path of reason, the path of unquestioning acceptance of the revelation of the prophets, and the path of a personal experience of the real, should God decide to unveil it. All of this seems to skirt any concrete explanation of what the Real is. Ultimately, one may accept the Real according to the Islamic mind, as God in total uniqueness, and the expression of God's being, according to the Koran will manifest itself in the final judgment. The idea of defining the Real as God is unsatisfying to the Western philosophic mind; however, it seems that God is the only possible definition for the Real within Islamic culture.

[19] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 237.
[20] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 45.

Knowing, then, that God is the Real and creation is, in some sense, unreal yet with something of the real existing in it, we must consider how the Real and unreal interact. Common Islamic theology discusses this interaction in terms of the nearness and the distance of God with his creation. The nearness of God is expressed through the word *tashbih*, and the distance of God is expressed using the word *tanzih*.

The literal meaning of *tashbih* is "to declare something similar to something else."[21] Thus, "It is to assert that God must have some sort of Similarity with his creatures. If he did not, how could they have anything to do with him?"[22] Therefore, according to the notion of *tashbih*, God shares something of his reality with his creation. To illustrate this, in *The Vision of Islam*, Murata uses the image of a dimensionless point. This point "has an infinite number of radii extending outward. Each creature in the universe is situated on a radius and is connected directly to the center, gaining its reality from the central point. The radii suggest God's concern for creation through love, mercy, compassion, and kindness."[23]

The notion of *tanzih* takes a different view. The literal translation of *tanzih* is, "to declare something pure and free of something else."[24] This means that, "In the perspective of *tanzih*, God is so holy and pure that he cannot be compared to any created thing, including concepts, since all our ideas are created."[25] Therefore, according to the notion of *tanzih*, God is uniquely one and alone. *Tanzih* is depicted as:

> (A)n infinitely vast circle. God is at the center; he is the dimensionless central point that serves as the origin of the circle. The world that we experience is at the periphery, infinitely distant from the center. There are

[21] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 71.
[22] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 71.
[23] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 72.
[24] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 71.
[25] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 71.

> many worlds, and these can be pictured as a series of concentric circles, some closer to God and some farther away. All worlds have the same center, and all are cut off from the center because of God's incomparability. Only the central point has no dimensions, and 'Nothing is like Him.' At the same time, every concentric circle is similar to every other circle. Created things share the same qualities, but God shares none of their qualities.[26]

Both of these perspectives are understood as existing at all times simultaneously. Thus, all of creation is always in relation to God, and gains its reality from him. Yet, creation is also perpetually apart from God with some aspects of creation always existing at a greater distance from God and some aspects of creation always existing at a lesser distance from God, but always at some distance. In understanding these concepts, we have established the most basic aspect of the Islamic cosmology and some simple notion of the interaction between God and his creation.

The Islamic Notion of Causality

The most common medieval Islamic notion of causality is found in the early Ash'arite school of *kalam*. The Ash'arite school, founded by al-Ash'ari (d.935), was deeply concerned with maintaining "the Koranic concept of divine omnipotence."[27] Thus, the Ash'arites proposed an "occasionalist doctrine that causal efficacy resides exclusively with the divine will."[28] Due to this occasionalist doctrine, the Ash'arites found it necessary to reject the Aristotelian notion of natural causation as held by the *falasifa*. According to the occasionalist thought adopted by the Ash'arites, all matter is created from nothing according to God's will, implying

> a metaphysics of contingent atoms and accidents that are created *ex nihilo*, combined to form bodies, and sustained in temporally finite spans of existence by direct divine action.[29]

Therefore, any experience of cause and effect is unnecessary.

This means that all of creation is totally contingent on the arbitrary will of God. Nothing must be, except for God. If nothing but God must exist, then neither must any particular effect exist in relation to any particular cause. Further, this leads to the notion that only God can be a genuine cause of anything including an act of a human being. They,

> seem to have held that whatever is normally regarded as the effect of man's deliberate act is also created by God simultaneously with the power, so that both 'power' and 'effect' are acquired by man from God.[30]

We must also consider the traditional Islamic notion of soul. Murata explains it thus:

> Spirit has the qualities of light, and body has the qualities of clay. Neither spirit nor body is fire, since fire combines the qualities of light and clay. Hence, in order to complete our picture of the human being, who came into existence when spirit was blown into clay, we need something fiery, something that is neither spirit nor clay, but something that is produced when spirit and clay are brought together. That something is typically called *nafs*, which can be translated as 'soul' or 'self'. Before spirit meets body, there is no human self, no human soul. Only after the two conjoin does a

[26] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 72.

[27] Michael Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (The Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia Library. October 24, 2004, http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dvl-39.)

[28] Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*.

[29] Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*.

[30] Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*.

> person come to exist, a person who perceives himself neither as spirit nor as body, but simply as self.[31]

So, we see that the soul is that which comes to be when God unites spirit with body, thus bringing about life. This spirit coming from God is eternal, and when joined with the body, the soul becomes a potentially eternal embodied being. In a little more than a century, al-Ghazali would further develop these ideas using the principles of logic as taught by the *falasifa*.

In the generation following the development of the ideas of the Ash'arite school, al-Farabi was laying the foundations of an Islamic school of Neo-Platonism. Al-Farabi is called "the first major figure in the history of that philosophical movement (neo-Platonism) since Proclus."[32] It was his work in philosophy that Ibn Sina later developed and popularized. What, for the purpose of this paper, we will consider the most important concept proposed by al-Farabi and later developed by Ibn Sina is the notion of the hierarchy of being.

Netton describes it thus:

> At the top of this hierarchy is the Divine Being whom al-Farabi characterizes as 'the First'. From this emanates a second being which is the First Intellect. Like God, this being is an immaterial substance. A total of ten intellects emanate from the First Being. The First Intellect comprehends God and, in consequence of that comprehension, produces a third being, which is the Second Intellect. The First Intellect also comprehends its own essence, and the result of this comprehension is the production of the body and soul of *al-sama'al-ula*, the First Heaven. Each of the following emanated intellects are associated with the generation of similar astral phenomena, including the fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. Of particular significance in the emanationist hierarchy is the Tenth Intellect: it is this Intellect (variously called by the philosophers the active or agent intellect in English, the *nous poiétikos* in Greek, the *dator formarum* in Latin and the *'aql al-fa''al* in Arabic) was responsible both for actualizing the potentiality for thought in man's intellect and emanating form to man and the sublunary world.[33]

Thus, the cosmos, in al-Farabi's view exists as several layers of Intellects, and the material world is produced from the lowest of these intellects, the tenth intellect.

Ibn Sina further develops this notion of layers of Intellects. He, like al-Farabi, considers God to be "the first with respect to the being of the universe," and further "anterior to that being and also, consequently, outside it."[34] Thus, Ibn Sina postulates that the First Being of the Universe is the necessary being, and this necessary being exists apart from the created universe. He says that, "the necessary Being is such (necessary) in all its modes-and thus as creator-and being overflows from it."[35] This means that the First Being is necessary and every part of its essence is equally necessary. A definite part of the necessary Being is the state of being creator. Therefore the necessary Being must create. In fact, Ibn Sina calls creation an "emanation (that) does not occur freely."[36] Due to the very essence of the creator in terms of being and all "modes" associated with him, the mere fact of being necessitates creation. This creation is not a continual action, but one action that reverberates throughout time.

A difficulty arises in the manner in which the creator must create in that, according to Ibn Sina, "from the One can come only one," and common experience reveals the existence of many. He explains this in that:

[31] Murata and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 100.

[32] Ian Richard Netton, "al-Farabi, Abu Nasr" (Muslimphilosophy.com. 1998, October 25, 2004), http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/h021.htm.)

[33] Netton, "al-Farabi, Abu Nasr" (Muslimphilosophy.com. Ocotober 25, 2004).

[34] A.M. Goichon, "Ibn Sina" (Muslimphilosophy.com. Ocotober 25, 2004), http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/sina/art/ei-is.htm.)

[35] Goichon, "Ibn Sina" (Muslimphilosophy.com. Ocotober 25, 2004).

[36] Goichon, "Ibn Sina" (Muslimphilosophy.com. Ocotober 25, 2004).

> The necessary Being thus produces a single Intelligence. This, having a cause, necessarily possesses a duality of being and knowledge. It introduces multiplicity into the world; from it can derive another Intelligence, a celestial Soul and a celestial body. Ptolemy's system (of various celestial spheres) becomes the framework of creative emanation; emanation descends from sphere to sphere as far as a tenth pure Intelligence, which governs, not a sphere, but our terrestrial world, which is made, unlike the others, of corruptible matter. This brings with it a multiplicity which surpasses human knowledge but is perfectly possessed and dominated by the active Intellect, the tenth Intelligence.[37]

It is from this active Intellect, or spirit, that each body receives its soul. It is matter that is the principle of individuality, and the soul that gives the individual body life.[38] Every body is a compound, "the two components (of which) are matter and form."[39] The importance of this compound, its contingent emanation from the tenth Intelligence, and the ability of the First Being to know such a compound will become apparent when we look into Ibn Sina's notion of causality as it relates to this cosmology.

To gain a subtly deeper insight into this cosmology, we should also consider Ibn Sina's cosmology as described by DeBoer. He writes:

> Out of the first One accordingly, – One only can proceed, viz., – the first World-Spirit. It is in this latter Spirit that Plurality has its origin. In fact by thinking of its own Cause, it generates a third Spirit, the governor of the outermost Sphere; when again, it thinks of itself, a Soul is produced, by means of which the Sphere-Spirit exercises its influence; and, in the third place, inasmuch as it is in itself a 'possible' existence, there emerges from it a Body, viz., the outermost Sphere. And so the process goes on ... Finally comes the Active Spirit closing the series, and generating no farther pure Spirit, but producing and directing the material of what is earthly, as well as corporeal forms and human souls.[40]

This cosmology offers an echo of the notion of *tanzih* in reverse. In this instance God is the outer sphere with each emanation, the first through the tenth intelligences, each occupying interior spheres, and the material world at the center. According to the thought of Ibn Sina, God is so radically different from creation that even human intelligence is at least ten times removed from his very being by a series of spirits or Intelligences. One causes the existence of the next with God, as the First Being, before the First Intelligence, being the cause of the First Intelligence simply due to the necessary creative power that is a part of God's very essence. This brings us to the consideration of the notion of causality as understood by Ibn Sina.

Causality According to Ibn Sina

In his treatise *On Medicine* Ibn Sina says, "The knowledge of anything, since all things have causes, is not acquired or complete unless it is known by its causes."[41] Therefore, if we are to have some idea of what life is, we must come to some understanding of what the cause of life is. Ibn Sina followed the causal theory of Aristotle. According to this thought, there are material, efficient, formal, and final causes.

It is the efficient cause that most interested Ibn Sina. He understood the efficient cause to be "productive of existence

[37] Goichon, "Ibn Sina" (Muslimphilosophy.com. Ocotober 25, 2004).

[38] T. J. DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam* (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), 140.

[39] Majid Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Publications, 1970), 168.

[40] DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*,137.

[41] Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East Vol. VI: Medieval Arabia* (New York: Parke, Austin, & Lipscomb, 1917).

as such."[42] According to his thought, "the efficient cause does not precede its effect in time, but only in existence."[43] This opens the possibility that God, as creator, is the chronologically simultaneous cause of the Second Intelligence, which is the chronologically simultaneous cause of the Third Intelligence, and so on until the Tenth Intelligence which forms matter causing material beings. God does, however, precede all that is in existence. Therefore, God is the efficient cause for all that is, but that in no way means that God must chronologically precede the existence of any other being; his being can chronologically exist simultaneously with other beings while being their cause.

Ibn Sina explains this sense of precedence in efficient causation using the example of a man turning a key. He says,

> For this reason the mind is not repelled at all by our saying, 'when Zayd moved his hand, then the key moved,' but is repelled by our saying, 'when the key moved, Zayd moved his hand,' even though (the mind) rightly says, 'when the key moved, we know that Zayd moved his hand.' The mind, with respect to the temporal coexistence of the two movements, assigns a priority to one, a posteriority to the other. For it is not the existence of the second that causes the existence of the first, but it is the first movement that causes the second.[44]

Here we see two simultaneous events, the movement of Zayd's hand and the movement of the key. Neither is occurring chronologically before or after the other, but the movement of Zayd's hand is prior to the movement of the key. Therefore, "efficient cause does not (necessarily) precede its effect in time, but only 'in existence,'" showing that simultaneity is possible in cause and effect.

[42] Michael E. Marmura, "Avicenna on Causal Priority" (Muslimphilosophy.com. October 25, 2004) http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/sin/art/marmura4.pdf.)

[43] Ibid.

[44] Marmura, "Avicenna on Causal Priority."

Ibn Sina understands the material cause to be that which is "reducible to the principle of potentiality or receptivity."[45] This means that the material cause possesses many "diverse connotations ranging from the prime matter in relation to form in general, to the unit in relation to number, or wood in relation to the bed."[46] In these examples, we see that material cause refers to the most basic thing of which any composite is composed, and that the basic thing is in some sense nothing without some other form to actualize it. Form takes on sensibility when paired with prime matter. Number is intelligible when paired with unit. A bed takes shape when paired with wood, so that the wood may create a frame. Of themselves, prime matter and unit are empty, and of itself, wood is simply potential furniture, fuel, or termite food until some outside force actualizes it. This leads to a consideration of that cause which actualizes the material cause, called the formal cause.

Ibn Sina understands the formal cause to correspond "to the principle of actuality or fulfillment."[47] Given the examples mentioned above in reference to material cause, form is the formal cause that actualizes prime matter, number is the form that actualizes unit, and the form of bed is that which actualizes the wood. Thus, the form of a number gives meaning to a unit in much the same way that the form of bed gives meaning to a pile of wood. Further, "Even art, in so far as it inheres in the mind of the artisan, may be referred to as form, in relation to its object."[48] So, the power of thought can be a formal cause. The mind possesses such power that a human thought can actualize some potential.

Ibn Sina defines the final cause "as 'that for the sake of which' the action is done."[49] Here, in reference to the abovementioned bed, it is the bed itself that is the final cause for the creation of the bed. It is the final cause that enjoys "a certain preeminence." This is because, "In the conception of

[45] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 172.

[46] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 171.

[47] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 171.

[48] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 172.

[49] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 171.

the agent, it is prior to the other causes, since they are conceived subsequently to it. It is also prior in point of definition, since it enters into the definition of the other causes."[50] This thought opens the possibility of an infinite regress of final causes, but the ultimate final cause, to which all things are ordered, is God the creator who exists outside of all that he causes due to his essence.

In calling God the ultimate final cause of the otherwise infinite regress of final causes paired with his notion of efficient cause, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi claims that Ibn Sina created "a special type of causation in which the cause is temporally co-extensive with the thing caused."[51] Therefore, God must exist as the necessary being, and due to the necessity of his creative essence, through the series of Intelligences, he is ultimately the cause of the Active Spirit that in turn is the cause of the material world and all contained therein. The series of caused Intelligences and the material world emanating from the last of the Intelligences, which is the Active Spirit, are eternal with the creator, being simultaneously caused by his mere being.

Here it is important to consider in what way God knows all of that of which he is the cause. We have established that Ibn Sina recognizes God as, "the First Principle of Being, who is supremely one." It is further explained, "in the koranic view of God, (that) an immense gulf separates the Being 'unto whom nothing is like' and the multiplicity of creatures He has, by his sheer fiat, brought forth."[52]

First, we refresh our understanding of Ibn Sina's vision of God. In the words of Fakhrn, "For Ibn Sina, the essential characteristic of this Being (God), who rises above the world of contingent entities, is necessity. The proof of its existence is logically bound up with this characteristic, since however long the series of contingent entities in the world might be it must terminate ultimately in a necessary principle upon which this series depends." In the same place he goes on to say that, "In this proof, Ibn Sina observes, we are concerned with the first, efficient cause of the series, who stands to it in an essential, generic relation rather than an accidental or individual one."[53] Thus, God exists of necessity, and part of that necessity is his concurrent causing of other beings of which he is the first efficient cause that stands apart from creation.

The second important aspect of God, in the view of Ibn Sina, is the absolute unity of God. This unity, "excludes every mode of composition, including the composition of essence and existence, since only entities which are contingent can admit of such composition, in so far as existence belongs to them by virtue of their dependence upon their cause, rather than by virtue of their own essence."[54] This implies that God, as the necessary Being, can have "no genus and no differentia ... and it is without equal."[55] From this, Ibn Sina calls God perfect. He lacks nothing.

This leads Ibn Sina to describe God as "pure reason" saying, "Whatever is free from imperfection, especially the imperfection of potentiality or materiality, must be a pure form. For matter is the bar to 'formal' or 'intelligible' being, namely, 'the being which once it is predicated of anything, this being becomes a reason,' either in a potential or in an actual sense. In the latter case such a being is both the subject and object of its own cognition, since there is no material bar to its becoming an object of thought. Consequently the Necessary Being is at one and the same time the act, subject, and object of thought or the substance, act, and object of Reason."[56]

This leads to what God, as the necessary Being knows. Ibn Sina says that God knows himself. Fakhrn explains, "The act of self-cognition, observes Ibn Sina, need not introduce any duality into the nature of this absolutely unique being. In thought, whatever is pure or immaterial is both agent and patient, since it is not hindered by any material impediment. Nor does it require any extraneous agency to bring about

[50] DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, 172.
[51] Toby Mayer, "Ibn Sina's 'Burhan Al-Siddiquin'," *Journal of Islamic Studies* (12.1.2001: 18-39), 29.
[52] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 173.
[53] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 173.
[54] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 174.
[55] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 174.
[56] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 175.

that condition of immateriality or abstractness which is the sign of both intellectuality and intelligibility."[57] Thus, God in knowing himself knows the One as one. This leaves some difficulty in how God can know his creation.

Ibn Sina does address this difficulty in that what emanates from God is still a part of God; otherwise, he would be in some way a duality. If God knows himself, and there is some emanation from God that is also part of the radical unity of God, then God must know that emanation as well. Thus, we see that "despite its (the necessary Beings') total independence of anything outside it or other than it, it apprehends, in the very act of self-apprehension, whatever has emanated from it, namely the 'higher entities' of the heavenly sphere and the lower entities of the sublunary world. The mode of this apprehension is explicitly stated to be universal, since it does not befit the Necessary Being to partake, without prejudice to its perfection, of that particular mode of cognition which belongs to finite knowers."[58] Ibn Sina's notion that the perfection of the Necessary Being would be prejudiced if it knew in a particular mode demonstrates the thought of the falasifa that if God knows particulars, which are contingent and subject to change, then that change in his knowledge would constitute a change in his being, thus compromising the perfection of God.

This still leaves some question of how we, as individual humans, are known as well as the rest of earthly creation. To this end, Ibn Sina explains that each intelligence contemplates the essence from which it emanates causing it to produce a new intelligence, which it in turn knows. Thus, "the first intellect is engaged in the contemplation of its supreme author or principle. In apprehending itself as necessary through this author, it generates the Soul of the outermost heaven. In apprehending itself as contingent in itself, it generates the body of this heaven, and in apprehending its author it generates the second intellectual substance in the series. This process is then repeated until we come to the tenth intellect, which concludes the series and dominates the nethermost sphere, namely, that of the sublunary world in which we live."[59] The tenth intellect, which informs corruptible matter giving it life, also knows that which it created.[60] Through the chain of emanations God knows himself, and in knowing himself he knows what emanates from him. As regards the sublunary world, he knows the universals. Thus, he knows the form of human, tree, good, liberty, blue, etc. It is only the tenth intelligence, from which matter receives form bringing forth particulars that knows in particular.

For Ibn Sina there is a part of the human that can, after death, unite with the tenth Intellect. It is the soul. Ibn Sina understands the soul to be eternal and imprisoned by the body. He explains this notion in a poetic work *Ode on the Soul*, in which the philosopher's soul seeks an experience of the Real. Fakhrn here paraphrases a section:

> Having been ensnared by a group of hunters and locked up in a cage, the Souls of mortals, like a swarm of captive birds, refuse to accept fate and struggle for release. Only a few of them, however, are fortunate enough to escape, with parts of their shackles still clinging to their claws. The others are left behind but are eventually rescued by their companions. They set out together in search of safety on the top of the eight-story Mountain of God. As they reach the seventh story they settle down to rest in the midst of green pastures and flowing streams. They are soon roused to a new sense of urgency and head for the eighth story, where they come upon a species of bird the like of which, in beauty, sweetness, and affability, they had never seen before. Before long, the bonds of friendship between them have grown so strong that the hosts are only too glad now to lead their guests to the city of the Great King, before whom they would lay their burdens. But as soon as their eyes fall on the radiant countenance of the King, they are infatuated. As they enumerate

[57] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 175.
[58] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 176.
[59] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 177.
[60] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 177.

their grievances, the Great King listens sympathetically, promises them complete restitution of liberty, and bids them go in peace. And so they go, with the most vivid impression of that vision of beauty whose enjoyment brings supreme happiness, and the conviction that never again will they be able to feel quite at home in that 'vale of sorrow;' from which they originally came.[61]

Thus, the soul is in a constant state of agitation, seeking release and union with the divine. In this description of the rising of the soul to the divine, no analogy for a material body exists. This is because Ibn Sina did not believe in the resurrection of the body. DeBoer explains, "The human body and the whole world of sense furnish the Soul with a school for its training. But after the death of the body, which puts an end to this body for ever, the soul continues to exist in a more or less close connection with the World-Spirit."[62]

The Islamic Rejection of Neo-Platonism

It is the notion of a God who is not totally free, but is, by essential necessity, forced to create, along with the notion of a necessarily eternal world, in its current form, and the notion of a God who does not know his creation in its particulars that the traditional Muslim mind could not accept. The Ash'arite school rejected these notions out of hand. Al-Ghazali concerned himself with the thorough study of the neo-Platonists in an effort to disprove these notions using the logical tools of argumentation available in philosophy. He undertakes this difficult task in his masterwork, the *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, in English the *Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

The passion with which he rejects the notions proposed by the neo-Platonists is quite clear in the introduction of the Tahafut:

[61] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 179.

[62] DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, 142.

The heretics in our times have heard the awe-inspiring names of people like Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. They have been deceived by the exaggerations made by the followers of these philosophers, exaggerations to the effect that the ancient masters possessed extraordinary intellectual powers; that the principles they have discovered are unquestionable; that the mathematical, logical, physical and metaphysical sciences developed by them are the most profound; that their excellent intelligence justifies their bold attempts to discover the Hidden things by deductive methods; and that with all the subtlety of their intelligence and the originality of their accomplishments they repudiated the authority of religious laws; denied the validity of the positive contents of historical religions, and believed that all such things are only sanctimonious lies and trivialities...

When I saw this vein of folly pulsating among these idiots, I decided to write this book in order to refute the ancient philosophers. It will expose the incoherence of their beliefs and the inconsistency of their metaphysical theories.[63]

In an effort not to stray too far from the bounds of this brief discussion we will now consider the cosmology of al-Ghazali and through this look at his notion of causality. To consider more of his argument against the philosophers, though incredibly interesting, would require far more discussion than is possible in this paper.

Al-Ghazali understood the cosmos as being created by God who is unquestionably one. He says about God "His being is the perfect being in contrast to which all other beings are imperfect."[64] This God can be called the "first cause" and the "final effect."[65] He also firmly understood God to be

[63] Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut Al Falasifa* (Lahore, Pakistan: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963) 1.

[64] Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut Al Falasifa*, 167

[65] Hans Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam and the Rise of Scientific Thought: The Background of al-Ghazali's Concept of Causality" (September 10, 2004. http://www.ghazali.org.), 3.

the creator of the world, and that he created the world from nothing.[66] This formulation allows for the total free will of God acting or not acting in his creation.

According to al-Ghazali, the cosmos created by God is composed of three worlds: the phenomenal called *mulk*, the invisible called *malakut*, and the intermediate called *jabarut*. Kojiro Nakamura describes these worlds as follows, "The world of *malakut* is that of God's determination, a world of angels free from change, increase and decrease, as created once spontaneously by God.... The phenomenal world is the incomplete replica of the world of *malakut*, which is the world of reality, of the essence of things. The latter is in some respects similar to the Platonic world of Ideas, or Ibn Sina's world of intelligibles. The only difference is that the world of *malakut* is created once and for all by God, who thereafter continues to create moment by moment the phenomenal world according to his determination."[67] Here we see that al-Ghazali accepted a notion of *tanzih* in which the separation between the realms takes on a different form than that proposed by Ibn Sina. This notion of *tanzih* holds God at the center with *malakut* as the next sphere and mulk as the following sphere. *Jabarut* exists in the space between *malakut* and *mulk*.

In the cosmology of Ibn Sina, "Once the divine determination is made, the phenomenal world changes and evolves according to a determined sequence of causes and effects."[68] This is a "reduction of the movements of the heavens and the effects of nature to 'separate intelligences' through the mediation of celestial causes, their knowledge and will, (that) ascribes to things and not to God a determining power."[69] Thus, the layers of intelligences proposed by Ibn Sina deny the free will of God to act or not to act as he so chooses.

In al-Ghazali's formulation of the cosmos there is no such necessity in God, allowing for his total freedom in acting in

[66] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 3.

[67] Kojiro Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid" (ghazali.org. September 9, 2004. http://www.ghazali.org/articles/gz1.htm.)

[68] Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid."

[69] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 3.

any and all of the three created worlds according to his own will. However, in the realms of intelligences, as understood by Ibn Sina, God acts out of essential necessity. Nakamura writes, "The difference between (al-Ghazali's) relationship and the philosopher's causality lies in whether or not the relation of cause and effect is necessary."[70]

Al-Ghazali criticizes the notion of necessary causality as espoused by Ibn Sina. He believes that "only inanimate beings are said to act by necessity." Further, he believes that "by definition, a necessitated act is not a voluntary act." Therefore, the thought of Ibn Sina that "does not allow God to act directly in the world of men, but only through the mediation of other causes,"[71] reduces God to acting in a manner more akin to an inanimate being. For al-Ghazali the "Divine Causality should be defined as free Creative Might."[72] In the light of such free creative might, any action, such as creation undertaken by God, is a purely free action.

Al-Ghazali argues that Ibn Sina bases his notion of causation on the simple observation that an effect "occurs with the cause, but not (necessarily) by it."[73] If it is true that an effect does occur with a particular cause, but not by, or due to it, then both cause and effect are separate and free actions that may occur separate from each other. Al-Ghazali proposes that, "Causes are mere conditions of the conditioned and do not necessarily imply an effect relatable to it."[74] In this regard, he writes:

> "The connection between what is habitually believed to be the cause and what is habitually believed to be the effect is not necessary for us. But in the case of two things, neither of which is the other and where neither the affirmation nor the negation of the one entails the affirmation or the negation of the other, the existence or non-existence of the one does not neces-

[70] Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid."

[71] Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*.

[72] DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, 159.

[73] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 4.

[74] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 5.

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[67] Kojiro Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid" (ghazali.org. September 9, 2004. http://www.ghazali.org/articles/gz1.htm.)

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[70] Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid."

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[72] DeBoer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, 159.

[73] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 4.

[74] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 5.

> sitate the existence or non-existence of the other; for example, the quenching of thirst and drinking, satiety and eating, burning and contact with fire, light and the rising of the sun, death and decapitation.... On the contrary, it is within God's power to create satiety without eating, death without decapitation, to prolong life after decapitation and so on in the case of all concomitant things."[75]

Al-Ghazali does allow that it is commonly observable that one event does regularly seem to follow another, but that we only develop some habit of believing one event to be the cause of the other. He says that the "mere observation of past uniformities does not suffice to give us the certainty of their future continuance."[76] To this end, al-Ghazali holds that "God creates in man knowledge that the world is orderly, but also that its order is contingent and disruptible."[77]

As an example, al-Ghazali discusses the relation of fire and cotton. He says that, "The philosophers claim that fire causes the burning of the cotton, whereas we maintain that the real agent in this process is God, acting either directly by Himself, or indirectly through an angel. For fire is inanimate, and cannot, therefore, be said to cause anything whatsoever. The only proof that the philosophers can advance is that we observe burning to occur upon contact with fire, but observation simply proves that the burning follows upon contact with fire, not that it is due to it, or that it is in fact the only possible cause of burning."[78]

This same concept is fleshed out in the Tahafut thus:

> "We agree that fire is so created that when it finds two pieces of cotton which are similar, it will burn both of them, as it cannot discriminate between two similar things. At the same time, however, we can believe that when a certain prophet was thrown into the fire, he was not burnt whether because the attributes of fire had changed, or because the attributes of the prophet's person had changed. Thus, there might have originated-from God, or from the angels – a new attribute in the fire which confined its heat to itself, so that the heat was not communicated to the prophet. Hence, although the fire retained its heat, its form and its reality, still the effect of its heat did not pass onwards. Or there might have originated a new attribute in the prophet's body which enabled it to resist the influence of fire, although it had not ceased to be composed of flesh and bones."[79]

It is simply due to the action of God's divine will, according to al-Ghazali that the cotton is burned when it comes into contact with the fire, every time it happens. It is equally possible that God might not cause cotton to burn when coming into contact with fire, just as the prophet was not harmed by the flames. This is, in fact, how that which is considered a miracle comes to be. Thus, "without denying that certain elements, like fire, are endowed with certain properties, such as the power to burn cotton, it is not logically excluded that God or His angels may cause this power to be checked in such a way that it will not cause burning in the cotton; or He may create in the cotton the power to resist the action of burning. Such miracles, reported in the Koran, as resurrecting the dead or turning a stick into a serpent could thus be explained in a perfectly rational manner."[80] Therefore, according to the thought of al-Ghazali, it is quite possible for God to cause whatever he chooses in total freedom.

Even human thought, according to al-Ghazali is a part of the willed creation of God. Thus, "even man's choice is compulsory and ultimately determined by God, insofar as it is conditioned by his life, his knowledge and his creation by God."[81] If God determines even the thoughts of humans, he must have a direct knowledge of, and interaction with his creation even in its most particular minutia. God's knowledge

[75] Marmura, "Avicenna on Causal Priority."
[76] Marmura, "Avicenna on Causal Priority."
[77] Marmura, "Avicenna on Causal Priority."
[78] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 258.
[79] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut Al Falasifa*, 190.
[80] Fakhrn, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 259.
[81] Daiber, "Rationalism in Islam ...," 8.

cannot be compared to human knowledge; therefore, any analogy between the two eliciting some notion of a change in God if he knows particulars is false. To this end, al-Ghazali writes:

> If they try to take the same stand against our doctrine of Divine knowledge, let it be known that it is agreed on all hands that the relation of Divine knowledge to its object cannot be compared to that between a creature's knowledge and its object. Whenever the soul of the sphere performs the same function as the soul of man, it follows that the two should belong to the same kind: for being a percipient of particulars-through intermediaries is their common characteristic. The validity of this comparison may not be conclusively proved: but there is strong probability for it. And even if this strong probability were not there, the comparison would at least be possible, and mere possibility would refute their claim that the evidence to the contrary is conclusive.[82]

This statement clearly refutes the claim of Ibn Sina that the emanations of God, in the Intelligences/spheres exist as universals. Thus, if God is to know anything, he must know directly, as every being between him and sublunary creation is particular. In reverse, this allows for a personal interaction with God, what Solanus Casey called 'blending' with God.

In regard to the resurrection of the body with the soul, al-Ghazali considers the possibility of souls entering a body that is prepared in a subtly different manner than was the earthly body. He writes:

> Perhaps departed souls require preparations of a different kind, and the causes of such preparations are not complete until the time of resurrection. And it is not improbable that the preparation required by the perfect souls which have departed from bodies should be different from the one required by souls which have come into existence for the first time, and which have not derived perfection from directing the body for a while. And God (exalted be He) best knows such requirements: their causes, and the times of their presence. Since religion introduced these things, and because these things are possible, it is necessary for us to assent to them.[83]

Thus, al-Ghazali presents the notion of resurrected body that will be inhabited by a soul after death. The soul does leave the body at death, but it does not become an eternally disembodied entity, rather it vivifies an eternal body. This body is then linked to God who knows his creation which comes into being solely through the will of the creator.

Conclusion

Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali wrote about the truth as each came to understand it by faith and reason, yet the conclusions drawn by each vary widely. Both attempted to create a valid philosophical tradition within Islam. The conclusions one accepts greatly colors the glass through which one attempts to relate to God. According to the basic cosmology and causality discussed in this paper, if Ibn Sina is correct no human will be able to have a genuine experience of God in his fullness. Rather, the most anyone could hope for, in this life, would be an experience of an emanation of God several times removed. Further, every cosmic occurrence must follow a particular causal chain that begins with God who, by necessity, must cause the chain to begin. However, should one accept the notions presented by al-Ghazali, then one has the opportunity of blending with God, even in this life, in a unique and real way. Following this thought, one must come to recognize even miracles as rational acts caused by God, who is entirely free to do, or not do, as he wills.

As knowledge developed and passed from culture to culture throughout time, the thoughts of these men appeared in various forms within the Muslim and Arab cultures, and

[82] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut Al Falasifa*, 178.

[83] al-Ghazali, *Tahafut Al Falasifa*, 241.

far beyond their borders. Thomas Aquinas adopted and developed many of the ideas of Ibn Sina, recognizing him as a laudable commentator of the philosophy of Aristotle. The notions proposed by al-Ghazali were far more palatable to the orthodox Muslim understanding of God, and his relationship with his creation. Many of these thoughts appeared centuries later, in new forms developed by the English Empiricists, most especially in the thought of David Hume.

It is because of such conversation that humanity is able to gain a deeper understanding of itself, the world, and what exists beyond our own senses. Such conversation does not provide irrefutable answers, but it does offer well-reasoned questions from which humanity is able to grasp a subtly clearer understanding of all that is. This clear questioning is a necessary component of a genuine faith and a good life.

John Paul concludes his encyclical *Fides et Ratio* saying, "I appeal also to philosophers, and to all teachers of philosophy, asking them to have the courage to recover, in the flow of an enduringly valid philosophical tradition, the range of authentic wisdom and truth—metaphysical truth included—which is proper to philosophical enquiry. They should be open to the impelling questions which arise from the word of God and they should be strong enough to shape their thought and discussion in response to that challenge. Let them always strive for truth, alert to the good which truth contains. Then they will be able to formulate the genuine ethics which humanity needs so urgently at this particular time."[84] In this statement we see the vital importance of the debate between the thought of Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali.

> Let them always strive for truth, alert to the good which truth contains. Then they will be able to formulate the genuine ethics which humanity needs so urgently at this particular time.
>
> John Paul II

[84] John Paul II, 151.

Book Review

***Dante and the Franciscans*. Edited Santa Casciani. Brill—Leiden-Boston, 2006. iii + 347 pp.**

As Giuseppe Mazzotta trenchantly observes in his contribution to this collection, "The subject I am treating in the following pages is certainly vast and far from being neglected by scholars over the years" (*Dante's Franciscanism*, p. 175). However, despite the extensive bibliography alluded to by Mazzotta, this collection of ten essays on Dante's Franciscanism manages to offer some new insights on the subject, particularly on the interpretation of Dante's *Commedia* in the light of Franciscan thought. Mazzotta's essay focuses on Franciscan particulars in the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso*, but he also makes the bold claim that the very essence of Dante the pilgrim's journey is defined by the Franciscan tradition: "The Franciscan focus on humility and on esthetics as the genuine way to God summarizes Dante's sense of his poetic and spiritual ascent" (p. 202).

Mazzotta's general study of the *Commedia* is complemented by three essays that specifically address the *Paradiso*: Amanda D. Quantz, "The Life of the World to Come: The Franciscan Character of *Paradiso*"; Tonia Bernardi Triggiano, "Clarissan Spirituality and Dante: Piccarda Donati Revisited"; Alessandro Vettori, "Pax Et Bonum: Dante's Depiction of Francis of Assisi in *Paradiso* 11." Triggiano's essay is particularly interesting on feminist interpretations of Franciscan spirituality, and Dante's creative recollection of one Franciscan nun who was forced out of her convent, and a second whose vocation was delayed by an unhappy marriage.

Two other essays that also address the *Paradiso* but are more properly listed among occult and numerological stud-

ies are Lucia Treanor's "The Cross as *Te* in 'The Canticle of Creatures,' Dante's 'Virgin Mother,' and Chaucer's 'Invocation to Mary'"; and Elvira Giosi's "A Franciscan Explanation of Dante's *Cinquecento Diece E Cinque*."

Two essays that both complement and contrast with each other are V.S. Benfell III's study of a Francisan's influence on Dante, and Santa Casicani's of Dante's influence on a Franciscan: "Dante, Peter John Olivi, and the Franciscan Apocalypse," and "Bernadino: Reader of Dante."

Since almost every assertion about Dante's life has been vigorously contested by scholars, including his relationship to Franciscanism (Did he go to Franciscan schools? Was he a member of the third order of St. Francis? Was he influenced by prominent Franciscans?), William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman ("What Dante Learned from St. Francis") have their hands full in approaching the subject. Nevertheless, they push bravely on: "Biographical information should not be dismissed out of hand. Dante is buried in a Franciscan church and his daughter became a Franciscan sister. There is even evidence that Dante himself might have been a lay or Third Order Franciscan" (p. 132).

Finally, Brenda Wirkus takes a different approach by writing an essay on Dante's autobiographical *La Vita Nuova*: "Vestiges and Communities: Franciscan Traces in Dante's 'New Life." *La Vita Nuova* is particularly interesting as an early presentation of Dante's idol Beatrice, who becomes, in the *Commedia*, less of a real person than the symbol of the reshaping of Dante's mental and spiritual life (Wirkus, p. 347).

Thus this collection of ten essays on Dante and the Franciscans covers a wide variety of material from a number of interesting perspectives. While not all of the essays are equally persuasive, each one contributes to the dialogue on a centrally important subject for scholars and students of the medieval period: the relation of Francis and his legacy to the life and thought of Italy's premier poet.

John Mulryan
Distinguished Board of Trustees Professor
St. Bonaventure University

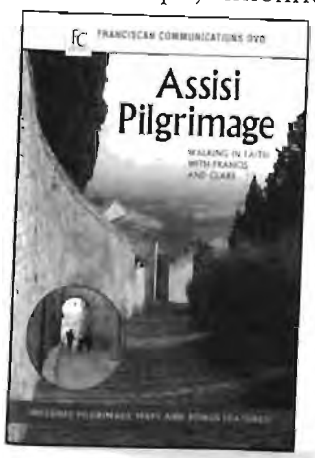
Film Review

ASSISI PILGRIMAGE: Walking in Faith with Francis and Clare Written and Directed by Greg Friedman, O.F.M.

Every year thousands of pilgrims descend on Assisi, Italy, birthplace of Sts. Francis and Clare, eager to draw on the rich spiritual experience that such a pilgrimage affords. Most people, however, will never cross the ocean to visit Assisi, but still want to know more about the founding Franciscan saints and the world in which they lived.

This new film aims to make that pilgrimage experience accessible to more people. The two-hour program allows viewers to hear the stories of actual pilgrims who have come to Assisi and to visit, via video, the many places that a modern pilgrim would go to in Assisi and the surrounding region.

Franciscan Pilgrimage guides, including author and poet Murray Bodo, O.F.M., Clare scholar Margaret Carney, O.S.F., and author Roch Niemier, O.F.M., tell the stories of places and events in the lives of Francis and Clare that mark the pilgrim's road. Music by Franciscan composer Robert Hutmacher adds a medieval flavor. Special features include interactive maps, timelines, a detailed explanation of the symbolism in the Cross of San Damiano, and a pilgrim's dramatization of Clare's departure from wealth.



A perfect gift for anyone who has a devotion to Franciscan spirituality, a curiosity about Francis and Clare, who has made a pilgrimage to Assisi or who simply wants to take an "armchair tour" of this very special pilgrimage destination. 120 min. DVD

Jean François Godet-Calogeras
St. Bonaventure University

About Our Contributors

Murray Bodo, O.F.M. is a frequent contributor to *The Cord* delighting readers with his insightful poetry. He is a friar of the St. John the Baptist Province and ministers in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Maria Calisi is Assistant Professor of Theology at St. Peter's college in Jersey City. She earned her doctorate in historical theology at Fordham University and lives with her husband in The Bronx, New York.

David Flood, O.F.M. has recently returned to Montreal after several years on the Research Faculty at the Franciscan Institute. He has a new edition of Peter Olivi's *Commentary on Genesis* ready for release.

Charles Finnegan, O.F.M. is a frequent contributor to *The Cord*, challenging its readers to a deeper, more personal commitment to our Franciscan *vita*. He is currently on leave from his ministry in Philadelphia, residing in Ringwood, NJ.

Jean François Godet-Calogeras is the editor of the Bonaventure Texts in Translation series and the *Franciscan Studies* published by Franciscan Institute Publications. In his spare time he is also a member of the Teaching and Research Faculty at the Franciscan Institute.

†**Frances Lea Loughlin, S.M.I.C.** played a critical role in the earliest days of the Institute assisting Father Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. in the vital work of retrieving and translating important works of the Franciscan tradition, and beginning other traditions, such as *The Cord*, in 1950. This short biography of Giles of Assisi was among papers she left here at the Institute.

Margaret Magee, O.S.F. is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY. She is currently serving as Associate Director of the Franciscan Federation in Washington, DC.

John Mulryan, Ph.D. is the Distinguished Board of Trustees Professor at St. Bonaventure University. He is currently on sabbatical from his teaching duties in the English Department.

Robert Williams, O.F.M. Cap. currently serves as DRE for two parishes in Hoboken, NJ. In his spare time he is in graduate studies at Seton Hall and also at the School for Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University.

The Seventh National Franciscan Forum

Sponsored by The Franciscan Institute
of St. Bonaventure University

Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue

The Forum will address interreligious dialogue using the encounter between Francis and Sultan Malek al-Kamil as a poignant focus in considering the current conflict between Christians and Muslims. It will examine how the core values of the Franciscan tradition and of Christianity and Islam impel us to engage one another respectfully and cooperatively in rebuilding the world.

Thursday, June 7 (4:30 p.m.) – Saturday June 9 (9:00 p.m.) 2007

Please plan to depart on June 10. Arrangements may be made to arrive early and/or stay longer.

Franciscan Retreat Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Forum Cost: $299 (exclusive of room cost)

Presenters:

Michael Cusato OFM: Director of The Franciscan Institute and historian of medieval Franciscan history.

Michael Calabria OFM: Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies and Inter-religious Dialogue, St. Bonaventure University.

Madge Karecki SSJ-TOSF: Co-founder of the Franciscan Institute of Southern Africa and former associate professor at the University of South Africa

Robert Lentz, OFM: Contemplative artist whose world-renowned innovative icons depict contemporary subjects. Forum will feature his latest icon (see above).

Irfan Omar, PhD: Assistant Professor of Theology at Marquette University. Teaches courses on Islam and World Religions and a graduate seminar in Muslim-Christian relations.

Kathleen Warren, OSF: Forum coordinator and specialist in Franciscanism and interreligious dialogue.

For more information and to register, see The Franciscan Institute website: http://franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu

or contact:

Kathy Warren, OSF, Forum Coordinator
415 Silver Spring Avenue #505
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 301-578-8552; e-mail: kwarren@sbu.edu

The Portiuncula Center for Prayer

Mark your calendars for 2007:

40-Day Hermitage Experience Using Mary Elizabeth Imler's, *A Franciscan Solitude Experience: The Pilgrim's Journal*, this retreat is based on the Third Order Rule, draws from the writings and guidance of Francis and Clare, as well as our rich Franciscan heritage. Participants are invited into the freedom to simply be, using the journal as a guide, with a theme reflection every 10 days by Sr. Mary Elizabeth and opportunities to be companioned by spiritual director as one wishes. Time: February 17 to March 29 and November 4 to December 13. Fee: $1800 – $2500 (depending on choice of hermitage).

***Annual Journey With Retreat....* St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke** with Robert Karris OFM. This retreat will show how contemporary Bonaventure's interpretation and spirituality are. St. Bonaventure was a highly regarded commentator on Sacred Scripture. Since the liturgical year 2007 features the Gospel of Luke, we will sample some of Bonaventure's rich commentary on this Gospel of Mercy. We will find that his exposition, e.g., of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, has anticipated insights of contemporary commentators. We will also find that his commentary on Luke often reveals his Franciscan soul in the points he accentuates, e.g., the poverty of Mary and her newborn son, Jesus. Time: June 11 - 17. Fee: $450

Private Directed Retreat: with Sr. Corrina Thomas FSPA. Corrina's work, as spiritual and retreat director, centers around companioning individuals in transformational processes, including such approaches as enneagram, focusing, active imagination, guided imagery, and balancing of the chakras. She believes that each person and all of creation are living images and living process of the Divine, inseparable from the Source of all life. And that in discovering our deepest identity as part of the creative life force of God, we will find hope, healing and harmony for our selves and for our world. Time: July 16 – 22. Fee: $420

Relationships of Love with Fr. Don Blaeser OFM. As much as we may speak of the importance of having faith, our spiritual life is always lived out in relationships. Using Sacred Scripture, examples from the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare, and various other sources, we will focus on living our faith in relationships of love. Time: July 23 – 29. Fee: $375 for overnight $225 for commuter.

For more information contact: Mary Ann Hamilton at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer
9263 West St. Francis Road, Frankfort, IL 60423
Phone: 815-464-3880
Email: info@portforprayer.org
Website: www.portforprayer.org

St. Francis Spirituality Center
200 St. Francis Avenue
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
419-443-1485

Enjoying God's Creation **June 10-15, 2007**

Presenters: Ellen Lamberjack, O.S.F.
and Paulette Schroeder, O.S.F.

Come, listen to the sounds of creation. See and experience God in the breeze, the trees, the lake and the growth of woodlands. Spend time in the county and state parks, along waterways and trails. Transportation and food are provided. Registration begins 6:00 P.M. June 10. Suggested Offering $325.00. You may continue another day for an extra donation of $25.00.

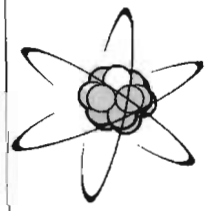
"A Single Branch of Flame: Meeting the Discerning Hearts of Francis and Clare" **June 18-24, 2007**

Presenter: Sr. Clare D'Auria, O.S.F.

Retreatants reflect on and pray with their own foundational faith experience: the unmistakable initial encounter with God–the moment of conversion. By engaging the Tavolas of Francis and Clare, retreatants will discover how this experience of conversion becomes the touchstone or "single branch of flame" in the light of which we see all that comes to us–in the process of discerning significant decisions in our lives. Suggested offering $340.00. Registration begins at 6:00 P.M.; no evening meal on June 18, 2007. Retreat ends with brunch on June 24.

Radical Amazement ... Retreat to the New Universe
October 7-12, 2007

Presenter: Judy Cannato, mother, wife, author, spiritual director, retreat director.



As clearly as the parables told by Jesus challenged his listeners to ask questions about who they were and what their relationships meant, so the new universe story challenges us to expand the way we think about and respond to the life around us. Suggested offering: $325.00. Registration: October 7, 6:00 P.M. Retreat ends October 12 after dinner 12:00 P.M.

A Franciscan Gateway to Interreligious Experience
(Cosponsored by: Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart)

When: August 2 - 8, 2007
Where: Portiuncula Center for Prayer, 9263 West St. Francis Road, Frankfort, IL 60423
Phone: 815-469-4883, Fax: 815-469-3880
Email: info@portforprayer.org
Website: www.portforprayer.org
Presenters: Kathy Warren OSF, Marla Lang FSPA, Corrina Thomas FSPA, Dr. Scott Alexander, Elizabeth Deligio.
Fee: $325 Single occupancy, $275 double occupancy, $200 Commuter
Tuition paid by co-sponsors

We will spend time in this workshop exploring the meaning of Francis' encounter with Sultan Malek al-Kamil in 1219 as a unique paradigm for building peace. Inspired and challenged by Francis' example, may we find ways of building interreligious bridges of peace in 2007.

Kathy Warren will companion us through her book ***Daring to Cross the Threshold***. She will help us find common ground for understanding peace and right relationship which is nothing short of God's intention for all of us.

We will have the opportunity to experience crossing the threshold into the sacred space of other religions of the world. We will also have the opportunity to have meaningful conversation with each other and with our sisters and brothers of other religions traditions.

It is our hope that inspired by the legacy of Francis of Assisi, participants, during this six day conference, will gently walk upon the holy ground of various religious traditions and focus attention on exploring and appreciating:

- Approaches to various inter-religious relationships
- Some values that religions share in common.
- Our desire for and commitment to peace-making, universal fraternity and interreligious dialogue as a spiritual practice.

Towards the Healing of Christianity: A Jungian Christian Dialogue

A Contemplative Conference/Retreat at Shalom Retreat Center, Dubuque, Iowa

DON BISSON FMS, D. MIN

- *Pioneer in exploring the deeper levels of the Jungian-Christian dialogue*
- *MA degrees in Christian Spirituality, liturgy and transpersonal psychology*
- *Doctorate-Pacific School of Religion, San Francisco in spiritual direction and Jungian psychology*

June 10—15, 2007

Sunday, 5:30pm – Friday, 1:00pm

These days will dialogue with Jungian concepts in relationship to the Christian message. Includes input, reflection and integration to facilitate our own healing as bearers of the Western Soul. Topics include:

- Healing the Jesus Wound
- The Shadow and Christian Spirituality
- The Archetype of Renewal & Destruction
- Jungian Inner Work and Christian Prayer
- Reclaiming the Christian Mystical Tradition

Extended explanation of retreat available upon request or on our web site. Massage, reflexology, Reiki available on-site thru Integrating Wellness.

Offering: $415 overnight / $315 commuter

TO REGISTER, send $75 nonrefundable deposit to:
Shalom Retreat Center, 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001.
This secures your reservation and is credited to the offering for the Retreat.

Craving for God: A Spirituality of Food

Saturday, June 16, 9:30am – 4:00pm

Workshop will focus on our hunger and thirst for the Divine in life. We will examine the spiritual relationship to nurturance, love, hunger, and the desire for food. Fasting, addictions, and obsessions of our culture will be presented. Input and process included. **Offering: $60** includes lunch.

TO REGISTER, send offering to:
Shalom Retreat Center, 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001.

For more information, call us at 563-582-3592

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WEB: http://members.aol.com/DBQShalom/

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Andre Cirino, OFM and Josef Raischl, SFO

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8-DAY
FRANCISCAN RETREAT

ST. BONAVENTURE'S JOURNEY OF THE HUMAN PERSON INTO GOD

SAN DAMIANO RETREAT

JULY 17-19, 2007
MID-WEEK
WORKSHOP

KEEPING ALIVE THE SPIRIT OF HOPE

Diarmuid O'Murchu

5-day Silent Retreat. July 29-August 3, 2007. With Fr. Eddie Fronske, OFM at San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA. For more information call Lorraine Steele at 925.837.9141 or visit our website: www.sandamiano.org.

God's Extravagant Love:
Reclaiming the Franciscan Theological Tradition

Program sponsored by
The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia — Aston, PA

In the context of prayer, presentation, exchange, we will consider the topics of the primacy of Christ/of love; creation and humility of God; dignity of the human person.

We approach them from the Franciscan perspective within our rich Christian heritage. Much has been said about the Franciscan Theological tradition offering a message of healing and hope. Its revitalization speaks to the deepest concerns of life on our planet today.

YOU ARE MOST WELCOME!

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

FRIDAY
6:30 –8:30 pm • Registration and Historical Overview, *"Already in our hearts"*

SATURDAY
9:00 am • Love and the Primacy of Christ
1:20 pm • Creation and Humility of God
4:15 pm • Liturgy
Evening • Open space to explore resources

SUNDAY
9:30 am • Dignity of Human Person
11:00 – 11:50 am • Pastoral Applications
12:00 – 1:00 pm • *"When, if not now; Who if not us"*
1:00 pm • Departure

ASTON, PA
Franciscan Spiritual Center
February 16-18, 2007
May 11-13, 2007
September 14-16, 2007
September 28-30, 2007

RINGWOOD, NEW JERSEY
Franciscan Spiritual Center
October 12-14, 2007
November 9-11, 2007

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK
Franciscan Center Retreat House
April 13-15, 2007

MILWAUKIE, OREGON
Griffin Center
April 27-29, 2007
June 8-10, 2007

WHITEHALL (PITTSBURGH) PENNSYLVANIA
Franciscan Spirit and Life Center
April 27-29, 2007

MILLVALE (PITTSBURGH) PENNSYLVANIA
Sisters of St. Francis, Motherhouse
November 2-4, 2007

SKANEATELES, NEW YORK
Stella Maris Retreat Center
June 15-17, 2007

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA
Avila Retreat Center
March 30 - April 1, 2007

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
St. Joseph Family Center
July 6-8, 2007

DUBLIN, IRELAND
Emmaus Retreat & Conference Center
December 7-9, 2007

PROGRAM COST

$225 Inclusive of registration, housing and resources

$150 Commuter
(NB Program includes Friday and Saturday evening sessions)

Brochure available Sept 2006

INFORMATION:
Kathleen Moffatt OSF
skmoffatt@aol.com
302-764-5657

Cell: 302-559-0952

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- **Certificate in Franciscan Formation**
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- **MA in Theology (Franciscan Studies)**
- **PhD Supervision** in Franciscan Studies and Theology
- **Sabbatical Programme** - time for study, for reflection and relaxation – you choose the proportions - in an international Franciscan family

For more information contact

- BA and courses in Philosophy, Theology and Ministry – Br Philippe Yates OFM
  email: philippe.yates@franciscans.ac.uk
- MA, Franciscan Studies and Sabbatical Programme – Sr Margaret McGrath FMSJ
  email: margaret.mcgroth@franciscans.ac.uk

Giles Lone, Canterbury CT2 7NA
tel +44 1227 769349 fax +44 01227 786648
www.franciscans.ac.uk

School of Franciscan Studies
Summer 2007: June 25th – July 27th

SFS	Credits	Course Title
WEEKS 1-5: JUNE 25th -JULY 27th		
507	3	Early Franciscan Movement
518	3	Franciscan Hagiographical Tradition
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies
528	3	Pre-Franciscan Religious Movements
505	0	Integration Seminar
597	0	Comprehensive Exams
WEEKS 3-5: JULY 9th – JULY 27th		
526	3	Clare and Early Franciscan Women
527	3	Rule and Life of the Third Order Regular
538	3	Development of the Franciscan Person
556	3	Foundations of Franciscan Spirituality
557	3	Franciscan Mystical Tradition
567	3	Franciscan Painting: Studio
ONE WEEK COURSES		
564 -01	1	Constructing a Contemporary Franciscan Spirituality of Creation
564 -02	1	The Prayer of Francis and Clare
GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES		
521	2	Francis: Life and Charism
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History

For more information see: franciscaninstitute.sbu.edu

A Franciscan Spirituality of Creation
June 25-29, 2007

This course will provide the intellectual tools for students to develop their own Franciscan spirituality of Creation, drawing from an array of sources: historical, scientific, and experiential. It will investigate the Franciscan spiritual, theological, and intellectual traditions and propose strategies for bringing these to bear on our contemporary environment crisis. The course will investigate the question: what is ours – from a Franciscan perspective – to do in light of these crises? Final projects will create a plan for bringing these resources to bear on an environmental issue in one's home community.

Keith Warner, O.F.M. Keith Douglass Warner is a Franciscan Friar, and the Faith, Ethics & Vocation Project Director in the Environmental Studies Institute at Santa Clara University. He is an interdisciplinary environmental scholar who studies how values, ethics, institutions and the expansion of knowledge shape nature/society relations. His areas of specialty include sustainable agriculture, sustainability ethics in science, and the greening of religions. More info: www.scu.edu/fevp.

The Prayer of Francis and Clare
July 2 – 6, 2007

With their creative and passionate love of Jesus Christ, Francis and Clare became great models of prayer. This course will analyze the experience of prayer that we find in and through their writings, with special attention to the images of Christ and of the human person that emerge. We will examine how the Church, the early fraternity, and their own personal encounters with Jesus Christ shaped the way that Francis and Clare prayed.

Richard Martignetti, O.F.M., is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province, New York. He has served his province both as Director of Post-Novitiate Formation and as Secretary of Formation and Studies. He served the Order for three years as Guardian of the OFM General Curia in Rome. He is currently living in Canada and working as Director of Pre-Novitiate formation. He is a guest lecturer at the Antonianum and at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury.

On the Franciscan Circuit

Franciscan Evangelization: Striving to Preach the Gospel May 25-27, 2007
The Franciscan Center at Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC See ad p. 223.

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Ministry Retreat June 1-7, 2007
Directed Retreat June 8-15, 2007
Conscious Contact Retreat Weekend July 13-15
Women's Retreat Weekend July 20-22, 2007
Franciscan Center, Tampa, FL. See ad p. 231.

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The Seventh National Franciscan Forum
Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue June 7-9, 2007
Colorado Springs, CO See ad p. 224.

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Annual Journey with Retreat ... St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke June 11-17, 2007
Private Directed Retreat July 16-22, 2007
Relationships of Love July 23-29, 2007
Franciscan Gateway Experience August 2-8,
At the Portiuncula Center for Prayer Frankfort, IL See ad p. 225.

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Enjoying God's Creation June 10-15, 2007
A Single Branch of Flame: Meeting the Discerning Hearts of Francis and Clare June 19-24, 2007
St. Francis Spirituality Center Tiffin, OH See ad p. 226.

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Towards the Healing of Christianity June 10-15, 2007
Shalom Center, Dubuque, IA see ad p. 228.

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Rules Are Made To Be Lived Not Broken July 20-26,
Franciscan Life Center, Little Falls, MN see ad p. 233.

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BlL	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 (*Regula non bullata*)
LR	The Later Rule (*Regula bullata*)
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 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
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 John Duns Scotus

Justice can be understood to be either infused (which is called gratuitous or grace), or acquired (which is called moral), or innate (which is the will's liberty itself). ... by distinguishing from the nature of the thing the two primary characteristics of this two-fold affection (one inclining the will above all to the advantageous, the other moderating it, as it were, lest the will in eliciting an act should have to follow its inclination) ... It is clear, then, from this that a free will is not bound in every way to seek happiness ... Rather it is bound, in eliciting its act, to moderate the appetite qua intellective, which means to moderate the affection for the advantageous, namely, lest it will immoderately.

Ordinatio II, Distinction Six.

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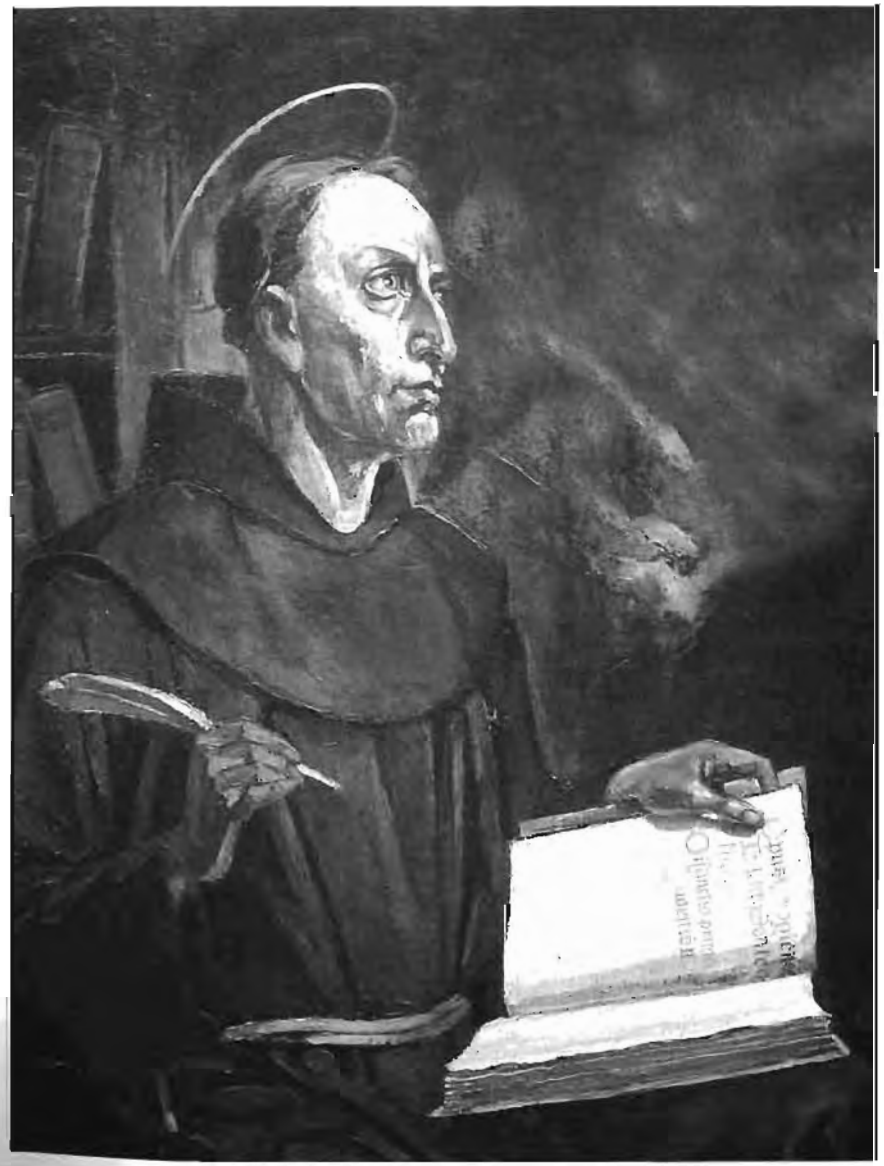

· A Franciscan Spiritual Review ·

THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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(Email: dmitchel@sbu.edu)

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

1. MSS should be submitted on disk in Microsoft Word (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 should be footnoted except Scripture sources or basic Franciscan sources. Scripture and Franciscan source references should be identified within parentheses immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:

(1Cor. 13:6). (2C 5:8). (ER 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, $60.00; half page, $30.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., March 1 for the April/June issue).

Cover design: Mark Sullivan

Table of Contents

Foreword

> *Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.* (CtC 9)

Much has been written about these words, and their meaning plumbed with great expertise and devotion. I invite our readers to rejoice in the beauty and bounty of this season while they peruse this issue. In western New York the season of "sitting outdoors" is short and consequently all the more appreciated.

This issue continues a focus on John Duns Scotus as St. Bonaventure University and the Franciscan Institute is the site of the first of four Congresses on Scotus. October 18-21, 2007 will find scholars from around the world gathered here to consider the *Opera Philosophica* of Scotus. His theological, metaphysical and ethical works, as well as their implications for the future will be the subject of other congresses to be held in Oxford, England, Bonn and Cologne, Germany, and Strasbourg, France respectively.

Next we move to Francis of Assisi, looking at the meaning of the Tau, and his Office of the Passion. The poetry of Seamus Mulholland leads us to new views of places associated with Francis. A new interpretation of the Letter to Brother Leo comes from the students in Jacques Dalarun's course on Pre-Franciscan Religious Movements. Finally, an invitation to the women of the family to study the charism for those elements which can bring life to today's Franciscan communities.

The fourth and final issue for this year – due out in November – is a special edition to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. The year-long celebration culminates in a Festival scheduled for April 18-19, 2008. St. Bonaventure University and the Franciscan Institute will host Festival participants in a series of lectures and the presentation of a *Source Book on the History of the Third Order Rule*. Mark your calendars and come join the celebration!

Daria R. Mitchell, OSF

Light and Love: Robert Grosseteste and John Duns Scotus on the How and Why of Creation

Daniel P. Horan, O.F.M.

Who, How and Why?

Medieval Paris and Oxford, as most students of Franciscan history know, are considered the centers of the nascent Franciscan intellectual tradition. Thinkers like Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure are among the best known from Paris, while John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham are the most remembered from Oxford. As was the contemporary practice, each of these thinkers engaged in a scholastic form of intellectual inquiry that often covered a number of subjects related to philosophy, theology and natural science. Frequently these subjects blended together to form a synthesis that reflected a thinker's view of the world that was not as categorized and easily distinguishable as our more specialized form of scholarship is today. This was often the case when a medieval thinker, including those within the Franciscan movement, explored the theme of creation. The practice of commenting on God's act of creation – known as *Hexaemeron*, after the Genesis account of the six days of creation – was a common academic exercise that can be found among the major works of many scholastics alongside their commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard.[1] Those who did not explicitly address the topic with some

[1] See Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), for more on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and the impact of that work on the theological formation of medieval university masters.

form of *Hexaemeron* often broached the subject tangentially by reflecting on the act of creation and the proceeding theological implications at some point in their work.

While the popular Franciscan figures mentioned above contributed immensely to the rich Franciscan intellectual tradition, helping to plant a firm foundation for the scholars that followed, some lesser-known thinkers also have influenced that tradition. John of La Rochelle and Odo Rigaud of Paris and John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta from Oxford made significant contributions in the early years of the Franciscans at the universities, ghostwriting parts of major works, such as Alexander of Hale's acclaimed *Summa fratis Alexandri,* and developing commentaries on scripture while lecturing for their brother friars.[2] Their impact on the intellectual development of the early Franciscan movement has yet to be fully studied and appreciated. Another under-recognized figure is Robert Grosseteste. A scholar of the first degree, Grosseteste was the first lecturer of the friars in England, although never a professed friar himself. A prolific intellectual who wrote on varied topics in philosophy, theology and science, Grosseteste helped to form what would later become the second center of the Franciscan intellectual tradition – the Franciscan school at Oxford. Among the wide-ranging themes of his writing, Grosseteste developed a cosmogony that fits well into the theological and philosophical paradigms of creation within the Franciscan movement. What is additionally striking about Grosseteste's cosmogony is the highly scientific and mathematical form it takes, especially considering it was authored in the early Thirteenth Century, making it extraordinarily original.

The method with which Grosseteste engages the topic of creation, highly scientific while deeply theological, provides a framework for answering the simple question of "how" creation came into existence. Presupposing God as the initiator and author of the creative act, Grosseteste methodically outlines

[2] See *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages,* eds. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), for more on the theological contributions and biographical details of John of La Rochelle, John Pecham and Matthew of Aquasparta.

a series of processes that begins with the first corporeal form – Light (*lux*)[3] – and ends with the created world, as understood in the Thirteenth Century. What is clearly absent from his treatise on the "how" of creation – *De Luce* (On Light) – is an answer to the question "why." While he does preliminarily address this issue of "why" in his *Hexaemeron* (On the Six Days of Creation), a fellow Oxford thinker and heir to the intellectual tradition left by Grosseteste writes more extensively on the subject of the "why" of creation. This thinker is none other than John Duns Scotus whose work has inspired so many over the centuries and whose philosophical and theological innovations had a major impact on the shaping of the growing Franciscan school at Oxford.

While this paper is in no way intended to draw exhaustive connections between the work of these two great thinkers, the harmonious pairing of these two figures is not only possible, but it leads to a unique view of creation. This Franciscan view of creation is as relevant today as it was centuries ago. The implications for our modern world torn by ecological injustices are many. Together, a relatively unknown but prolific scholar and one of the most famous Oxford thinkers provide a distinctively Franciscan perspective on creation that suggests answers to the timeless questions of "How" and "Why." Contributing each in his own way, both thinkers provide the response: light and love.

Illuminating *De Luce*'s Importance

The question is simple, but the answer is nuanced. How did all of what we experience of the created world come into existence? This is a question that has prompted the development of creation myths found in every human community on Earth. For thousands of years the quest to answer one of the most basic questions of existence has led

[3] C.G. Wallis makes the point to distinguish that the Latin word for light that is used is *lux* in his translation "On Light" found in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., eds. Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1973), 474.

to inquiry by means of imagination, theology and science. Faced with this task in the early Thirteenth Century, Robert Grosseteste begins his work by systematically addressing this problem.

Grosseteste was invited by Agnellus of Pisa, sometime between 1229 and early 1230, to become the first lecturer of theology to the newly arrived Franciscan brothers in England.[4] Much of Grosseteste's history prior to this invitation, including the exact date of his birth, is debated or altogether unknown.[5] Most scholars assert that he was born between 1168 and 1170 to a poor family,[6] and studied the Arts in Oxford and possibly Paris likely before 1186.[7] He became the first lector of theology to the Franciscans in England holding that position until March 27, 1235 when he was elevated to the position of Bishop of Lincoln.[8] Around the time he was with the friars, Grosseteste developed a rather extensive body of written work on a number of topics, crossing many disciplines. One of his major works written during this time was a treatise titled *De Luce* (On Light).

De Luce begins with God's creation of a single point of light from which, through expansion and extension, the entire physical order came into existence.[9] It is this light created by God, which comes from nothing preexisting, that is the center of Grosseteste's cosmogony. He posits that there could

[4] James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

[5] See McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 19-30, for more information regarding the issues surrounding the ambiguity of the early life of Robert Grosseteste.

[6] For more information regarding the divergence of theories that support the placement of Grosseteste's birth at a particular date before or after 1168, see McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, xi; R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 64; and McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 4-5. It would seem appropriate to assert that, given the information at hand, McEvoy's position regarding the likelihood of Grosseteste's birth before 1170 to be most sound.

[7] There is written evidence of Grosseteste's presence as a young master signing a charter as a witness sometime between 1186 and 1190, as shown in McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 21.

[8] McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 29.

[9] McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 88.

be no other form of matter that so perfectly self-replicates, expanding by self-propagation in all directions while at the same time remaining one and simple.[10] To initiate the process of creation from that single point of primordial light, Grosseteste uses the image of an ever-expanding sphere of light that will diffuse in every direction instantaneously so long as no opaque matter stands in the way. Early in *De Luce* Grosseteste reflects on why light must be the first corporeal form in creation and concludes that because of its characteristics and ability to self-propagate, light must either be the first bodily form or the agent through which creation came into being.[11] But how can light, which is utterly simple and without dimension, create something – let alone everything – contained in three dimensions? To address this concern, Grosseteste relies on the mathematical model of infinity.[12]

Understanding light to replicate infinitely in all directions in an instant, Grosseteste asserts that the expanding sphere of light would eventually double back on itself, becoming increasingly denser. The light expands and retracts between the outermost points of the sphere and the center point of originating light. A simplistic analogy may be drawn to the act of churning butter. As cream is churned in on itself through the process of forced expansion and retraction and becomes thickened into butter, so too light "churns" itself into a denser matter establishing tri-dimensionality. Borrowing from Aristotle's *De Coelo et Mundo,* Grosseteste notes that if something simple is plurified[13] an infinite number of times, it necessarily results in a finite product.[14] This finite product is the created world.

The majority of the remaining portion of his treatise is a complicated explication of his mathematical premises that

[10] McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste,* 88.

[11] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

[12] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

[13] Wallis repeatedly uses the term *Plurification* in reference to the multiplication of light in his translation of "On Light" found in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., 475.

[14] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 475.

support light being the first bodily form and the primary agent through which God created the world. Grosseteste closes his work with a detailed look at the created world, as he understood its makeup. Drawing on his medieval understanding of the created world that consisted of several spheres – both celestial and terrestrial in nature – he explains that God's choice to use light is the intelligent work of God, creating the perfect number of spheres, ten types in all.[15] Grosseteste, capping his explanation of creation, explains that, "Wherefore every whole and perfect thing is a ten."[16] He concludes the work analyzing the numerals that he has identified as observable in creation and through which creation is held in balance: one, two, three and four. Mathematical to the end, Grosseteste poetically concludes his treatise with a final look at the above four numerals, "Wherefore only those five concordant ratios exist in musical measures, in dances, and in rhythmic times."[17]

Grosseteste is clearly influenced by scripture with its frequent use of light in image and metaphor.[18] One may easily see the significance scripture had in the formation of his intellectual works. Although the mathematical rigor and precision of *De Luce* may be first noticeable, its foundation rests in Grosseteste's understanding of God's revelation to humanity through scripture. In a time when the scholastic method of study was gaining prominence in the universities, John Moorman notes the impact that Grosseteste's insistent use of scripture in teaching had on his students.

[15] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 478-80.

[16] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 480.

[17] Grosseteste, "On Light," trans. Wallis, 480.

[18] Grosseteste was certainly well versed in scripture and borrows from the first chapter of Genesis: "Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen 1:3). It is likely he was also influenced by Paul who later makes reference to the light of Genesis when addressing revelation to the church in Corinth: "For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). For more on Grosseteste's use of the Genesis reference to light see, C.F.J. Martin, *Robert Grosseteste: On the Six Days of Creation, a Translation of the* Hexaemeron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste,* 89.

> Grosseteste, who was already a mature scholar when he began his work for the friars, set the tone which Oxford scholars, both friars and seculars were to follow for many years. The special characteristics of his teaching were, first, his emphasis upon, and use of, the Bible, and 'the irrefragable authority of Scripture,' rather than the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, as the textbook of all study.[19]

The importance of scripture as a classroom text, when other scholars preferred the new scholastic text of Lombard, highlights the explicit impact that the Bible had on Grosseteste's world view. McEvoy suggests that *De Luce* be read today as a speculative interpretation of the Genesis account of creation. He also makes note of Grosseteste's use of biblically based language throughout his treatise, citing the Oxford thinker's use of "the firmament" as a deliberate attempt to emphasize that this is a theory of God's creation and not some alternate explanation of the created world.[20] For Grosseteste, God is present in and throughout the entire creative act. Fusing theology with scientific inquiry, he set a precedent at the Oxford school that had lasting impact on the Franciscan scholars to follow.

In a lecture given in 1916 on English Franciscan history, A.G. Little praises Grosseteste for the precedents he established at the school and credits him with setting the standard of scholarship that elevated the young Franciscan school to such prestige. Of great importance to Little is the work of Grosseteste in linguistics, particularly his fluency in Hebrew and Greek. This skill allowed Grosseteste, with a Christian lens, to introduce ancient philosophers and commentators into the Oxford classroom.[21] Again, it is Grosseteste who sets the stage for future scholars by broadening the material accessible to his students. "Robert Grosseteste, who set the

[19] John Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order: From its Origins to the Year 1517* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988), 242-43.

[20] McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste,* 89.

[21] A.G. Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1917), 193-221.

standard for Franciscan study ... realized more and more the need for studying the books of the Bible in the languages in which they were written, for which purpose he made himself acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew."[22]

It is clear that Grosseteste had a particular fondness for the friars[23] and an often under-appreciated role in the foundation of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. As Moorman records, "Grosseteste had left Oxford by the time of Alexander of Hales's entry into the Franciscan Order, so that he must rank as among the first to lay the foundation of a Franciscan school."[24] Included among his foundational contributions can be the synthesizing of science with theology while remaining rooted in scripture. His pupils, such as Roger Bacon and those who followed, would later go on to excel in this type of scholarship. It is for this reason that Grosseteste's inquiry into the created world is so central in the early Franciscan intellectual movement. When facing the question of the "how" of creation, it is with scripture that he starts, and it is with God he remains. By isolating the first corporeal body as primordial light, Grosseteste developed an influential cosmogony that has had lasting import.

Creation as God's Free Gift of Love

About seventy years after Robert Grosseteste, John Duns Scotus, perhaps best known for his work on developing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and asserting the necessity of the Incarnation, also grappled with questions regarding creation. As Grosseteste sought to articulate his understanding of how creation came to be, Scotus looked

[22] Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 394.

[23] Moorman notes that "Grosseteste had already seen something of the Preaching Friars (Dominicans), but it was the Franciscans who won his warmest approval, an approval which grew into an affection which at one time very nearly persuaded him to take the habit himself." (Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 92). Additionally, Robert Grosseteste is known to have bequeathed all his books to the friars in England in 1253. (184-85).

[24] Moorman, *A History of The Franciscan Order*, 243.

to his study of theology and his Franciscan tradition to help elucidate the "why" of creation.

Scotus studied and taught at the Franciscan school at Oxford, a beneficiary of Grosseteste's establishment of the program there. Like Grosseteste, what remains recorded of Scotus's early history leaves many questions unanswered. It is believed that he was born in Duns, Scotland around 1266[25] and died on November 8, 1308 in Cologne, Germany. Scholars assert that Scotus studied in Paris after entering the Franciscan Order and doing preliminary studies in Oxford, followed by some lecturing at the university. This assignment to study in Paris indicates the caliber of thinker that Scotus was since the Minister General of the Order would appoint a select number of men to do advanced studies there. After his time in Paris, the Order would again ask him to move, this time to Cologne where he would oversee the theological studies of the Franciscan students. Scotus died three years later at the age of 42.

Although still young (by today's standards) at the time of his death, Scotus left behind a significant number of written works, all at various stages of completion that has contributed to the difficulties one encounters when studying his work. Like Grosseteste, other preceding thinkers and his colleagues, Scotus wrote and lectured on a great many subjects in philosophy and theology. However, creation for Scotus might be seen as the linchpin that connects his various works. Asserting the inherent dignity of all creation, Scotus develops his thought on creation through the lens of contingency of the world and the freedom of God.[26] Ilia Delio summarizes Scotus's approach to creation, "For Scotus, *why* creation comes about is more important than *how* creation comes about.... Creation is simply the work of an infinitely

[25] For more on the dating of Scotus's birth and early history, see Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 13-23.

[26] Ilia Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World*, Vol. 2, The Franciscan Heritage Series (CFIT/ESC-OFM) (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003), 33.

loving creator."[27] With the precursory and foundational work of Oxford thinkers of the Franciscan school, like Grosseteste, who systematically outlined the "how" of creation, Scotus picked up the issue of "why."

To understand the starting point for a thinker such as Scotus, one must view his Franciscan experience as primarily hermeneutic. The spirituality that defined his religious community, and therefore his own experience, is deeply rooted in the belief of Francis of Assisi that all creation is good, created by a loving God. For Scotus, God's love is the reason *par excellence* for creation. This foundational position is the springboard for his doctrine of the contingency of the world. Scotus believed that nothing that was created existed out of necessity. Nothing had to be. Rather, everything that is, has been or will be is brought into intentional existence through God's divine freedom. To suggest that the world and all it contains *must* have been created diminishes God's freedom and detracts from the loving act of self-gift that God has so willingly granted. To believe that God's creating act is freely done says more about the Creator than it does about creation. Mary Beth Ingham describes Scotus's perspective as, "God is the artist and creation the work of art."[28] No more than an artist *has* to create a work of art does God *have* to create the world. This necessarily leads to the position of God's divine freedom.

If the world and all of creation are contingent, then it must have been a deliberate choice for God to create. For Scotus this is a metaphysical issue. It directs one to consider what it means for God to be God. Scotus philosophically deduces that absolutely nothing can interfere with God's ability to act freely. Every choice of God, because of its rational and free character, does not impede, limit or narrow other possibilities vis-à-vis God's divine freedom.[29] In other words, the fact that something exists – that you or I exist – does not limit or narrow the possibility for it to have been any other way or interfere with any other choice of God. This position has

[27] Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 33.
[28] Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 38.
[29] Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 51.

extraordinary consequence in the area of creation's inherent dignity. Everything that is created is a reflection of a particular decisive act of God to bring that aspect of the created world into existence. Since God has particularly chosen to create a given thing implies that thing's intrinsic value.

Scotus addresses the particular dignity of creation in his doctrine of *Haecceitas*, or "thisness."[30] While the term is at first intimidating, it is a rather simple principle. Scotus, with an appreciation for the inherent dignity of every created thing because it was individually chosen to be created by God, wished to express what makes each part of creation one thing and not another. Prior philosophical language simply stated that "this" is "not-that."[31] Scotus's perspective focused simply on the "this," establishing a positive term as opposed to a negative qualifier that defined items of creation in opposition to each other. Neither Platonic nor Aristotelian in origin, Scotus's doctrine of *Haecceitas* is incredibly relational. Focusing on the very individuality of created beings necessarily reflects the Creator that brought the individual creation into existence. Since this individuating character of each created being is a mystery known to God alone – for it is neither measurable nor empirical – *Haecceitas* refers to the ultimate reality of any being.[32] Summarizing the distinction in thought between Scotus and Aquinas, Ingham states:

> According to Scotus, the created order is not best understood as a transparent medium through which divine light shines (as Aquinas taught), but is itself endowed with an inner light that shines forth from within. The difference between these two great scholastics can be compared to the difference between a window (Aquinas) and a lamp (Scotus). Both give

[30] "Haecceitas – From *haec* (literally *this*); the individuating principle of each being; the ultimate reality of the being." From the glossary of Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 228.
[31] Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 52.
[32] Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 54.

light, but the source of light for Scotus has already been given to the being by the creator.[33]

Scotus's vision draws on the metaphor of light, perhaps inspired by the thought of his predecessor Grosseteste, and reflects his strong position of both the sacredness of each person as individually and uniquely chosen, created and loved by God, while also acknowledging the very presence of God in all creation. Since all creation is a gift from God, God's love must be the source of that gift. Echoing John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16), Scotus develops the doctrine of the necessity of the Incarnation, strengthening his position of God's free and loving choice to create. Scotus asserts that the Incarnation was always part of the overall plan of creation, not the result of human sin, as Anselm and others had speculated. As Delio puts it, "Creation was only a prelude to a much fuller manifestation of divine goodness, namely, the Incarnation."[34] As stated above, no choice resulting from God's divine freedom can limit or narrow any other choice, including human sin, as some believed was the reason for the Incarnation. For Scotus, the Incarnation was simply the quintessential expression of God's over-flowing love.

A gift is not a gift if its giving is forced. God's creation is a gift and therefore a freely chosen one, given like any other gift out of love. Scotus answers the question of the "why" of creation with the simple response: love. Proving that all that is created is not necessary, and that God is absolutely free to choose as God desires, Scotus makes clear the Love that is the source of all creation, exemplified by the Incarnation.

[33] Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces*, 54-55.

[34] Delio, *A Franciscan View of Creation*, 34.

Synthesizing a Franciscan Response to Questions of Creation

Distilled to their most basic form, the Franciscan answers to the questions of "how" and "why" creation came to be and was created are light and love. Robert Grosseteste, being deeply rooted in scripture, sought to propose a way of viewing how God might have created the world. John Duns Scotus, awed by the beauty and goodness of creation, sought to elucidate the reason for anything's existence. Together these two great Oxford Franciscan thinkers provide the world with a synthesis that calls us to recognize the inherent dignity, beauty, goodness and presence of God in creation.

While proof of the direct influence of Grosseteste's treatise on light on Scotus may never be known with complete certitude, it is safe to assume that the "Subtle Doctor" was at least exposed to and familiar with the work. The significance of the biblical use of light featured in the work of both thinkers is evident when addressing their respective questions on creation. The work of Grosseteste and Scotus offers us light and love as the lenses through which we can view our created world. Establishing a paradigm based on the themes articulated by these Oxford Franciscans prompts the recalling of our relational nature and reminds us of the intrinsic dignity of all of creation. Like Francis in his *Canticle of the Creatures*[35] we are brought to awareness of the fraternal nature of our existence among and with the rest of the created world. As we strive to love our neighbors, the call to recognize the interconnectedness of creation challenges us to look beyond the human family to the entire created world.

In an age when we are faced with questions about our stewardship of our world, when we are challenged by global warming, air and water pollution, war, consumerism, over-population, deforestation, and other areas of concern,

[35] Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of The Creatures" in *Francis of Assisi: The Early Documents*, Vol. 1, eds. R. Armstrong, A.J.Wayne Hellmann and W. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 113.

we can look to the message of the Franciscan scholastics from Oxford for grounding. Their message is a holistic, foundational view of creation upon which we can build a more sustainable vision of the future. The work of Grosseteste, far removed from the complexities and advances of modern scientific theory, continues to provide an allegory for our understanding of the relational nature of our existence among all creation. Reflecting on the metaphoric use of light as the primordial corporeal form through which all things come into existence, we hold a keepsake of our interconnectedness and interdependence on the rest of creation. Holding firm to that realization we can look to Scotus to provide additional meaning to that view. With our interconnectedness and interdependence comes the truth that, along with the rest of the created world, we are individually chosen, created and loved by God. Scotus explains that while we may come from a single source, each person and creation has an inherent dignity and value that exceeds our understanding to remain a mystery known to God alone. Looking through the lenses of light and love to better appreciate the created world and the creation act, it is marvelous to consider God's over-flowing love and divine freedom that is at the core of creation.

Our existence in the modern world demands an acute awareness of the choices we make regarding our relationship with creation. Writing on the humility of God found in the work of Francis and Bonaventure, Delio notes that the Gospel life today requires our entering into a world of global consciousness and community.[36] Following Jesus Christ in an age of increased globalization changes the way we live in the world and subsequently the way we relate to creation. Drawing on the rich Franciscan view of creation found in the work of Robert Grosseteste and John Duns Scotus, we are aided in the deepening of our relationship with Jesus Christ and can therefore enter more deeply into our relationship with the created world. Francis's experience of relationship

[36] Ilia Delio, "Evangelical Life Today: Living In The Ecological Christ" in *Vita Evangelica: Essays in Honor of Margaret Carney, O.S.F., Franciscan Studies*, Vol. 64 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 477.

was not limited to human beings but extended to even the tiniest elements of creation. "As his life deepened in the life of Christ, he came to recognize that the meaning of Christ extended beyond human persons to include non-human creation."[37] Inspired by the light and love of God evident in the existence of the world around us, we are moved to embrace the call to be just stewards of creation.

Former Vice-President Al Gore, in his acclaimed documentary on global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*, mentions that global warming and other critical issues affecting our planet are not just political or social matters, but are ethical and moral responsibilities that impact everyone.[38] As Franciscan men and women this is not something new to us. With a tradition spanning eight centuries of viewing creation fraternally, we are entrusted with a message for the world that simply states that when creation is neglected or abused an injustice of considerable proportion is committed. Not only is such neglect or abuse a violation of the intrinsic dignity of all created things, but a turning away from the light of God that shines forth from creation, expressing God's love. To live a Franciscan life rooted in the Gospel is a way of living in the world.[39] It is a way of living that values and protects the dignity of creation with respect to our fraternal relationship. It is love for a gift that is freely given. And it is an assurance of our commitment to pass on the gift to future generations so that they too may experience the light and love of God.

Our existence in the modern world demands an acute awareness of the choices we make regarding our relationship with creation.

[37] Delio, "Evangelical Life Today," 489.

[38] *An Inconvenient Truth*, DVD, directed by Davis Guggenheim (Paramount Home Video, 2006).

[39] Delio, "Evangelical Life Today," 503.

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Duns Scotus's Primacy of Christ and *Haecceitas* As Bases for a Franciscan Environmental Theology

Seamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Today, issues surrounding environment and ecology are quite "sexy," indeed "all the rage." Some cynics even suggest they are today's "liberal-minded accessory." We need not delve too deeply into the motivations behind these types of comments but what is certain is that the world as we know it is changing. Not changing simply in the sense that from its birth to its eventual death it, like all living things, is born, grows, matures and will die. It is changing at its very heart, in its very constitutive elemental primalism. Global warming has replaced the hole in the ozone layer as *the* great threat to the existence of the world as we know it. Nations ponder, reflect and consider what to do about it. Green activists urge us to more radical action, neo-liberal capitalists dismiss the idea of reducing carbon emissions since it will affect "business" and therefore profits. Left leaning activists [there are still a few of us remaining!] want to see more "community" action. Wherever we stand on this central and crucial issue we will stand with our own agenda and our own critical analysis of "blame" for the problem and solutions to it.

At first glance it may not seem as if a thirteenth century metaphysician has much to offer us in relation to the formulation of a Franciscan approach to environmental theology. After all, Scotus was a distinctly complex and complicated philosophical and theological thinker. What could the thirteenth century medieval metaphysician Scotus say about twenty-first century approaches to care

for the earth? Well, at the obvious level, nothing. But there are two tenets of Scotus's thought which, while apparently different (one theological, the other metaphysical), can assist the Franciscan movement in providing a solid theological and philosophical base for its formulation of a distinctly Franciscan environmental theology. These two tenets are the Primacy of Christ and *Haecceitas* ("thisness").

The Scotus doctrine of the so-called "Primacy of Christ" situates Christ at the center of creation, predestined to grace and glory before the Fall of humankind is provisioned by God. Scotus arrives at this position through the assertion that God predestines Christ to grace and glory in respect to His will to be loved perfectly by a creature outside himself who can love Him with the same love with which He loves Himself. This creature is Christ. It may be worth pointing out here that perhaps we should stop using the title "Christ" when speaking of Scotus and the Primacy. It has too many connotations of the emphasis on divinity, whereas in the Scotus conception what is predestined is the human nature of Jesus with which the Word unites itself fully. It is this human nature of Jesus which has the primacy over and in all other creatures.

The term generally used to speak of this process is "contingency." Contingency means that whatever exists other than God is not necessary. So: it is not necessary that the human nature of Jesus exist. It does so through the free willed decree of God since all contingent acts and willing outside the Godhead are themselves contingent. Creation, since it is not necessary, is also a contingent. The human nature of Jesus has primacy among all other things created, so perhaps, "Absolute Primacy" is an incorrect term and we should just speak of the "Primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation," or the "primacy of the human nature of Jesus among other contingent realities" (since whatever is contingent cannot be absolute).

This human nature holds the primacy among other contingents in relation to its perfection and as "first-born" among all other created realities. This is true when it is considered that "first" is a relative term and implies another

outside or beside the first. "First" when applied to the primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation is strictly in respect to that nature among all others. This primacy in creation is not dependent on, nor is it occasioned by what Jesus would do historically. The primacy is, above all, a primacy of contingent being in, and of love and grace, among other contingent beings. So, it is through the free will of God that the creature Jesus exists as the perfect lover of the Trinity outside itself. I shall return to this.

The second tenet of Scotus's thought is a philosophical notion, his famous concept of *haecceitas*, (hey chay it tas) usually translated as "thisness." On first approach this can seem a daunting complexity, Scotus at his most subtle and obfuscatory best. Some regard it as Scotus being a philosophical pedant; or that he is engaging in self-indulgent philosophical word play. Nothing could be further from the truth. Scotus's *haecceitas* has profound theological, as well as philosophical, importance and significance, and much to teach us today about the uniqueness of the individual created thing. *Haecceitas*, put simply, means that whatever exists contingently has a "thisness" about it: a unique, unrepeatable, and ultimately indefinable "ness" that is the real possession of that thing as that thing individually, within all classes and types of common nature. Already it is starting to sound complicated. Let me try and explain; *haecceitas* is the reality of a contingent thing as individual even within a species or genus of that thing.

So, for example: Seamus is an animal, so he has "animality." Seamus is a human person so he has "humanity" and personhood, (species –Homo Sapiens), but Seamus is also a man (genus –Male). So Seamus is an animal, of the species Homo Sapiens in the genus of Male. Scotus belongs to the species Homo Sapiens, in the genus of Male. We both share fundamentals of substance, animality, species and class, but both Seamus and Scotus possess a defining quality at the substantial level which is possessed by each individual substance and not another which makes Seamus and Scotus uniquely what they are as individual "substances." Male human persons, a "Seamus-ness" or "Scotus-ness" whereby

Seamus is not Scotus and Scotus is not Seamus even though they are of common nature but uniquely and unrepeatably and individually Seamus or Scotus – their "thisness."

Seamus is *this* Male Homo Sapiens and not *that*. If we then turn back to the primacy then we can speak about the uniqueness of the human nature of Jesus as an unique individual contingent among all other contingent things. It is *this* human nature which holds the primacy in creation and not *that* human nature. Or, if we wish to give it a more spiritual tone: God reveals the fullness of Himself in *this* person Jesus and not *that* person, or Jesus is this human person and not *any* human person. So it is possible to unite Scotus's theological and philosophical thought into one reflection. How then can this unity of the primacy of the *haecceitas* of the human nature of Jesus in creation provide the basis for a Franciscan environmental theology?

The primacy teaches that whatever exists does so because there is the human nature of Jesus which is prior in both grace and predestination to glory than all other created natures. Creation was made for the human nature of Jesus united to the Word and not the other way round. Thus the primacy is a creational primacy and given this primacy all that exists does so in relation to it. Creation therefore has a sovereignty with the union of the Word with the human nature of Jesus at its head, and it has an existence, which, while as contingent as the human nature of Jesus, is nevertheless in fraternal relation to him so that the human nature of Jesus is "first among the many brethren" of other created natures.

Creation and its rights are, therefore, determined by their relation to that which is prior in grace and nature, the created nature of Jesus, which as its model, determines all other created realities. The human nature of Jesus in creation, since it is contingent, has this primacy as pure gift from God, and since all other created realities are in relation to this gift, their rights are also gift. They are not granted by other contingents (even the human nature of Jesus in creation) and that includes Humanity. Thus, men or women, cannot determine what the rights of creation should be – they simply are as created realities existing in relation to the perfection

of created nature which is that of Jesus. Men and women because they are "sentient" are not the lords of creation, but, in fact, its servant charged by God to tend it, honor it and guard it.

In the union of uncreated nature with the created nature of Jesus, necessity and contingency co-exist without detriment to the other, each existing in prefect relation to the other so that neither pre-existent Word or created human nature is destroyed or changed by this union. In the Incarnation, therefore, all other created realities are brought to their "apex," their single, defining moment of existent which is the "Jesus point" whereby pre-existence and existence are together as one person who lives out a life in history. Creation exists because there is a perfect nature which is its model, or to use a Bonaventurian term, its exemplar. All creation, regardless of whether it is animal, vegetable or mineral, even down to the smallest fragment of the constituent "stuff of life" – DNA – is because there is a prevision of necessity and contingency existing as one in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

This Jesus of Nazareth is unique, unrepeatable being who has his own "thisness" and "Jesus-ness" which does not derive specifically from the union of the pre-existent Word with the human creature that is Jesus of Nazareth, but which derives rather from the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is Jesus of Nazareth and not because he is the Word Incarnate. God could have, if God so wished, carried out creative, redemptive purposes in another way, but what God could have done is not relevant, it is what God *has* done in the person of Jesus that is available to us. The Jesus moment is therefore the God-creation moment in a unique, unrepeatable, individuated way. The "thisness" of Jesus is unique to him, mine is to me and creation's is to it. Thus whatever exists co-relationally exists uniquely and individually with its own unrepeatable, individuated "thisness." Hence, the rights of creation are unique and individuated and not determined by men and women but rather by the fact of their own existence.

Since other created realities stand in co-existent and co-relation to the primacy of the human nature of Jesus in creation, all other created realities constitute the "body

of Christ" as much as the "mystical body," so that any persecution of the "cosmic body of Christ" is as much a persecution as those perpetrated on the "mystical body" which is the Church. This stands true because Christ is "head of the body, which is the Church." In which case, if the "headship" or primacy is applied to the cosmic body, then the entirety of the created cosmos is the body of Christ. The Church is the spirit of Jesus alive in all things. If this is true, then by applying the Franciscan concept of the primacy and *haecceitas* to this presence of Jesus we can arrive at the following conclusion.

Christ is present to each and every person coming into the world and enlightens them. This presence does not depend on a credal confession of Jesus' lordship. It is neither subjective to confession nor objective to the fact of Jesus' lordship. It is a truth which stands alone. Scripture attests to this primacy e.g. "He is the first born of all creation." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...." "Christ is the head of the body, the Church," etc. Since the Church is the spirit of Jesus alive in people, then all those to whom Christ is present and enlightens constitute the Church. The risen and glorified Jesus is present in creation as beginning, middle and end point. That is, the Jesus-moment is the reference point to all time and history. The Risen One, therefore, enlightens creation in his presence, the whole of creation is therefore the Church, the locus of the Risen and glorified historical Jesus.

Given this, the Scotist doctrine of the primacy and *haecceitas* are not doctrines which are little more than historical curiosities in the history of theology or metaphysics. They are vibrant, vital, important bases on which the Franciscan movement can formulate an approach to environmental theology and ethics on a solid theological, Christological and philosophical base rather than on naïve, romantic, idealistic notions of St. Francis "loving animals and all creation." This is not to say that Francis is to be taken out of the equation. Quite the opposite, his place and role is crucial. But romanticism is not a solid base on

which to ground a contemporary Franciscan theology of environmental care. The primacy of the human nature of Jesus and the *haecceitas* of this nature, and all other created natures, guarantees their right to be that which they are. So that whaling, the hunting of the tiger, the destruction of the rainforests, the mining of the earth to dust, etc., attack the body of Christ in the sense of martyrdom.

Thus, a Franciscan approach to environmental theology is grounded on firm theological-philosophical and Franciscan bases, and needs further development through the study of political theory, economics, anthropology, environmental ethics, ecology, and socio-cultural studies. Failure to do this means failure to accept redemption because the created nature of Jesus is not left behind at the Resurrection but is glorified in its transcendence of historical and existential limitations and is now at the heart of the Godhead. The Scotist doctrine of the primacy of the human nature of Jesus and the doctrine of *haecceitas* have much to teach the world – if only we can translate it and make it relevant and meaningful not just for Franciscans but for all those who seek the divine with a sincere heart.

Connecting the Vernacular Theology of Francis of Assisi with John Duns Scotus's Causal Contingency

Robert Mayer

Introduction

For Francis of Assisi God was not only good, but was the source of all that is good. This spiritual intuition was so important to the early fraternity that a prayer acknowledging God as the source of all that was good was placed into the *Regula non Bullata*, chapter 17, verses 17-19.[1] In this prayer, Francis gave thanks and praise to the God who has given so much to the human fraternity through the gift of creation itself. Throughout Francis's life, this theme will occur in a number of different prayers and other writings. Even when Francis is no longer able to enjoy fully the gift of God's creation because of disease, he is still able to find the generosity of God's will in it. In the *Canticle of the Creatures*, Francis began, "Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory and the honor and all the blessing, to You alone ..." a sign that though "Brother Sun" was the source of great pain for him, it was still deserving of God-oriented praise because of its ultimate source.

This important spiritual insight is the seed for a much more developed theological stance concerning God's freedom of action, the contingent nature of creation and the goodness

[1] All quotations and citations of Francis's writings and related hagiography come from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volume 1, *The Saint* and volume 2, *The Founder*. Ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, William Short (New York City: New City Press,1999 and 2000). Hereafter, *FA:ED*.

of God in the works of John Duns Scotus. This is not to deny that other theologians also believed that God was good or that creation was a special gift to humanity. It would hardly be fair to the Christian tradition to make such a claim of exclusivity. Yet, there is something unique to the Scotist formulation of these beliefs and the theological consequences of this formulation. This paper intends to examine both Francis and Scotus, using their common bond as *fratres minores* as an important source for their theological and spiritual insights. It is the basic assumption of this approach that, though Francis was not a scholastic theologian and Scotus was one of the most profound schoolmen of his time, there is a fundamental connection between the two because of the life values each held to some degree. Therefore, an examination of the theological writings of these two men may yield some insights that would not have been so apparent had an examination of them separately occurred. This process is not meant to argue that there is an exclusive link between Francis and Scotus; other scholars have ably demonstrated the thematic connections in the thought of Francis and other Franciscan theologians.[2] This approach is merely advocating the idea that Francis's thought and writings can be used as a valid and hopefully important hermeneutical lens when reading Scotus.

Is it Appropriate to refer to St. Francis of Assisi as a Theologian?

In the Introduction reference was made several times to Francis's theology. This in turn begs the question whether Francis was indeed a theologian. Dominic Monti has offered an answer to this question and asserts that it is indeed appropriate to refer to Francis as a theologian.[3] At first glance, Monti's conclusion may seem counterintuitive though it is ultimately a sound one and is the premise that this paper will base itself on.

In response to the first difficulty presented, it would seem that one should not allow Francis's own humility to compromise the value of his contribution. Certainly, by 1220, it would seem that the Franciscan movement was recruiting a number of men who were more formally educated than the members of the community were in 1209.[4] Thus, Francis's own self-identification as "simple and unlettered," would only seem appropriate in relation to the new members who were coming to the Franciscan Order. It is evident that Francis had some ability to read and write and that he was familiar with some scripture, though to what extent is difficult to say. It is therefore inaccurate to portray Francis as incapable of creating and articulating a language of his relationship with God and hence to leave him labeled as just "simple and unlettered" does not do justice to the nuanced and complex world that Francis lived in.

Once it is established that Francis was at least capable of engaging himself and his followers in an intellectual investigation of how God was to be made manifest in their lives, it is appropriate to address the second question, namely, whether or not what Francis was writing could be considered "theology." Though the thirteenth century can rightly be seen as the high point of medieval scholastic thinking, it was also the apex of a religious movement that focused on the democratization of the religious experience.[5] This movement started almost a century before Francis of Assisi was born. During that time, various groups of lay people began to engage in "religious life projects," creating new forms of

[2] A cursory examination of the work of Ilia Delio on St. Bonaventure or David Flood on Peter of John Olivi will ably show how they have connected these Franciscan theologians to the spirit of Francis of Assisi.

[3] Dominic Monti, "Francis as Vernacular Theologian: A Link to the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition," in *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Washington Theological Union Symposium Papers 2001*, ed. Elise Saggau, OSF (St. Bonaventure, NY Franciscan Institute Publication, 2001).

[4] In Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima* he relays his own joining of the Order along with several other "honorable men." These new members are often thought to be amongst the new class of educated "clerics" who joined the movement. This is presumed to have been around 1217.

[5] Cf. Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, English Edition Trans. Steve Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

communal and semi-communal religious groups. These communities would create their own theological language, their own praxis and what is anachronistically referred to as their own spirituality. Bernard McGinn identified the fruits of these endeavors as a "vernacular theology."[6]

Vernacular theology provides the framework around which one can build the theology of Francis of Assisi. Using the criteria of this categorization one can confidently call Francis a thirteenth-century theologian without compromising the integrity and contribution of scholastic theology. This paper is proposing that Francis's vernacular theology had an Aristotelian "flavor" to it. This does not mean that Francis knew and incorporated the writings of Aristotle into his writings. As mentioned above, that would be beyond Francis and his resources. Yet, there is a certain way of viewing the world, a seemingly inductive method, whereby Francis comes to know God, that is reminiscent of Aristotle's own approach to knowing the world. This is not to say that Francis is exclusively an Aristotelian in his thinking, for there are also elements of deductive and Platonic thinking as well. It is the contention of this analysis though that the inductive thinking is the more prevalent and that this is one of the reasons why there is a high degree of compatibility between Scotus's and Francis's own thinking.

Did Francis's Vernacular Theology have an Impact on the Scholastic Theology of Scotus?

Very little is known of the life of John Duns Scotus and, unfortunately, the collection of works that are attributed to him do not reflect the entirety of his life's work. It is therefore difficult to gauge how much of a direct influence, if any, Francis's vernacular theology had on Scotus. Furthermore, in the writings of Scotus to be examined for this paper there is not a single explicit mention of Francis or his spiritual insights. In this, Scotus differs from other Franciscan theologians, like Bonaventure or Peter of John Olivi, who used Francis as an important element in some of their theological writing.

This lack of explicit mention of Francis in Scotus's writings may seem to present a difficulty. Yet, as opposed to direct references to Francis of Assisi in the works of Scotus, an influence is present in a perceived common theological perspective or worldview. The connection to be explored therefore is not a textual one, but one based on the common life of being a *fratres minores*, which in turn consists of a particular approach to the world and creation.

It is impossible to say how Scotus was exposed to the writings and thought of Francis. It is known from Thomas of Eccleston that the first Franciscans to arrive in England came in 1224, a little over two years before his death.[7] It is therefore likely that a copy of the *Regula Bullata* had been brought with them, as well as copies of other circular epistles that had been sent from Francis to the Order and its ministers. In addition to these texts, Scotus was probably aware of Francis's *Testament*. Other texts that Scotus must have been aware of were the two legends composed by Bonaventure on the life of Francis. Essentially then, one could say with some confidence that Scotus was aware of the *Regula Bullata*, the *Testament*, the *Legenda Maior* and the *Legenda Minor*. Asserting that Scotus knew anything else about the founder is speculation, but such speculation is not completely baseless. For example, it would not be too far fetched to suppose that he was aware of Eccleston's chronicle and therefore knew of some of the biographical information on Francis contained in it. One also needs only recall that the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries were a period of crisis in the Franciscan Order

[6] Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism*, Vol. 3 (New York: Crossroads Press, 1998), 58.

[7] Thomas Eccleston, *The Coming of the Friars Minor to England*, trans. E. Gurney Slater in *Coming of the Friars Minor to England and Germany* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1926; Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing).

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[7] Thomas Eccleston, *The Coming of the Friars Minor to England*, trans. E. Gurney Slater in *Coming of the Friars Minor to England and Germany* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1926; Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing).

surrounding the issue of poverty.[8] It is therefore hard not to assume that Scotus would have been aware of at least some of the issues being debated and the surrounding polemical material being exchanged in regards to the poverty of Francis. Texts of this nature may have included the *Legenda Vetus* and collections of sayings attributed to Conrad of Offida and Francis of Assisi.[9]

While it cannot be known how many or if any of these texts were known to Scotus, there is enough supporting evidence to assume that Scotus was at least aware of an overall Franciscan approach to creation, the human place within that creation and how it all relates to God. This approach, already discussed in the Introduction, places the person in the paradoxical position within creation as being both privileged and humbled. Privileged because one is aware of the scope of God's gift and can see God working through creation; humbled because of the immensity of God's love and one's inability to effect the same type of power that God does. This overall sense will have an even greater resonance with Scotus because of his Aristotelian outlook on creation and God. For Scotus, the person is made to know God and creation naturally (as opposed to supernaturally). While in this life the person can come to know God through creation and in the next life the person will have an immediate and intimate knowledge of God that fulfills the person's natural abilities. Therefore, the similarity in approaches to the person, creation and God that will appear in both Scotus and Francis leave open the possibility that the material concerning Francis may have played a significant role in the development of Scotus's theological thinking. Making those connections even more explicit and highlighting the similarities may create an appreciation that Scotus's scholastic theology is enriched by its connection to Francis's vernacular theology.

[8] For a fuller explanation of the poverty controversy and its impact on the friars at the Universities see, Malcolm Lambert's *Franciscan Poverty*, Revised and Expanded edition, (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1998).

[9] For a fuller explanation on the nature of these texts as well as English translations of them see *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Prophet*, Vol. III, eds. William Short, Regis Armstrong and J.A. Wayne Hellmann (New York: New City Press, 2001), 109-40.

Guiding Principles in Understanding the Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus

While specifically focussing on the elements of Scotus's thought that are concerned with his idea of causal contingency, it is necessary to acknowledge two principles that are essential to an understanding of Scotistic thought. The first deals with the epistemology and the second relates to the ontology of Scotus. While a thorough examination of these principles is not possible here, it is hoped that this cursory examination will provide some greater understanding when causal contingency is introduced.

In James Ross and Todd Bates's article on Scotus's view of natural theology, they make the claim that for every one scriptural citation there are approximately ten citations of Aristotle.[10] This seems to indicate that Scotus's theology is grounded heavily in natural reason and the human person's ability to understand God and the world around them. Underlying this epistemological concept in Scotus is his belief in a univocal concept of being. This approach is defined by Scotus in *Ordinatio* I distinction 3, "I call that concept univocal that has sufficient unity in itself that to affirm and deny it of the same subject suffices as a contradiction." This univocal concept will permit Scotus to assert in a positive manner things about both God and creation. Without this ability, Scotus cannot work from contingent to necessary beings in his theology.

A second key concept is Scotus's hierarchy of being. It is important to differentiate between Scotus's concept of being and the beings themselves. Scotus, in his *De Primo Principe*, establishes two orders of being, the first is necessary and the

[10] James F. Ross, and Todd Bates, "Duns Scotus on Natural Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193-237, 200.

second is contingent.[11] Briefly, Scotus differentiates between the ontological characteristics of necessary and contingent beings. The basis for such a differentiation is on the order of eminence. Eminence in this sense should not be understood in its Neo-Platonic sense, but is instead related to *potens*, or the power of the being in question. Scotus's theology of God's absolute power is instrumental in understanding this difference.

Absolute power belongs only to God and is related to God's absolute freedom. Though "absolute" can mean without boundary or limitation, Scotus takes a more conditioned view of the term. In *Ordinatio* I, Distinction 44, he wrote, "For God can do anything that is not self contradictory or act in any way that does not include a contradiction."[12] For Scotus, even though God has absolute freedom in regards to the created universe, God cannot do anything that would entail a contradiction to God. For example, God cannot order a creature to hate God, in Scotus's metaphysical scheme God is infinite goodness and it would therefore be contradictory to order a creature to hate God because it is natural to the creature to love what is good and therefore natural to the creature to love what is most good of all. God's absolute power is therefore not the ability to do anything, it is solely the ability to do anything beyond God's ordained power and does not include a contradiction.

Causal Contingency and the Goodness of God

How does one know that a good and loving God is responsible for the universe? In Aristotle's thought system it did not seem necessary to assert that the world had been

[11] Scotus's division of being is broken into two conclusions in the *De Primo Principe*, a translation by Allan B. Wolter is available through Franciscan Institute Publications. Richard Cross wrote an extensive commentary on the work in 2005, see *Duns Scotus on God*.

[12] Calvin Normore, "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 148.

created at all, in fact one could maintain that the Earth had and will exist for eternity. Scotus, along with others, explicitly refuted this idea and instead asserted that the world had to have a beginning. For a number of theologians this was primarily evident through divine revelation or scripture. Bonaventure denied Thomas of Aquinas's position of the philosophical possibility of an eternal earth partly on the basis of what scripture had revealed.[13] Scotus though is going to take a different approach, relying on a philosophical explanation rather than a scriptural one.

The first element is that no effect is its own cause.[14] It is important to take note of the words, "effect" and "cause." The distinction between the two will be important at a later point. According to Scotus the earth is an effect, one of many effects that one can observe. Because the earth is an effect, it must have been caused by something. This begs the question though, how does Scotus know that it is an effect. One will recall earlier that a distinction was made in the eminence of beings, and that one of the defining characteristics in this differentiation was in the difference in power. It is true that the earth has some form of causal power, natural phenomena provide numerous examples of that power. Yet, it is also true that the causal power of the earth is limited and in fact needs the cooperation of other powers to produce a number of effects. This lack of absolute power therefore makes it clear in Scotus's ontology that the earth itself does not qualify as one of the beings in the highest level of the ontological hierarchy. Therefore, the earth must be some form of effect, an effect with causal powers, but an effect nonetheless.[15]

Once it has been established that the earth is some sort of effect the cause of the earth can be sought. Scotus believes that all effects must come from some first principle; he denies

[13] Anthony Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60-63.

[14] *De Primo Principio, Chapter II, Conclusion 4*, trans. Evan Roche, Franciscan Institute Publications Philosophy Series, Number 5, eds. Philotheus Boehner and Allan B. Wolter (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1949), 15. Hereafter *De Primo*.

[15] *De Primo*, 15.

the possibility of an infinite chain of causes. An infinite chain of causes in Scotus is unsatisfactory because there is no way of signifying when the infinite chain could begin. This "beginning" cause does not necessarily have to be temporal, because Scotus would affirm non-temporal moments;[16] instead, this beginning is metaphysical and ontological. It is easy to conflate Scotus's first principle with God, but he is careful to distinguish between the two. Basically, the first principle is a philosophical necessity, it is needed to begin the chain of events that eventually leads to the existence of the present moment. For Scotus it is possible for the person to know something positively about the first cause. Such an investigation is possible through an examination of the natural world. There are two important premises at work in this idea. The first is that the human person has a natural ability to know something of creation and the second is that this ability is from the first principle.

For Scotus, there are two ways of knowing, through abstraction and through intuition.[17] Both ways of knowing are natural to the human person (meaning that the human person has the natural capacity to exercise each) though that potential is not always actualized. The person comes to know creation and therefore the first cause through abstraction, the person comes to know God through intuition. God, for Scotus, while being the first principle is something more as well. What that something more is will be addressed when the will of God is examined.

The second premise is that the first cause desires to be known by the creation. Scotus lays out a theory of causality based on Aristotle's formulation of the four causes. These are the efficient, the final, the material and the formal. The final

[16] Scotus used non-temporal moments to talk about the procession of persons in the Trinity, while the Father is first, the Son is second and the Spirit is third, Scotus advocated an understanding of these outside of time.

[17] *Quodlibetal Question 6*, 6.17-6.20 found in Mary Beth Ingham's *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003). (Appendix 1 Reading 5), 169-71.

cause is of primary concern because it is the key to Scotus's teleological worldview. The first principle contains these four causes in total perfection and therefore the final cause of the first principle is the final goal for all of creation. For Scotus the final goal of all creation is intimate union with God and so in order to effect that goal God ensures that the human person is aware of the first principle by creating a knowledge directed creation and knowledge oriented creature. This creates a mutuality between God and creation, the more that can be learned about one increases human knowledge about the other. The metaphysical principle behind Scotus's mutuality is his univocal concept of being. This principle ensures that the human person can have a true (though limited) knowledge of the world's and God's attributes. Without the element of truth to this knowledge, human knowing is open to some form of skepticism that ultimately defeats the human participation in the teleological goal of all creation.

Francis of Assisi presents a similar view of creation in his *Canticle of the Creatures*.[18] This song of praise is connected to Scotus's view of causal contingency in two ways. First, Francis tacitly acknowledges what Scotus would consider to be the principle of mutuality though without ever explicitly stating so. Instead, he does this by means of his formulation of the verses; "Praised be you, My Lord, through..."[19] By means of this formulation, Francis seems to be emphasizing a connection between the one praising (i.e. the person), the creation (the means through which praise is effected) and the One to be praised (i.e. God). The connections are multi-phasic, operative on a number of different levels. Therefore, it is impossible to identify a one to one connection between

[18] *FA:ED* Volume 1, *The Saint*, 113-14.

[19] The word translated as "through" is the Latin *per*, which is a difficult word to translate and could also be translated as "by." The English translation in the *FA:ED Volume 1: The Saint* uses "through." There are eight stanzas which begin with the phrase, "Praised be you, My Lord..." and seven of them have "through" follow it in the formulation, one, the first opens, "with all Your creatures, especially Brother Sun." It is interesting that the Sun is the only aspect of creation that Francis so closely identifies with God.

Scotus's idea of mutuality and Francis's; yet, on the level of procession from the person to knowledge of the creator through the creation there is a clear connection. This is especially clear in the case of the Sun, who is most likened to God. Francis seems to be delving deeper than simple analogy with his identification of the Sun's light with God's illumination. It could be supposed that Francis is intuitively recognizing some sort of common concept between God and the created world, one might suppose a primordial form of Scotus's univocal concept of being. This primitive notion of a univocal concept of being is the second point of connection with Scotus's view of causal contingency in the *Canticle*.

Causal Contingency and God's Will

The second element to be examined is the relationship between a contingent creation and God's will. Could God be God, if there was no creation? For Scotus the answer is "yes," because nothing in the external world (even the lack of an external world) could affect God.[20] This is because God is ultimately on a different ontological plane than anything outside of God. In a sense, there is a separate essential dynamism that belongs to God's essence alone, one that is sufficient to God and God's goodness. While it may seem intuitive to believe that the creative act was an act of free choice on God's part there was a different, though Franciscan approach, that posited much less emphasis on God's free will in the act of creation. Bonaventure's formulation of the relationship between God and creation sees the fecundity of love within the inner life of the Trinity as being intricately connected to the act of God's creative power.[21] This view ultimately leads to a different conceptual understanding of God's will than Scotus's, as well as a different view of creation. Scotus does not deny the role of love in God's creation, he

[20] *De Primo Chapter 3 Conclusion 2.*

[21] For more on Bonaventure and God's creative power see Ilia Delio's *Simply Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001).

instead roots the act of love in an attribute of God, namely the divine will and not in the essence of God as Bonaventure does.

As stated above, God possesses a will that is formally different from God's intellect.[22] For Scotus the will plays two important roles in this discussion concerning contingent causality. First, the will is the determinative power in that nothing occurs without God willing it. For Scotus this creates an intimate bond between God's will, God's power and God's intellect. There are two divine principles always guiding God's will. The first is the aforementioned final cause and the second is the principle of God's own self love, which is perfect. All of God's actions are guided by these two principles.

It might seem that according to these two principles creation is not necessary and might even be a sort of bother to the Divine Essence; for creation is not needed for complete union with God (as the Trinity is a sufficient communion) and cannot add or subtract to the perfect self love of the Divine Essence. While creation is certainly not a bother to God, it is undoubtedly gratuitous to the Divine. It is this feature that requires further examination.

Scotus's conception of the will is unique amongst scholastic thinkers because it gives the actor the ability to choose between three different options (as opposed to the more traditional two options), these are: 1) the ability to choose to do "a", 2) the ability to choose to do not "a" and 3) the ability to choose not to choose between options 1 and 2.[23] It is the third option that seems to be unique to Scotus.

[22] The formal difference in Scotus is one of his unique contributions to the study of metaphysics. It allows for one to speak of an attribute like intellect or will without positing that the attribute itself is its own subsistent object. So while Scotus speaks of the divine will, he is not attempting to say that the will exists outside of the divine essence. This can be especially confusing when Scotus refers to the formal causal power of God, but such a discussion is outside of the scope of this paper.

[23] *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Volume II, Books 6-9, trans. Girard Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter, Franciscan Institute Publications Text Series Number 19 (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1998), Chapter 9, question 15.

How this definition of the operation of the will plays into creation becomes quite clear. God was not choosing between creating and not-creating – a choice that might depict God in a arbitrary light – but instead was choosing between creating, not-creating and not choosing between creating and not-creating. In this sense, God could have chosen the third option and thereby opt to exist not without creation but also not with a creation. While this may seem to make God seem "neurotic," it also allows Scotus to preserve the total freedom of God without imaging a God that would arbitrarily decide against the act of creating. In light of this conception of the will it is understandable why Scotus considered the creative act of God as gratuitous. God could simply have chosen to do nothing but instead God chose to do something. In choosing to create God's action is gratuitous and ultimately unrepayable by that creation.

In discussing God's will it is also important to note that while this will is determined by God's own self love and the principle of final causality, neither of these two things are separate, either formally or really, from the Divine Essence. As stated above, Scotus is ultimately concerned with preserving God's freedom, not the freedom of God's will. While this may seem like an overly-subtle difference (especially in light of the fact that according to Scotus the Divine will is only formally different from the Divine Essence) failing to make such a distinction may lead to a voluntarist conception of God that Scotus is not advocating.

Francis of Assisi's writings seem to strongly identify with the idea of God as gratuitous in the act of creator. It would seem that Francis's own life, both before and after his conversion disposed him to view God in such a way. Both lives by Celano tell the reader that Francis was lavish and charitable, acting so as to imitate the nobility of society and courtly literature. One sign of nobility in the popular courtly literature of the time was their overly-generous attitude towards the company they kept. As one can see, the depiction of a beneficent, gratuitous God who bestows gifts upon those who love and serve Him would be an image that

Francis could have readily identified with and kept with him as he formulated his life.

One of the most obvious manifestations of this image in the writings of Francis is in *The Praises of God* where Francis actually refers to God twice as a King (v. 2).[24] Throughout this text, Francis refers to God as not only the source of all charity, but charity itself, not only as good, but goodness itself. The various praises evoke both the beauty and the majesty of God, referring to God as a protector and defender, as well as love and meekness. The mixing of metaphors and identifications stems from the ever-presence of God in anything worth achieving. In a sense, God is the final goal for which every person strives. For Francis, God is not only the King that commissions the knight errant, but is the squire that supports the knight in his quest and is the goal of the quest as well. Such an understanding illustrates how, in Scotistic thought, gratuity and finality are linked.

A gratuitous God is like a gratuitous King, one that deserves the love and loyalty of Francis for all that has been given to him. Francis's gratitude manifests itself in an attitude of disappropiation, since nothing is Francis's nothing can be claimed by Francis. It would then seem that the theological roots of Francis's poverty stem from his belief in a contingent world that God could have freely chosen not to create. Because God did choose to create though, that action requires a response from Francis, a response rooted in a keen desire to publicly acknowledge his poverty and live in conformity with it.

Causal Contingency and God's Intellect

There are two views of a changing creation that one can take (i.e. a creation that is not a-historical and reflects the fact that change has occurred over time). One is that it is teleological and therefore goal oriented and the other is that it is evolutionary, where there is no set goal and the change is a

[24] *FA:ED* Volume 1, 108-10.

response to the external pressures that nature applies. While both acknowledge that change is a fundamental element of the world that God has created, the reason for those changes are completely different. Scotus has a clear preference for the teleological model. He seems to have believed that creation has been placed on a certain trajectory since the moment of God's first creative act and was moving towards it in time. While a teleological outlook is perfectly consistent with a Divine Creator that willed creation into existence, this model presents a challenge to one of the defining characteristics of that creation, namely contingency. If everything is moving in a predetermined way, toward a predetermined goal is there any freedom for that creation? With Scotus's emphasis on the will, both divine and created, as well as his belief that the only necessary thing that exists is God, then a teleological creation that is free may seem to be a paradox both to the nature of that creation and God's knowledge. Because of this belief, Scotus has to reconcile causal contingency with the omniscience of God.

The problem is this, if there is some element of contingency and freedom in creation how is God properly omniscient and any aspect of creation "not necessary?" "Properly omniscient" in this sense is meant to signify that God's knowledge of past, present and future actions is complete. This definition in combination with a teleological worldview tends to imply that there is no real freedom and therefore nothing is contingent but only necessary. If this is true then can Scotus actually believe in a causally contingent world? Scotus's solution to this difficulty is remarkable. He asserts that God's knowledge of creation and the actors in it comes from the Divine will and not Divine knowledge.[25] In proposing this solution Scotus is also establishing a paradigm in which God operates along two different wills, this distinction in wills shall be made clearer as the resolution is further explicated.

[25] *Duns Scotus on Divine Love: Texts and Commentary on Goodness and Freedom, God and Humans*, eds. A. Vos, H. Veldhuis, E. Decker, N.W. Den Bok and A.J. Beck (Utrecht College: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003). *Ordinatio* I 47, 178-91.

The Divine Will is operative in two different ways for Scotus: there is the will that is associated with the final causality of God and there is the will in which God acts cooperatively in all manner of human action.[26] For Scotus it is through the latter that God comes to know a contingent creation while still preserving human and divine freedom. Essentially, Scotus believes that the actions of each person are produced by the human will and by the divine will which acts in cooperative manner in order to institute the action. Because it is necessary for God to act in cooperation with all human action through the Divine will, God is omniscient. In one sense, it is God's action and not God's intellect that is key to God's knowledge.

This of course leads to some serious questions about the role of grace and the freedom of human action. But it is important to note that Scotus did not deny the role of grace and though he was charged by later commentators as a Pelagian he did not adhere to Pelagius's theory of the relation between human and divine action and was never censured for it in his own lifetime.

As stated above, in addition to the cooperative will of God there is God's will predicated of God's role as final cause. Scotus saw a connection between these two wills. While God would never will a person to sin, God, in order to preserve the dignity of freedom, acts in a cooperative way with the will of the person who is sinning. This in no way effects God's final goal of salvation for the world and the Christian people.[27] It is the final goal of creation that provides meaning for the rest of God's actions. Because God's will for creation has been predetermined by God through final causality, nothing can impede creation from becoming that, not even sin or sinful human actions. Therefore, God can allow (and must allow,

[26] *Duns Scotus on Divine Love, Ordinatio* I 46, 166-76.

[27] Scotus, like many of his contemporaries, did not believe in guaranteed universal salvation and therefore felt that Christians were the primary recipients of God's saving action. This does not contradict Scotus's belief in God's ability to save people of other faiths, for God has the ability to do anything. Rather this attitude is reflective of the belief that the normative path to salvation was the Christian religion.

because God has woven contingency and consequently freedom into the ontological fiber of creation) humans to act in a way contrary to the final will of God without impinging on the Divine prerogative.

Francis seems to have been keenly aware of human freedom and the choices people have the ability to make concerning their own salvation. This is most evident in the longer *Letter to the Faithful.* In this text, Francis categorizes people into two different groups, those who do penance and those who do not. While the ability to do penance is a grace from God, those who choose not to do penance are making a choice of their own free will and are not being condemned to that state by God. The will plays an important part in this text and makes two substantial appearances. The first is found in vs. 10-12. These are significant because they outline the idea that Jesus, like us, had the ability to make a choice about the death he was destined to undergo. In addition, having this choice was a source of pain for him. Francis emphasizes the agony in the garden as a sign of the struggle Jesus faced to do the will of the Father. Francis explicates Jesus' resolution by depicting it in the light of a conformity between the will of the Father and the will of the Son, "He placed his will in the will of His Father."[28]

The act itself is salvific in two senses, first because it redeems fallen humanity from sin and second because it provides an example for humans to follow. The example to follow is the option to exercise human will in such a way that it conforms to the will of God. When one exercises one's will in this way there are consequences. According to Francis, the person becomes the "brothers,"[29] of the Lord when the will of the Father is done by them. Francis certainly does not mean the person is equal with Christ, but is instead using familial language in order to stress the qualities of being a child of God the Father. A child, in this context, is one whose will is subsumed by that of the loving parent and in turn is able

[28] *Later Admonition and Exhortation*, v. 10, *FA:ED* I, 46.
[29] *Later Admonition and Exhortation*, v. 52, 48.

to exercise the greatest possible freedom to love neighbor as well as enemy and perform acts of penance.

Obviously, Francis has not articulated a theology of the divine and human will as sophisticated as Scotus's. The fact that there are two wills, a divine one belonging to the Father that points creation toward the Kingdom, and an individual will that allows us to make choices are both key elements of Scotus's own formulation of the relationship between the Divine Plan and human freedom.

Is Scotus a Voluntarist?

It would seem that this is a valid question to ask after an analysis of the role Scotus placed on the Divine Will. It would seem that this model presents God in a rather arbitrary light, almost as if the decision to create and to interact with that creation is a whim. While Scotus's student, William of Ockham, will devise a theological system where God is free of restraint, Scotus does not take that approach. Instead, Scotus will construct a theology of natural law that in fact applies more to God than to creation.

Scotus's natural law theology is rooted in the first three of the Ten Commandments. While traditionally those three have been associated with how the person is to relate to God, Scotus interprets them as equally applying to the Divine itself. God must love God because God is eminently good (and therefore something deserving of the highest love) and eminently knowledgeable (and therefore capable of recognizing what is eminently good).[30] These three commandments, all focusing on the primary command to love God, become the foundation for the other seven commandments, as well as the ordered nature of the entire universe. Even God's absolute power is incapable of commanding anything (including the Divine self) to actively disobey these commandments. This is because such a command would contradict the very nature of the Divine itself, something even God's absolute power is

[30] Lectura I, 17, *Duns Scotus on Divine Love*, 90-108.

incapable of doing. Though theoretically one could passively disobey the first three commandments by willing actions against the other seven commandments, those violations could never come from an active action of the will to hate what is most eminently good.

This abrogation of God's absolute power is an important distinction for Scotus and prevents the critic from formulating a voluntarist notion of Scotus's theology. This theory of natural law is far different from others' notions that relegate this concept to a consequence of the ordained nature of the universe. Scotus's concern with God's ontological simplicity and therefore God's consistency in action seems to have been the primary motivator for his formulation of natural law. To that end Scotus formulated a theology of natural law that allowed God to remain perfectly consistent (and therefore ontologically simple) while still allowing God the freedom to abrogate dietary restrictions or command the Jewish people to loot the Egyptians as they left bondage while later commanding them not to steal. Rather than posit a God who simply changed direction during the course of salvation history, Scotus found a more elegant and theologically sound explanation in removing these moral commands from the realm of natural law.

This choice to root natural law in love may also be an intentionally Franciscan choice. It would seem that Scotus's intuition follows Francis's own insight that *caritas* is the guide and rule for following in the footsteps of Jesus. Throughout the *Regula non bullata* and the *Admonitions* Francis reduces all precepts to the life and their exceptions, to charity and love. Any rule must take into account the necessity of the moment and conform to the needs of the community members in their striving to live the spirit of the rule and not just the letter.[31] Francis's desire to live this ethos also appears in the hagiography surrounding Francis, most notably in *The Assisi*

[31] This Pauline citation (from 2 Cor. 3:6) will appear only once in Francis's corpus of writings, *Admonition 7*. Yet, the theme appears in *RNB*, chapters 9 and 10. Unfortunately, a thorough study of Pauline influence in the writings of Francis has not been done and is something worth pursuing.

Compilation, chapter fifty, where Francis eats with a brother who was incapable of maintaining the same rigors of fasting as the others.[32] As one can see, the most important element of following the Rule for Francis was that it was rooted in an attitude of charity amongst those who also chose to follow it.

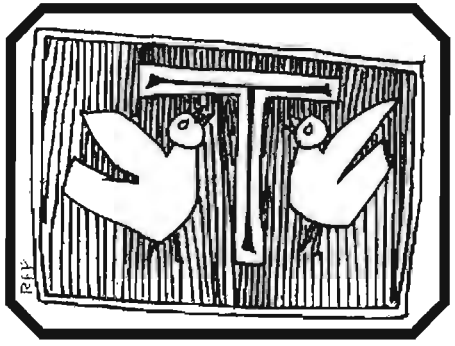
Conclusion

John Duns Scotus was a schoolman, a theologian and a subtle thinker whose impact is still felt today. Francis of Assisi is one of the most universally recognized Christian figures and has been seen as a forerunner to the Italian renaissance, the patron of the environmental movement and an especially appealing Roman Catholic figure to the rest of the Christian community. These two figures shared a connection beyond affiliation to the same canonical religious order. It was a similar outlook and optimism about the human person's relation to God and the role of the creator to the created world. While each worked out this insight within the context of his own time and place in society, the underlying ethos remained remarkably consistent.

As interest in the theological work of John Duns Scotus continues to grow, understanding his Franciscan roots and the Franciscan sources he may have been exposed to will become more prominent. Already, scholars like Mary Beth Ingham have argued that a more thorough understanding of Scotus's Franciscan charism is important to the future of this field of study. This paper examined just one topic of interest, Scotus's concept of causal contingency, yet there are a number of other topics Scotus wrote on that can be examined in order to determine the degree of thematic commonality with Francis of Assisi's own writings. While most of the work done by scholars has been to find some new insights into Scotus's thinking by examining Franciscan sources, there is also the possibility that scholars of Francis's own vernacular

[32] This also appears in *2 Cel* chapter 15.

theology may gain new paradigms for understanding Francis by examining Scotus. Obviously, there can be causal relationship from Scotus to Francis, but the possibility for new ways of expressing Francis's spiritual insights can also be gained. Hopefully, this work will continue, to the benefit of both Scotus and Francis scholars.



The Tau: The Meaning of the Cross for Francis of Assisi

Michael F. Cusato, O.F.M.

A Signature – What's in a Name?

One of the most important forms of authentication used in legal, commercial as well as religious documents is a person's own signature. Hand-written signatures are honored as solemn testimonies virtually equivalent to the person him/herself, an expression of the person transferred, as it were, to a piece of paper and accepted in the place of that person. The reason for this virtual equivalence is that a person's handwriting – or more specifically, a person's signature – is considered to be unique to that person, expressive of the substance of the person. Indeed, according to handwriting analysts, signatures can tell us quite a bit about their authors: their confidence or lack of confidence; their outlook on the world, be it positive or negative; their introversion or extroversion, and so on. Signatures, in short, are external signposts of the inner person, windows onto the unique inner world of the individual. Sometimes we also find that signatures are embellished with additional symbols (like a smiley face or heart) to give emphasis or coloration to one's message, to tie the message more directly to the person. And in even rarer instances, just the symbol itself – without the signature – can come to represent the person, evoking the very essence and substance of the person.

In spite of the number and variety of writings Francis of Assisi left to posterity, we have, in fact, only one example

of Francis's writing his own name.[1] We do have a few other autographs, that is, things we know were written by his own hand (like the famous *chartula* or the aforesaid *Letter to Brother Leo*); but no signature *per se*. However, Thomas of Celano, the first official hagiographer of the Franciscan Order, writing about the importance of the cross in the life of Francis, tells us the following in his *Treatise on the Miracles:*

> It was his [Francis's] custom, established by a holy decree also for his first sons, that wherever they saw the likeness of the cross they would give it honor and due reverence. [But] He favored the sign of the Tau over all others. *With it alone he signed letters he sent, and painted it on the walls of cells everywhere.*[2]

Francis, in other words, used the sign of the Tau – that is, the Greek letter "T" that looked very much like a cross with a slightly bowed crossbar – both as his own *personal signature* (without his name) and also, in places where he stayed, as an *external representation* of something deeply personal and fundamental to the very core of his life. The questions raised by this preference of Francis are: *where* did Francis get the idea of using the Tau; *why* did he choose this particular symbol to represent the substance of his inner life; *what* did the Tau mean to Francis; and, therefore, *what* might it mean to those of us who call ourselves Franciscan?

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the Tau

Even though historians can find scattered traces of the use of the symbol of the Tau prior to the time of Francis, it is Innocent III – the pope contemporaneous to the beginnings of the Franciscan movement – who was primarily responsible for bringing the image of the Tau squarely into the symbolic

[1] In the opening line of his *Letter to Brother Leo,* Francis writes his own name (*Francissco*) but there is no formal signature at the end of the letter.

[2] 3 Cel 3.

universe of medieval Christianity.[3] And he did this at one particular moment in history: the opening of the Fourth Lateran Council in November 1215.

Lateran IV, the council called by Innocent III, was the most massive gathering of ecclesiastics, religious and laity assembled in the Middle Ages. And it is today regarded by historians as one of the most pastoral councils in the history of the Church. In the lead-up to the council, the pope announced that the assembly would have three primary aims.[4] The first – and most important – aim was to launch a new crusade, the Fifth Crusade, whose purpose would be to retake the Holy Land once again from the Muslims.[5] This call occurred against a backdrop of the troubled history of Muslim-Christian relations in the High Middle Ages.[6] Having recaptured the Holy Places from the Muslims in 1099 in the First Crusade, the Christian crusaders then lost them to the great Muslim warrior, Saladin, in 1187. The Third Crusade launched in 1189 to retake Jerusalem – the so-called crusade of the Three Kings, Frederick Barbarossa from Germany, Philippe II Augustus of France and Richard I the Lionheart of England – ended in total failure, netting virtually nothing. The Fourth Crusade, which was to be a maritime crusade, began inauspiciously: only half of the anticipated crusaders showed up in the port of Venice for the campaign, immediately thrusting its shipbuilders into severe debt. Then, when it finally did push off from Venice in 1204, the venture was detoured from its destination not once but twice. First to Yugoslavia purely for reasons of plunder (to

[3] See the little volume of Damien Vorreux, *A Franciscan Symbol: The Tau, History, Theology and Iconography,* transl. M. Archer and P. Lachance (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979).

[4] The papal bull calling the council with its primary aim of the crusade is *Quia maior,* PL 218, p. 817-22; an English translation can be found in L. and J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095-1274* (London: 1981), 118-24.

[5] For an overview of the Fifth Crusade, see James Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213-1221* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

[6] For general overview of this matter from a Franciscan perspective see J. Hoeberichts, *Francis and Islam* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1977), 3-42.

recuperate the lost revenues of the Venetians); and then to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, where the crusaders, who ostensibly went to reverse a coup d'etat, overthrew and ejected its Christian rulers and then seized the lands for themselves, establishing there the Latin Empire of Constantinople. In other words, by 1215, the crusading ideal – if one can even speak in such lofty terms – had been largely discredited. Innocent III now aimed to rehabilitate it by rallying all of Christendom to join together in a successful campaign to retake Jerusalem once and for all. This was the major thrust of the council.

The second and third aims of the council can be summarized quite succinctly: to root out heresy within the Church (most notably the heresy of the Cathari in southern France) and to reform the Church itself by reviving the faith and holiness of its members. In the grand scheme of the council, however, the success of the first aim would depend on the success of second and third aims; for only a renewed and purified Christendom would be able to carry forward with the blessing of God a successful recapturing of the Holy Places.

Innocent announced these three aims in an historic opening sermon on November 11, based on the text of Luke 22:15 in which Jesus tells his disciples: *"I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* The pontiff then goes on to talk about the three aims of the council as a kind of "triple Passover." First, the council would announce a physical Passover by launching a physical passing-over of the Mediterranean from the West to Jerusalem in the East in a new crusade. Second, it would announce a spiritual Passover by urging the conversion of the individual from sin to holiness. And third, it would announce a sacramental Passover by reestablishing the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian worship – the Passover of the Lord – in the passing-over of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Hence, three Passovers: a physical passing-over in the crusade; a sacramental passing-over in the Eucharist;

and a spiritual passing-over in the conversion to holiness of all good Christian men and women.

Having announced the three great aims of the council, Innocent then proceeded to give the whole conciliar program a symbol – a logo, as it were – that would sum up and convey the meaning of these three great thrusts. The symbol that he chose to stand for all three conciliar aims was the Greek letter Tau. The question is: why did the Roman pontiff choose a Greek letter to be the symbol of the whole conciliar program? Innocent III drew this symbol from chapter 9 of the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. In that passage, destroying angels are being summoned by God to wreak destruction upon the city of Jerusalem. Then, a man dressed in linen is instructed by God:

> Pass through the city [of Jerusalem] and mark an X on the foreheads of those who moan and groan over all the abominations that are practiced within it ... [And then the destroying angels are warned]: do not touch any of those marked with the X.

This "X" is the Hebrew letter "Tau." And the Hebrew Tau that looks like an "X" is simply a mark intended to convey something like "X marks the spot." Thus, in Ezekiel, the mark of the X – the mark of the Tau – is the mark placed upon the foreheads of those who by their lives have separated themselves from the sinful ways of the world and who, by this very fact, will find themselves pleasing in the sight of God and spared from his wrath.

Now: when the Hebrew Bible comes to be translated into Greek, the Hebrew letter Tau, shaped like an "X" is rendered by the Greek letter Tau which is shaped more like a "T." This is the sign placed on the foreheads of the elect in the Book of Revelation.[7] And in a Christian context, the Tau thus becomes transposed into the symbol of the cross – the cross

[7] The symbol of the Tau on the foreheads of the elect in Revelation is, of course, a reworking of the symbol from the Book of the prophet Ezekiel.

of Christ: *the* central symbol of Christian life and the sign of salvation.

But how will Innocent III use the image of the Tau cross as the symbol of the three aims of the council?

First, the Tau cross – the cross of Christ – will be the mark placed upon the clothing of the crusaders who go off to Jerusalem. Already in 1204, Innocent had referred to the crusaders in Latin as the *crucesignati*, literally, those "signed with the cross" – the cross of Christ. Now, eleven years later, in 1215, Innocent explicitly identifies the Tau cross with the cross of Christ. For, just like Jesus in the Gospels turns and goes to Jerusalem to embrace his cross, now those who pass over to Jerusalem will go marked with the cross and, Innocent claims, protected by the cross. For even if death be their lot, they, like Christ, will pass-over from death to life eternal. For the cross is the sign of salvation. The Tau, in short, is the sign of the Christian crusade.

Second, the Tau cross – or the cross in the form of the Tau – also becomes the sign of the Eucharist: the sacrament that was repudiated by the Cathari heretics. How does Innocent associate Tau with Eucharist? Not only did the opening page of the canon of the Mass as it appeared in the altar books of the Middle Ages present to the celebrant a gigantic illuminated "T" for the first words of the canon "*Te igitur*"; more importantly, the Eucharist is itself the Passover of the Lord, the passing-over of the Lord, from life into death and death into life, consummated upon the cross of Calvary. And those who receive it likewise have the possibility of receiving salvation. The Tau is thus also the sign of the Eucharist – the new and eternal Passover.

And third and most importantly for our purposes, the Tau also becomes the sign of the conversion of life – the spiritual Passover – to which every Christian is called in baptism. These are those men and women who choose to distance themselves, as it says in Ezekiel, from the abominations that are practiced within the earthly city. These are the righteous, the elect, the chosen, the saved. It is the sign of those who

have rejected worldly ways and who now live in holiness and integrity.

So to recap: the Tau is the sign of the crusade, the sign of the Eucharist and the sign of conversion.

Lateran IV, the Tau and Francis of Assisi

Given the rich, multi-layered associations given to the Tau cross by Innocent III at Lateran IV, what does this have to do with Francis – and with us?

In all probability, as the leader of a fledgling religious movement in the Church, Francis would have been present – at least for some time – at the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome. Beyond that, we have very little information about what he may or may not have done during the sessions of the council or even whether he attended any of them. What seems certain, however, is that, because he was there at some point and was exposed to the grand themes of the council, he took them to heart and sought to implement over the next ten years of his life much of the spirit of the Council.[8]

Indeed, it is virtually certain that Francis's personal appropriation of the symbol of the Tau – to the point where it functioned as his personal signature – is directly related to the prominence given it by Innocent III at Lateran IV. In other words, the use of the Tau is not original to Francis; but neither is his understanding and use of the Tau exactly identical to that of the council's. Put another way: while there are convergences between Francis and the council's understanding of the Tau symbol, there is also a notable divergence which, when examined, will help us to understand what the Tau meant to Francis and what it did not – indeed, what it *could* not – mean to him.

Let's start with the convergences. The most obvious resonance between the spirituality of Francis of Assisi and the conciliar program is surely on the matter of the spiritual

[8] See, for example, Franco Cardini, "Il concilio lateranense IV e la '*fraternitas*' francescana," *Studi francescani* 78 (1981): 239-50.

Passover, that is, the conversion of the individual from a life of sin to a life of holiness. For Francis, the Tau is first and foremost the sign of personal conversion; the sign of a conscious choice to live a new way of life consistent with and in keeping with the life of Jesus as presented to us in the Gospels.

This fundamental conviction is rooted, of course, in the experience of his encounter among the lepers: the seminal experience of his *own* conversion. In that landmark encounter, Francis – as has been stated elsewhere[9] – discovered for the first time in his life, through the mysterious workings of grace, that all men and women without exception, even the seemingly most vile and repulsive among us, are brothers and sisters one to another, come from the hand – each one of us – of the same Creator God. *This* is the fundamental insight of Francis's life: his discovery of the universal fraternity of all creation, whereby Francis came to recognize the fundamental sacredness and inviolable dignity of the human person – of every human creature – simply because each one of us has been made by God and loved by God. This belief in the universal fraternity of all creatures – human beings pre-eminently, and then extending outward into the created cosmos itself – is the cardinal grounding of Francis's life and it is the motivation explaining every major action in his life thereafter. Moreover, everything – every action, attitude or behavior – that ruptures the bonds of this sacred fraternity of creatures between us is what Francis means by "sin." And to understand what he means by "sin" is to understand what he means when he says, in his *Testament*, that he then began to "do penance." The doing of penance to undo the consequences of their sin, in the Franciscan family,

[9] Most accessibly: M. Cusato, "Hermitage or Marketplace: The Search for an Authentic Franciscan locus in the World," *True Followers of Justice: Identity, Insertion and Itinerancy among the Early Franciscans*. Spirit and Life, 10 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2000), 1-30, esp. 10-13; and, idem, "The Renunciation of Power as a Foundational Theme in Early Franciscan History," *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West*, eds. Martin Gosman, Arjo Vanderjagt and Jan Veenstra. Mediaevalia Groningana, 23 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), 265-86, esp. 274-75.

is quite simply the distancing of oneself from everything that threatens to break the bonds uniting this human fraternity, setting human beings over each other and against each other. This is the specific coloration of the minorite notion of conversion.[10]

And conversion to this specific way of life, this manner of fraternal living, came to be symbolized for Francis in the sign of the Tau: the cross of the Christ of the gospels. The cross is, for Francis, the sign of salvation and healing of the human fraternity: not merely in the sense of something rewarded to us in the afterlife but rather and more significantly the healing of human existence – the healing of human relationships – by concrete, life-affirming actions, done by us, for each other, in the here and now. The cross thus exemplifies for Francis the fundamental values of love, mercy, forgiveness and peace which Jesus himself lived on this earth in definitively showing us the right way to live as intended by God. His was a life of values which fostered – not denigrated or destroyed – the innate dignity of the human person and the bonds of respect between human beings. This way of life – this life of penance – brings to life the Kingdom of God here on earth. And yet, paradoxically, this same way of life and values is what led Jesus to his death. And yet, even in that moment, he opened his arms on the cross, refusing to reply to the violence done to him with a reciprocal act of violence, and by that very act of love was vindicated by God and, again paradoxically, brought life through his death.

The Tau, in other words, is not just the sign of conversion; it is the sign of the life of penance, the penitential lifestyle, and those "actions that produce fruits worthy of penance"[11]

[10] Cf. M. Cusato, "To Do Penance / *Facere Poenitentiam*," *The Cord* Vol. 57, no. 1 (2007): 3-24.

[11] The phrase is used by Francis several times in his writings, emphasizing that the inner attitude of conversion must express itself outwardly in concrete actions restorative of the human family. Cf. the longer version of the so-called *Letter to the Faithful*, v/ 25 amd *RNB* 21. v.3.

that flow from concrete human decisions not to harm by any form of violence any creature who is a brother or sister.

One can now understand why Francis will affix the Tau as his personal signature at the conclusion of his letters. The Tau encapsulated as it were the very substance of his life: his renewed life in Christ. And when he wrote, he used the Tau to serve as a reminder to his brothers of the very life *they* had chosen – the life of penance – in becoming *fratres minores* (Friars Minor). Hence, the Tau was a sign to himself and a sign to his brothers of what they had vowed to live. But it was also a call to others *beyond* the Order – religious, clergy, lay men and women – to likewise enter upon this life of penance as the specific coloration of the Christian life implicit in their baptism. And finally, this call to penitential existence – of respect for the human fraternity of creatures – was also a call to those *even beyond the Christian faith* – Muslims, for example – to live a similar kind of life, respectful of the sacrality of the human fraternity. One can, therefore, understand why Francis would mark the walls of the places where he stayed: not as a kind of talisman to ward off evil but as a constant reminder of the life he had chosen to live which, if lived with integrity, would bring healing to the human community. In short, the Tau cross was the sign of the evangelical life – the cross-in-action – lived in the now.

Moving briefly onto a second aim of the council – the sacramental Passover, that is the revival of belief in the centrality of Eucharist to Christian life – one can quickly say two things. First, it should be obvious that in the later writings of Francis – that is to say, after his return from the Holy Land in September 1220 and during the six years that remained to him – the founder frequently lifted up the theme of the mystery of the Incarnation in the Eucharist and most particularly the care and respect all should show towards the sacrament and its associated sacramentals. Although he does not seem to have ever used the symbol of the Tau explicitly in reference to the Eucharist as did the council, it is obvious that Francis was surely deeply affected by the

council's placing of the Eucharistic mystery at the center of Christian worship.

However, it is when we come to examine the first aim of the council – the calling of the Fifth Crusade – that we notice a point of stark divergence from the conciliar program and its crusading ideology. It is indeed striking that not only does Francis *never* speak about the crusade in a single one of his writings but that he never – *not once* – adopts the council's association of the Tau cross with the crusading movement. This is compelling evidence – evidence of a conscious and deliberate attempt of Francis not to associate the cross of Christ with the crusades, contrary to the council and contrary to over a hundred years of the Church doing just that. Indeed, the word itself – "crusade" – comes from the Latin word for the cross (*crux, crucis*) and, as was said earlier, Innocent III was fond of calling the crusaders *crucesignati* – those signed with the cross. And yet Francis would not associate himself with this typology.

Why not? It is, of course, impossible to enter here into an extensive examination of Francis's opposition to the Fifth Crusade in 1219: when he and his companion, Illuminato, went into the camp of the crusaders outside the city of Damietta in Egypt and attempted to put a halt to the assault being planned by the crusading army, only to find themselves mocked and brushed aside by the crusaders.[12] But Francis's vision was much larger than this one crusade; he was against *all* such crusading efforts.[13] Why? Suffice it to say here: human warfare – indeed, all forms of violence – is a testimony to human failure, to our inability (or lack of will) to find creative life-enhancing solutions to difficult, sometimes intractable human problems. War is an assault on human creaturehood; the shedding of blood, a violation of the sacredness of the bonds of the human fraternity created

[12] The primary account of this episode is 2 Celano 30.

[13] I addressed this topic at the Seventh National Franciscan Forum in Colorado Springs (8-10 June, 2007) which had as its theme: "Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscans and Muslims in Dialogue." This paper – and a companion piece – is to be published in the series of Franciscan Institute Publications, *Spirit and Life, Volume XII* (forthcoming, 2008).

and desired by God. It is, in short, the exemplification of evil and the personification of sin itself – the sin of human persons. Even when sanctioned by centuries of tradition and pronouncements in its favor by the Church, war and violence, according to Francis, is a catastrophic testimony of the human failure to live as God intends us to live. It is the antithesis of the life of penance and it is the precise opposite of the meaning of the life-giving cross. For Francis, the Tau was the pre-eminent sign of the non-violent Jesus whose way of life was the only way to bring about healing in the human fraternity.

Therefore, it should not now surprise us that Francis would studiously refuse to associate the Tau – the cross of healing – with the campaigns of war, no matter how highly touted by the Churchmen of his day, including the pope and the council. On this they differed: sharply, quietly but profoundly. It is perhaps no wonder then that Francis's radical vision was quickly and conveniently pushed into the background – not just by the Church but by the friars themselves. The vision was just too difficult to sustain in the face of the larger forces of history. And yet the story of Francis and the Tau does not end here; there is one final chapter to tell.

An Epilogue: Francis, La Verna and the Tau

When Francis returned from the Holy Land in mid-1220, he was actually quite ill.[14] After his resignation as minister of all the friars during the emergency chapter which he called in September of that year, he moved progressively further into the background of events happening in the Order which he had founded. And yet he continued to attempt to have an influence upon his friars through a series of letters and prayers which he wrote – and signed with the Tau – with

[14] He had contracted malaria, suffered from a debilitating eye ailment and suffering the effects of a form of leprosy.

the help of friar-secretaries and through his work on the definitive Rule.

By late summer of 1224, his health had deteriorated considerably. And yet, at that time, we see him making an arduous journey with a few faithful companions to the mountain known as La Verna in the hills of eastern Tuscany. As is well known, it is here that Francis received the gift of the stigmata "on or around the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross" in September 1224.[15] After having received what appeared to be the nail marks of Christ in his own flesh as a result of his profound meditation upon the cross of Christ, we are told by Brother Leo that Francis composed the *Praises of God* as a prayer of thanksgiving for this astonishing gift. He then turned the tiny piece of parchment over – what has come to be called the *chartula* of St. Francis – and then wrote out the blessing of Aaron (from Numbers 21), adding what looks like a recumbent head *with a cross in the form of a Tau* emerging from the mouth of this figure, all surrounded by a kind of border, with some oddly placed words underneath and through the Tau cross.

In a recently formulated hypothesis – in the context of a much larger article on the stigmata[16] – I have proposed that the enigmatic head sketched near the bottom of the backside of this *chartula* is actually a representation done by Francis of the Sultan al-Kamil whom he had met and conversed with in Damietta during a suspension of hostilities between the two armies in September 1219. The question is: why would the head of the Sultan be on the backside of what most commentators call the *Blessing to Brother Leo*? The long answer, requiring more demonstration, is that maybe this *chartula* of Francis was not really intended as a blessing for Leo at all. Maybe it was intended for something or someone

[15] The expression is the one used by Bonaventure (LM XIII, 3).

[16] M. Cusato, "Of Snakes and Angels: The Mystical Experience behind the Stigmatization Narrative of 1 Celano," *The Stigmata of Francis of Assisi: New Studies, New Perspectives* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 29-74.

else.[17] But the short answer is this: namely the reason for going to pray on La Verna was, I believe, prompted by the news that a new crusading venture was being organized – this time with the help of the mighty German Emperor, Frederick II – whose aim was to crush al-Kamil's forces once and for all in Egypt. Francis, I believe, went to La Verna with a group of companions – including Illuminato, the friar who had accompanied him into the tent of the Sultan – profoundly saddened and discouraged that, once again, blood was going to be shed between two peoples and covered over with a veneer of religious justification.

On this mountain, Francis and his friars entered into a "Lent of St. Michael" – the Defender in Battle – on behalf of those who would soon find themselves in harm's way, including Malik al-Kamil. In the course of this prayer, Francis, intensely meditating on the mystery of the cross "on or around the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross," received the stigmata, the marks of the cross literally exploding out of him and onto his own flesh. Dazed by this experience yet grateful for this strange gift, Francis wrote the *Praises of God*: a simple prayer which is in fact remarkably reminiscent of the *99 Beautiful Names of Allah*. In other words, Francis at this moment was praying in an Islamic mode precisely because the fate of the Sultan and his brothers were weighing so heavily on his heart. Then he turns the parchment over and writes a prayer of protection – not for Leo (not just yet) – but for the Sultan, praying: "May the Lord bless and guard *you* ..." Finally, he draws a figure of the head of the sultan near the bottom of the page and traces a *Tau cross coming out of the mouth of this figure*. The question is why; what does this mean?

Some scholars, believing the figure to be the head of Brother Leo, prefer to interpret the Tau as a prayer of protection for Leo (who was, it is true, often beset by temptations). But the cross of Christ does not promise protection from harm; rather, it is the sign of the evangelical life lived in this world

[17] Cf. ibidem, and reiterated in my article: "From Damiette to La Verna: The Impact upon Francis of His Experience in Egypt" in the *Spirit and Life* volume (see above, n. 11).

which promises life *even through death*. Moreover, the Tau on the *chartula* is not placed on the forehead of the figure but is actually emerging from its mouth. My hypothesis is that Francis, fearful for the fate of his brother al-Kamil, is praying, desperately, for him: that he confess the cross of Christ before it was too late lest he, in death, be lost for all eternity to perdition, not having acknowledged Christ. If true, this is a deeply poignant prayer for the Sultan.

But there is more: if, in fact, the Tau encapsulates within itself the concrete values of the life of penance which Francis had embraced and which became the content of his preaching wherever he went, including among the Muslims, then the Tau placed upon the lips of the Sultan would also mean that Francis was praying that he, too, like him and like Christ, would hold fast to the way of non-violence *even in this moment of violence being done to him* and thereby preserve the human community from further bloodshed and destruction. For even in death, the cross teaches us, life and salvation will yet come. For only "in this sign – the cross as a sign of peace and not of warfare – will you conquer."[18]

The Tau is thus far more than a nice wooden symbol that hangs around the necks of good and well-meaning Franciscans. It is, rather, the most profound sign of the life of penance which we all profess with its pledge of non-violent living for the sake of the healing of the human family.

[18] I turn on its head the famous words which, according to Lactantius, were "heard" in 313 by Constantine, the pagan military commander, at the Milvian Bridge outside Rome which prompted him to trace the cross of Christ (*labarum*) on the shields of his soldiers as they advanced – victoriously – to defeat the ruling augustus, Maxentius.

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The Office of the Passion by Francis of Assisi

Ruth Evans, O.S.C.

Introduction

At first sight *the Office of the Passion* written by Francis of Assisi appears to offer little prospect of a fresh perspective on the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. The only freedom that the composer of the office has permitted himself is a freedom of arrangement. Psalm verses are plucked from their original context in the Vulgate Psalter and introduced into a new sequence. Occasionally the composer selects two fragments from verses that have no link in the book of psalms and combines them to create his own original verse. Sometimes he clarifies his intention by adding snatches of New Testament scripture to his collage. Occasionally he alters or adds a word for his own reasons.

Such a severe constraint in artistic form appears unpromising. It is also a strikingly unassuming choice. Even if we did not know that the composer was Francis of Assisi, we might infer that he had little interest in a literary form which would draw attention to his own artistic achievement. Strictly speaking, the words he is using are not his own.

But it is not so simple. The phrases which Francis borrows become the instrument of his thought through the skill of his application. They become the vehicle which communicates his profound understanding of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. His little office is not the well-intentioned but inexpressive string of well-worn phrases that might have been predicted, but a composition marked

throughout by the coherence and integrity of the composer's thought. Francis shows himself to be remarkably adept at selecting psalm verses which cast light on particular details of Jesus' journey towards death and resurrection. The result is that the re-assembled psalm verses cohere into an original narrative. They reflect and penetrate their new context. They say something in unison which they did not say apart.

There is in fact a poignant parallel between the constraint of the literary form and the subject matter of those psalms that focus on Christ's Passion. They portray the state of mind of a man who must suffer, say farewell to life and die within the constraint of other people's choices.

In his office, Francis succeeds in creating a convincing portrait of the inner world of Jesus as he struggles through his Passion. The style is so unassuming it is easy not to notice what an achievement this is. Writers on the Passion notably try and fail to portray what it was that Jesus actually suffered in his inmost being. Sometimes they give graphic descriptions of physical torture, without offering an in-depth portrait of the person who is suffering. Or they attempt to describe what Jesus thought and felt during his Passion without, however, necessarily ringing true. By contrast, there is an authenticity about the terse sequence of verses that Francis chooses and the sequence of thought and feeling which they express. The series of scenes through which Jesus passes creates an almost cinematic effect. The pictures that are unreeling, however, are not primarily the external realities of capture, torture and crucifixion. What Francis reveals is the traumatized inner world of the victim as he absorbs blow after blow and struggles for the resources to carry on. The office is not obviously emotive, the style is austere. It inspires compassion for Jesus, not by manipulating our emotions, but by its insight and truth. Rather than concentrating on Jesus' physical torment, although this is not ignored, it illuminates with startling beauty and authenticity the less obvious and less easily expressed interior suffering of the Son of God. It illuminates the scarcely imaginable toll that his suffering and death took on his inmost being.

The perspective of the office as a whole is profoundly eschatological. The victorious outcome of what Jesus is accomplishing is not in question. At the same time, the human experience of Jesus as he confronts evil is never less than vivid and immediate. There is a near-perfect balance between awareness of Jesus' human agony and awareness of his ultimate triumph.

The psalms considered here are the first seven in the sequence. The first six describe Jesus' Passion and death. The seventh is a psalm of exultation in the Resurrection. Francis sets the scene for his narrative in psalm one, the psalm about Gethsemane.

Psalm One

O God, I have told you of my life;
you have placed my tears in your sight.[1]

The aspect of place, where Jesus is positioned, is an important concept in Francis's office. As outcast and condemned criminal, Jesus will be placed at the choice of his tormentors. As Son of God, he is placed in the Father's sight and is destined to be placed in glory. Throughout the narrative of suffering, he is certain of that glory. This creates a dialectic between the tragic outcome of Jesus' earthly experience and the eschatological outcome that is assured by God. In verse one, the text opens with an indication that the choice of the Father for the Son will determine the outcome. Nonetheless, there is a tension, a crisis. This is due to the fact that Jesus is not offered an escape. He must encounter the evil that opposes him.

Jesus is aware that he has accounted for his life to God. The first verb of the psalm is *annuntiavi*, I have made known, I have proclaimed, I have given an account. For this reason he remains poised, even as he contemplates what lies ahead. Thus the context within which Francis sets his narrative of pain and glory is the relationship between the Father and the Son, the dialogue between them. The Son refers his life to the Father. The Father sees the tears of the Son.

In the next four verses of the psalm, Jesus reviews his predicament.

> *All my enemies plotted evil things against me; they conspired together.*
> *They repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love.*
> *Instead of loving me, they slandered me, but I continued to pray.*
> *My holy Father, King of heaven and earth, do not leave me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

This glimpse into a history of suffering and supplication to the Father gives the opening of the narrative depth. Traditionally, the crisis in Gethsemane is suggested by Jesus' representation to himself of what he has to undergo. Francis adds a note of psychological realism by reminding us that Jesus' dread of what he must face is intensified by what he has already experienced in the way of ingratitude and betrayal. The opening verse inserts the reader into a continuum of suffering. The man, Jesus, is shown in his historical context, as suffering within time. The past has taken its toll upon his resources. He struggles within the present. He assesses the future in the light of the past and shrinks from further suffering.

Evil has created a paradoxical situation in which good is repaid with evil and love with hatred. There are many paradoxes like this in the *Office of the Passion*. By depicting the deliberate frustration and abuse of Christ's love, Francis shows the psychological crucifixion that precedes and accompanies his physical crucifixion. His interior response is to turn to the Father in an act of trust.

Events develop between the first four verses of the psalm and the second four. The first quatrain expresses the hero's awareness of the evil forces accumulating against him. In verse five, the evil that is dreaded appears. Francis appreciates the reality of evil, its objective power. He introduces a note of intimacy into the desolate scene by adding Jesus' private

[1] The translation is taken from Dominique Gagnan's translation in his article "The Office of the Passion," *Greyfriars Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1993.

name for God, taken from the Gethsemane scene in St. Matthew's Gospel, *Pater mi* and from St. John's Gospel 17:11 *Pater sancte* to the verse that he borrows from psalm 21. In this way Francis alters the appeal to God into something more personal and profound. He also adds the phrase, *rex caeli et terrae* (king of heaven and earth) emphasizing the sovereignty of God at the scene of his Son's abandonment.[2] Strangely, almost disconcertingly, at the moment of imminent arrest there is a glimpse of triumph. Jesus receives an assurance of the Father's immediate care.

> *Let my enemies be turned back, on whatever day I shall call upon you, for now I know that you are my God.*

Francis may well have been thinking of the arrest scene in St. John when Jesus' enemies momentarily fall down. This sudden shift in perspective is characteristic of the multi-dimensional nature of Francis's narrative. There is a balance that is never lost between his awareness of Jesus' distress and his awareness of Jesus' security in the Father's love. But the triumph that is glimpsed is not for this world. In verses seven and eight he proceeds to show Jesus' suffering as he enters the distorting world of his captors' choices.

> *My friends and my neighbours have drawn near against me and have come to a stop; those who were close to me have stayed far away.*
> *You have driven my acquaintances far from me; they have made me an abomination to them; I have been betrayed and I have not fled.*

At the opening of the psalm, evil oppresses the hero's consciousness. At the point of arrest it claims power over his body. We see the test to the protagonist's faith in the Father who has placed his tears in his sight, now that he cannot occupy any physical space except the one chosen by his captors. Francis uses the same verb *ponere* (to place) in verse eight to express Jesus' position of captivity as he did to express the position of his tears before God in verse one, *posuerunt me abominationem sibi*. Literally, *they have placed me as an abomination to them*. There is an implicit contrast between the environment of recognition chosen for Jesus by his Father and the environment chosen by his enemies. As Son of God, he is eternally secure. As a man, his fate is circumscribed by the choices of other men.

Jesus within the psalm is shown as very human in his need to cling to and remind himself of the fact that he is present to the Father. As Son of God, he has enjoyed intimacy with the Father of all eternity. On the lips of the man Jesus in Gethsemane, the need for this intimacy becomes a plea for reassurance in the face of his abandonment. Through repetition, the psalm emphasizes the isolation of Jesus as he is distanced from human contact. In the last two verses Christ appeals to God to attend to him.

> *Holy Father, do not take away your help from me; my God, come to my aid.*
> *Come to my help Lord, God of my salvation.*

In verse nine Francis unites two pleas from different psalm verses to reinforce the intensity of the appeal. The appeal has a human urgency. The verb *respicere* used in the second half of verse nine, *Deus meus ad auxilium meum respice* means to look back upon, to take notice of, to have regard for, to succour. The earnestness of Jesus' appeal for the solicitude of God poignantly suggests how far he is from the solicitude of men. In verse ten Jesus asks God to *intende* to his appeals, literally to strain towards him.

Psalm Two

Psalm two describes Christ's condemnation to death before the Sanhedrin. It opens with exactly the same phrase with which psalm one closes, *Domine Deus salutis meae*. This repetition of a phrase before and after an intervening lapse of time skillfully indicates an interim of pain. The repetition of Jesus' appeal hints at the strain upon his powers of

[2] The original psalm verse states merely: *Do not leave me for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

endurance. Time has passed and yet evidently there has been no alleviation of his suffering.

> *Lord, God of my salvation, day and night I have called to you.*
> *Let my prayer enter into your sight, incline your ear to my prayer.*
> *Look at my soul and free it; because of my enemies, rescue me.*

In verse two, God is invoked using the physical images of sight and hearing. The theme of place recurs. The words *enter* and *sight*, imply that the Father's presence is a place into which the suffering man's prayers can penetrate. From his place of abandonment, Jesus thinks about a place of communion with the Father. In the face of not having anywhere he can live, he needs to represent to himself a place where he is received. The Son humbly asks the Father for the solicitude that has always been his.

In verses four and five, Mary, his mother, is introduced as a place of original reassurance. With her are identified Jesus' memories of security and belonging upon the earth. She is the place where he was originally safe.

> *For you are the one who drew me out of the womb, my hope from my mother's breasts; I am cast upon you from the womb.*
> *From my mother's womb you are my God, do not leave me.*

God is invoked as the one who gave his blessing to this first place of reassurance. The tangible nature of God's involvement with the critical moments of childbirth is suggested by the verbs in verse four, reminding us that Jesus' ultimate guarantee of security is with his Father.

> *Quoniam tu es, qui abstraxisti me de ventre, spes mea ab uberibus matris meae, in te proiectus sum ex utero.*

The energetic verb *abstraxisti*, to drag away from or separate, casts God in the role of midwife, as does *proiectus sum* (projected into), which presents God as the one who catches the baby as he emerges from his mother's womb. Jesus recalls images that anchor him in the world of his established values, a world in which God is an active participator. Jesus, the uprooted man, about to be condemned to death and destined for a cross which will separate him from the earth returns to memories of belonging to his mother, of rootedness within the created world.

Like other men who are about to die, Jesus feels the need to review his end in the light of his beginning. At times of danger and distress people sometimes assume a fetal position. Jesus recalls the safety of his mother's womb at the moment when he is about to be condemned as *free among the dead.*

> *You know my disgrace and my confusion and my fear.*
> *All those who torment me are in your sight; my heart expected abuse and misery.*
> *And I looked for someone to grieve together with me and there was no one; for someone to console me and I found no one.*
> *O God, the wicked have risen against me and the assembly of the mighty has sought my life; they have not placed you in their sight.*
> *I am numbered among those who go down into the pit; I have become as someone without help, free among the dead.*

The psalm offers different perspectives for our contemplation. The theme of the sight of God, which has already occurred twice within the office, recurs in verse seven. God sees all those who afflict the prisoner. By contrast, we see in verse nine that the enemies have not placed God in their sight. This refusal to enter into relationship with God and its cost is seen through the suffering perspective of the Son who is also aware that the Father sees him.

Verse eight describes how the condemned man looks for someone who will turn to him in his need and no one does. At the end of verse five, shrinking from the isolation that greets him, Jesus implores God *ne discesseris a me* (do not leave

me). His deep need for help is greeted with a cruel silence. In verse ten he finds himself alone, *inter mortuos liber*. This phrase, *free among the dead,* is a horrible parody of the freedom that is needed, the freedom to live and communicate with others. It contrasts also with the security of the baby, lovingly drawn from the mother's womb and placed upon her breasts. As a child, Jesus, like other children, was dependent on his parents for the conditions that permit growth. Francis does not here describe Christ's status as a condemned man primarily in terms of the violent death assigned to him. He emphasizes Christ's emotional agony. The death sentence is described as ostracization.[3]

The reference to the baby reminds us that this sentence is the culmination of a life history. One of the themes of the little office up to this point has been the loss of liberty. The condemned man is "free" in the sense that no one takes responsibility for him or cares about the outcome of his life. Verse eight expresses the longing for a comforter who never comes. Through the arrangement of his verses, Francis associates the pain of this longing with the sentencing to death.

Verse nine points to the fact that the scene which Francis is describing is the trial before the Sanhedrin. The word used for assembly is *synagoga* (synagogue).

At the moment when the death sentence is passed, the moment where even the notion of justice seems on the point of collapse, Jesus turns to his Father and in a movement of love affirms his faith.

> *You are my most Holy Father, my King and my God.*
> *Come to my aid Lord God of my salvation.*

The words of verse eleven are not, as we might expect, words of entreaty. They are a statement about what is his.

[3] In his deep awareness of the suffering of abandoned people, Francis must have drawn on his contact with outcasts and his own chosen status as an outcast. Like Jesus at this moment, the lepers in Francis's society were marginalized and consigned to a living death. In his *Testament* Francis says that the decisive moment in his conversion was the moment when God inspired him to show mercy to lepers. He links the incident to his departure from the world.

In the face of losing everything Jesus makes a three-fold affirmation.

> *Tu es sonctissimus pater meus, Rex meus et Deus meus.*

Francis intensifies the verse by adding the phrase, *Tu es sanctissimus pater meus,* to the verse fragment that he borrows from Psalm 43. In the face of the horror of what evil can do, the relationship between Son and Father retains its integrity. Stripped of his social identity, Jesus retains his identity within his relationship to the Father. Thus in the depths of suffering the Son and the Father meet. We are left marvelling at the magnitude of love between them that allows a salvific act at such cost.

Finally, taking up all that has been suffered into patient entreaty, Jesus implores God for assistance. The fact that the psalm ends exactly where it started, with the phrase *Domine Deus salutis meae,* emphasizes the theme of patience in the face of relentless suffering. It is the same verse that ended the first psalm.

Psalm Three

In the third psalm of the sequence there is a change of perspective. It is described in Laurent Gallant and André Cirino's edition of the office as *A Morning Interlude,* a title that pinpoints the way that the psalm steps back from the narrative sequence of psalms one and two.

It would be too strong to say that psalm three breaks away from the sequence of pain that has been established. The pain and sense of oppression are still there but there is a shift of perspective. Psalm three shows the protagonist already rejoicing in the certainty of victory, even as he watches the trap that ensnares him move to its conclusion.

Francis makes use of different perspectives within his office to illustrate the depth and multi-faceted nature of the Passion narrative. He constructs psalms with different emphases to demonstrate truths that are not in conflict but

which are difficult to express simultaneously. Interestingly, the psalm cost Francis less creative effort than the other psalms in the sequence considered here. Apart from his decision to include verse 18 from Psalm 17 as a substitute for a verse and a half in the original psalm, the entire psalm is taken from Psalm 56. Even though the psalm is not Francis's own composition, it can nonetheless be considered as chosen by Francis to express an aspect of Christ's redemptive death. The relaxation of creative effort corresponds with a moment of reduced tension within the darkening story. The psalm pauses within the narrative sequence of psalms one, two, four, five and six. Perhaps it refers to a moment of solitude granted to Jesus during his ordeal. Like a darkened stage suddenly filled with light, we are presented with truths which have always been there but which are suddenly illuminated before our eyes.

> *Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for my soul trusts in you.*
> *And in the shadow of your wings I will hope until wickedness passes by.*
> *I will cry to my most Holy Father, the Most High God, who has done good to me.*
> *He has sent from heaven and delivered me; He has disgraced those who trampled upon me.*
> *God has sent His mercy and His truth; He has snatched my life from the strongest of my enemies and from those who hated me, for they were too powerful for me.*
> *They prepared a trap for my feet and bowed down my soul.*
> *They dug a pit before my face and fell into it themselves.*
> *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and chant a psalm.*
> *Arise, my glory, arise psalter and harp, I will arise at dawn.*
> *I will proclaim you among the peoples, O Lord, I will chant a psalm to you among the nations.*
> *Because your mercy is exalted even to the skies, and your truth even to the clouds.*
> *Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and may your glory be over all the earth.*

The use of tense within the psalm is interesting in that victory is presented as something anticipated in verses one to three and as something already accomplished in verses four to eight. This fits well with Francis's dual perspective, his insight into both the immediacy and the purpose of Christ's suffering. The certainty of victory does not diminish the need for trust in the face of what evil has the power to do. Evil is seen as powerful, yet transitory and ultimately self-deluding, as verse seven makes clear. The transitory power of evil exacts acts of faith from Jesus as he struggles to endure. The result is a hymn of confidence proclaimed even as he experiences his own defenselessness. In this way his defenselessness becomes a choice to remain open to his Father.

The interlude created by psalm three provides a space for the narrator to establish what has already been introduced, the supremacy of the relationship between the Father and the Son. As in psalms one and two, Francis adds a personal name for God to the divine names in the original psalm. Jesus calls God *sanctissimum patrem meum* in verse three. The Son's vulnerability in the hands of his tormentors becomes the access point of the love of the Father. To accept this requires faith and psalm three is a psalm about faith, faith that is confident, proclaimed, even defiant. There is a powerful contrast between the descending, oppressive images which characterize the enemies' schemes in verses six and seven and the upward, soaring images of the Son's liberation in the Father, in verses nine and eleven. The experience of destitution leads to more than rescue. It leads to an appetite for God that anticipates fullness of life. *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum* (My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready).

As I have mentioned, Francis makes a substantial alteration within verse five, the only place where he introduces material from another psalm. The section taken from Psalm 17 emphasizes the strength and power of the enemy and

Jesus' vulnerability in their hands. In this way the inserted section casts light upon Jesus' utter dependence on his Father.

> *Misit Deus misericordiam suam et veritatem suam, animam meam eripuit (Ps 56, 4-5) de inimicis meis fortissimis et ab his, qui oderunt me, quoniam confortati sunt super me. (Ps 17,18)*

Psalm Four

In psalm four, again the perspective changes. In psalm three the anticipation of ultimate victory illuminates and transfigures pain. Psalm four voices the perspective of someone who is confronting pain without any immediate, foreseeable prospect of release. The assured victory of psalm three is not experienced.

The psalm belongs to the hour of Terce, the hour traditionally associated with Christ's condemnation before Pilate. The psalm shows Jesus entering more deeply into the experience of humiliation and abuse. Continuing pain is portrayed without the relief of an eschatological perspective. No meaning for the pain is offered. Unlike the other five psalms in Francis's Passion sequence, psalm four makes no reference to God in the centre of the psalm.

> *Have mercy on me, O God, for people have trampled me underfoot; all day long they have afflicted me and pressed their attack against me.*
> *All day long my enemies trampled upon me, for there were many waging war against me.*
> *All my enemies plotted evil things against me; they prepared lies against me.*
> *Those who guarded my life conspired together.*
> *They went outside and spoke about it.*
> *All those who saw me scoffed at me; they spoke with their lips and wagged their heads.*
> *I am a worm and no man, the scorn of all and the outcast of the people.*
> *I have been made despicable to my neighbours far beyond all my enemies, an object of fear to my acquaintances.*
> *Holy Father, do not take away your help from me but look to my defence.*
> *Come to my aid Lord, God of my salvation.*

The psalm opens with the same words as psalm three, *Miserere mei, Deus*. There is a repetition of the phrase *tota die*, (all day long) in the first two verses, emphasizing the imprint of continuous suffering upon Jesus. The word for trample underfoot, *conculcare*, is also repeated with its connotations of devastation. The verb can mean to lay waste, to be treated with contempt.

The absence of a reference to God between the first and final verses exposes the reader to a dark catalogue of pain. Within this abyss the torturers assume power. The absence of comfort is consistent with Francis's realism. The torturers go unchallenged. They have prolonged power over their victim.

The psalm shows an awareness of the relationship between inward intent and external result, an awareness that is characteristic of Francis. Evil inwardly conceived has an external consequence. Suffering imposed on the victim from without has to be internalised and dealt with at enormous cost.

The psalm captures the loneliness of Jesus as he silently witnesses the energy and intrigue generated by his enemies' plan to have him killed. Verses three to six evoke the sense of confusion and conspiracy. The only contact that people make with him is abusive, *Omnes videntes me deriserunt me*, (All those who saw me scoffed at me).

In verse seven Francis records the victim's lonely self-perception. The crown of thorns that he is wearing and marks upon his body are left to our imagination. The statement that Jesus makes about himself in this verse shows that he is profoundly wounded by their hate. He feels himself to be what they have made him, an object of abuse. In Francis's office, the suffering of Jesus is seen through his own eyes. He knows what is being done to him and how he appears

to others. Although Francis's approach is understated, he is able to represent the relationship of Jesus with his own suffering in depth. What has happened is utterly unjust, and, in one sense, meaningless. Nonetheless, it belongs to Jesus' experience of his own life. He no longer feels like a human being. Francis does not describe, only implies, the physical horror of torture. Instead, he focuses on the effects of abuse at the level of Jesus' self-awareness. In this way, he draws attention to what it means to Jesus to be made an outcast.

The magnitude of love, which underlies this suffering, is implicit in the Son's entreaty to the Father at the beginning and closure of the psalm. The entreaty reminds us of the trust between them, the Son's fidelity to the Father. Psalms one, two and four end with the same verse. This refrain indicates Jesus' ever-deepening cooperation with and abandonment to his father. Increasingly, this relationship bears the entire weight of the Son's hope.

Psalm Five

Psalm five is ascribed to Jesus on the cross. The first six verses of the psalm are taken from Psalm 141, the psalm that Francis himself recited as he was dying.[4]

There is a desperation and sense of crisis about the psalm consistent with the trauma of being nailed to the cross and positioned there to die. Throughout the previous four psalms, evil has gained power. Now an intensity about the review which the hero makes of his life suggests the perspective of someone who is dying. An accumulation of verses depicting confusion and betrayal reflect the momentum of what is happening. In verse six, the words, *Periit fuga a me* (Escape has failed me) suggest a place of no return, a finality. What is being done to him has reached a point where the effects are irreversible. The psalm has the tone of an enquiry which Jesus makes into his fate. Verse after verse addresses the mystery of the response which his enemies have made to him. The repeated thrust of enquiry confronting impenetrable darkness appropriately creates the atmosphere of approaching death.

> *I cried to the Lord with all my voice, with all my voice I begged the Lord.*
> *I pour out my prayer in the sight of God and I tell the Lord of all my trouble.*
> *When my spirit failed me, you knew my ways.*

The psalm begins with a sense of images of expenditure. The cries of the speaker in verse one suggest the cries of Jesus as he is nailed to the cross. In verse two, the verb *effundo* (I pour out) also evokes the scene of execution, suggesting both the depth of Jesus' self-giving at this hour and the loss of vital fluids from his body. Francis focuses on Jesus' inward struggle, which is directed, as always, towards the Father. Verse three again takes up the theme of the strain upon Jesus' resources, *In deficiendo ex me spiritum meum.* Francis's description of Jesus' inner state is always consonant with the suffering inflicted upon him.

These desperate images set the scene. Francis goes on to explore Jesus' state of mind. What is happening within him as he dies? The psalm voices the human need of Jesus to know, to understand what is happening. But the senselessness of his experiences throws this need back upon itself. The psalm voices the need of Jesus to be known, also frustrated.

> *On this way on which I walked, the proud hid a trap for me.*
> *I looked to my right and I sought, and there was no one who knew me.*
> *I had no means of escape and there is no one who cares about my life.*

Verse six takes up the theme of isolation. The verses capture the loneliness of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. Verse four hints that he is no longer able to walk. Verse five states that he is able to move his head in a search for companionship. But the man at whom he looks, crucified

[4] Thomas of Celano, "The Life of St. Francis," *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol.1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), 277.

next to him, also rejects him. Verse six makes clear that there is no way out of this position and within it no compassion.

> *I have borne insults because of you; dishonour has covered my face.*
> *I have become an outcast to my brothers, and a stranger to the children of my mother.*
> *Holy Father, zeal for your house has consumed me; and the taunts of those who blasphemed you have fallen upon me.*

Jesus' sense of estrangement is all the more painful because it is estrangement from those with whom he ought to be secure. The psalm evokes the raw, sensitive perception of a man tortured in every need for reassurance and recognition. What Jesus has done and tried to do with his life are tested against the outcome. Francis never suggests that the result is a collapse into the despair of self-doubt. He does, however, indicate that Jesus experiences an agonizing sense of futility. The psalm focuses on the emotional pain rather than the physical horror as Jesus' needs for support and compassion at the hour of his death are not met. Verse after verse voices the paradox of his fate, graphically illustrating how the dying man's instinctive need for meaning in his relationship with others is confounded.

> *They rejoiced and united together against me; many scourges were heaped upon me and I knew not why.*
> *More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who hated me without cause.*
> *My enemies, who persecuted me unjustly, have been strengthened; then I repaid what I did not steal.*
> *Wicked witnesses, rising up, asked me things I did not know.*
> *They repaid me evil for good and they slandered me because I pursued goodness.*

Each statement and the question implicit behind it express Jesus' dying need to find coherence in the narrative of his own life. The divine integrity of his mission as Son of God does not spare him this human hunger for response, for a story that makes sense. By allowing the Son to give voice to the paradox of his rejection at the hour of crucifixion, Francis draws attention to the deep hurt.

However, the psalm is more than a portrait of mental anguish. Jesus, the one who has not been known by men, looks to God as the one who knows him. In verse three he recalls, *tu cognovisti semitas meas* (you knew my ways). The theme of his relationship with his Father returns in verses seven and nine as a place of trust and faith. The search for meaning and coherence finds its answer close to the centre of the psalm in verse seven, the number denoting perfection. The meaning of Jesus' life rests in his relationship to the Father. *Quoniam propter te sustinui opprobrium* (I have borne insults because of you). In other words, the reason for all this is love. Again, in verse nine a meaning behind the horror is revealed in the Son's love for the Father. Francis adds Jesus' name for God to strengthen the sense of intimacy, *Pater sancta*.

The psalm points to the mystery of the divine relationship that illuminates the sufferings of Jesus. Francis never, however, romanticizes those sufferings. Jesus is being hurt by men on account of that which is rightly his. Verse twelve recounts that he has been made to pay for that which he did not steal, his identity as Son of God. The naked anguish of the psalm suggests the physical demands upon Jesus' limbs and body as he hangs upon the cross, but it does so indirectly. The direct portrait is of the inward struggle of a tormented man. The last two verses are an affirmation of confidence in the Father and repeated entreaty. They are the same couplet which concluded psalm two, the psalm of the first sentencing to death.

> *You are my most holy Father, my King and my God.*
> *Come to my help, Lord, God of my salvation.*

The God who has not saved him continues to be *Domine Deus salutis meae.*

The Cord, 57.3 (2007)

Psalm Six

Psalm six consists of two parts, the first of which is longer than the second. The first ten verses describe Jesus' death, the final six his entrance into glory. There is a stark contrast between the two parts of the psalm. And yet, the fact that through his state of suffering Jesus enters into a state of glory indicates that a relationship between them does exist. This is highlighted by the way that images and preoccupations, which feature in part one reappear, transfigured, in the second part. The death of Jesus is portrayed as brutal. There is no reference to God in the first ten verses at all. This absence is the way Francis chooses to depict the dereliction which prompted Jesus' cry on the cross, *Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?*[5]

> *O all you who pass along the way, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.*
> *For many dogs surrounded me, a pack of evildoers closed in on me.*
> *They looked and stared at me; they divided my garments among them and they cast lots for my tunic.*
> *They pierced my hands and my feet, they numbered all my bones.*
> *They opened their mouth against me, like a raging and roaring lion.*
> *I have been poured out like water and all my bones have been scattered.*
> *My heart has become like melting wax in the midst of my bosom.*
> *My strength has dried up like baked clay, and my tongue has stuck to the roof of my mouth.*
> *And they gave me gall as my food and, in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.*
> *And they led me into the dust of death and added to the pain of my wounds.*

[5] Mk. 15:34

Psalm six is the only psalm in the Passion sequence which does not make an appeal to God in the opening verse. Each initial verse in the preceding psalm is a communication with God whose intimacy compensates, to some extent, for Jesus' rejection at the hands of men. Verse one, which is taken from the first Lamentation, substitutes the usual appeal to God with an appeal to the passers-by.

> *O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor meus.*

But we are told in the next two verses that the passers-by are in fact surrounding him and gloating over him. The fact that the speaker does not revert to his intimacy with the Father indicates Jesus' sense that God is absent. His appeal for the compassion of his mockers is the appeal of a man who craves for the humanity of those who kill him.

Verses two to eight come from Psalm 21, a psalm traditionally understood to be representing Jesus' suffering on the cross. But Francis alters the arrangement of the verses that he selects, giving precedence to images which express his priorities. For example, Francis brings part of the original verse 17 forward, making it into his verse two. The choice gives an importance to the onlookers who are watching Jesus die. Francis emphasizes the dynamic between the dying man and his audience. The onlookers loom large in the psalm, coming into sharp focus at the very time when God seems totally withdrawn. The speaker is intensely aware of the reactions of passers-by, suggesting the heightened susceptibility of the man upon the cross. Grotesque animal images suggest the nightmarish intrusion of the onlookers' presence upon the victim, the way their words and faces invade his tortured senses. In verse two we are told they have surrounded him like dogs.

In verse three he is stared at and inspected. They cast lots for his clothing. Francis places this description of Christ's degradation before the verse that describes the nailing, even though in Psalm 21 it is the other way round. In other words,

he is careful to suggest the emotional pain of the crucifixion before the description of physical brutality.

Verse one emphasizes the desire of the crucified man to be authentically perceived. He asks the passers-by to *attendite et videte.* We are reminded of the craving to be truly known that he voiced in psalm five. The verb *attendere* carries the sense of to attend to, to take heed, to give attention, to listen. The verb *videre* carries the sense to see, to look at, to observe, to be aware, to know, to consider, to perceive, to understand, to discern, to take heed. But in verse three we see that Jesus is inspected, exposed and humiliated. Verses four, six, seven and eight describe his torture. His hands and feet are pierced. He is poured out like water. His bones are dispersed. Verses eight and nine describe his desperate thirst. Verse nine, taken from Psalm 68, evokes the cry of Jesus on the cross, *I am thirsty.*[6]

He is given vinegar. Every response to him that is described is debased. Francis's office repeatedly draws attention to the abyss between what is needed and what is given. Finally, they lead him into death. Francis has constructed verse ten, the verse which describes Jesus' death, carefully taking phrases from two separate psalm verses. The first is from Psalm 21:16, which in the Vulgate reads, *et in pulverem mortis deduxisti me* (and you led me into the dust of death). Francis alters the phrase so that it reads, *Et in pulverem mortis deduxerunt me,* (and they led me into the dust of death). The alteration is significant. The phrase as it stands in the book of psalms voices the speaker's submission to the will of God. Francis makes the phrase more brutal, emphasizing the finality of the executioners' decision. They choose to terminate the life of Jesus and he obeys them. While the theme of obedience to God is not lost, since Francis has stressed it throughout, the alteration emphasizes how terrible the acquiescence that God asks of him in fact is.

The second part of verse ten comes from Psalm 68:27 *et super dolorem vulnerum meorum addiderunt* (and they have added to the pain of my wounds). These are the words that

[6] Jn 19.28

Francis puts on Jesus' lips as he dies. There is no reference to God here and no victory. There is only an awareness of intensifying cruelty and pain. They read like the expenditure of a last unanswered sigh.

The last six verses of the psalm describe what happens to Jesus after he has died.

> *I have slept and I have risen and my most holy Father has received me with glory.*
> *Holy Father, you have held my right hand and you have led me according to your will and have taken me up with glory.*
> *For what is there in heaven for me and what did I want from you on earth?*
> *See, see that I am God, says the Lord; I shall be exalted among the nations and exalted on the earth.*
> *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has redeemed the souls of his servants with his very own most holy Blood and who will not abandon all who hope in him.*
> *And we know that he is coming, that he will come to judge justice.*

Sleep is the first image Francis uses to describe Jesus' resurrected life, the gentleness of which contrasts with the tension of his final hours. The first ten verses of the psalm are full of images of tormented awareness. Having appealed consistently to God for rescue in the first five psalms, in psalm six Jesus no longer does. It is as if pain has overwhelmed finally even the energy for appeal. Suffering comes to an end at verse ten. The image of sleep in verse eleven suggests the peaceful abandonment of self into the embrace of God. We learn that after sleep he has arisen and his father has received him with glory. In verse twelve, contrasting with verse four where his hands are pierced, the Father leads him by the hand. In verse ten he is led into the dust of death. In verse twelve the Father leads him into glory, *in voluntate tua deduxisti me et cum gloria assumpsisti.* Again, the efficacy of Francis's alteration of *deduxisti to deduxerunt* in verse ten becomes apparent. As a result of the alteration, there

is now a contrast between Jesus' treatment by men and his treatment by his Father. Verse thirteen points to completion, the fulfilment of the hope that Jesus has in God. The hope is personal, a fulfilment of intimate love.

The psalm culminates in verse fourteen with a declaration of Jesus' Godhead.

> *Videte, videte, quoniam ego sum Deus, dicit Dominus, exaltabor in gentibus et exaltabor in terra.*

The original psalm verse, taken from Psalm 45 reads, *Vacate et videte* (be still and see). It is Francis who creates the emphasis of the repeated *videte,* which is more powerful for his purposes. This emphatic invitation to look at Jesus in glory contrasts movingly with the invitation in verse one to look at him upon the cross. The proclaimed identity, which earlier scenes of degradation would appear to have discredited, has been mysteriously affirmed. Verse fourteen suggests that the full joy of his Godhead becomes present to Jesus after his Resurrection. This contrasts with the way the power of evil has been forced upon him.

Verse fifteen is about redemption. Francis alters the verse that he borrows from Psalm 43 to give it a Christological emphasis. It is *with his very own most holy Blood* that we have been redeemed. The words *de proprio sanctissimo sanguine suo* are Francis's own addition.

The final verse is about justice. Throughout the office, a crying need for justice has been manifested bleakly in its absence. Jesus has been portrayed struggling to bring his mission to completion, without receiving a response. His interior anguish is transformed into an act of supreme self-giving on behalf of others. Now Francis adds a cathartic declaration that there will be justice. There will be a scenario where the 'justice' under which Jesus suffered will itself be judged. Francis prefaces the verse with *Et scimus,* his own addition to verse thirteen of Psalm 95, *and we know.* The addition is personal, suddenly casting light on Francis and his silent audience. It creates a space for the audience whose sympathy and identification with Jesus has not been voiced. It reminds us that we are called to respond to the events we

have witnessed with hope and faith. According to the original psalm verse, God is coming to *iudicare terram* (judge the earth). Francis changes the object of the verb, making it more specific for his narrative. In Francis's office, God is to judge justice itself, *iustitiam iudicare,* the social, legal constructs by which human beings justify what they do to Christ and one another.

Psalm Seven

The last in the series of psalms considered here is about the triumph, the omnipotence of God. It has a depth, which underlies its apparent simplicity. The psalm derives its beauty from a paradox. We have witnessed the struggle of a powerless and hunted man whose achievement was not to conquer his enemies' malice but to submit to it. It is this achievement that the psalm celebrates. While the psalm exults in God's power over all creation, we recall that the office has not shown this power manifested in a conventional display of majesty, but in a crucifixion.

> *All you nations clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness.*
> *For the Lord, the Most High, the Awesome, is the Great King over all the earth.*
> *For the Most Holy Father of heaven, our King before all ages, sent His Beloved Son from on high and has brought about salvation in the middle of the earth.*
> *Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, let the sea and all that fills it be moved, let the fields and all that is in them be joyful.*
> *Sing a new song to him; sing to the Lord all the earth.*
> *Because the Lord is great and highly to be praised, awesome beyond all gods.*
> *Give to the Lord, you families of nations, give to the Lord glory and honour; give to the Lord the glory due His name.*
> *Take up your bodies and carry His holy cross and*

follow His most holy commands to the very end.
Let the whole earth tremble before His face; say among
the nations that the Lord has ruled from a tree.

Verse one is a call to applause. We are invited to rejoice in what God has done. All humanity is included. Francis's love and feeling for Jesus, which have run as an undercurrent through the office, emerge in this tribute. Again the effect of the verse is cathartic, creating a space for the compassion and wonder of the onlooker.

Verse two announces that God is king over all the earth. The declaration derives its power and poignancy from the spectacle of Christ's powerlessness. It is this supremacy which claims our homage. Francis alters verse three from the Psalter in order to have it refer directly to the saving work accomplished between the Father and the Son. He adds the words *For the Most Holy Father of heaven... sent His Beloved Son from on high* to the verse that he borrows from Psalm 73. This is the relationship that underpins the entire office. It emphasizes that the initiative for salvation was always with the Father. Immediately we are shown that the implications of the salvation accomplished by the Son are universal. The heavens, earth, sea and fields are all invited to rejoice in what has been accomplished. Verse five stresses the originality of what God has done. The three-fold acclamation of verse seven creates a movement of praise. This emphatic praise is the reverse of the humiliation that has been heaped on Jesus. Formerly he was tortured on account of whom he was. Now the psalm renders him *the glory due His name.*

Verse eight is carefully constructed, suggesting that it is important. Unusually, within the office it is based entirely on New Testament sources, Luke 14:27 and 1 Peter 2:21. The verse invites us to take up the cross of Christ and to be faithful until the end. The invitation of the psalm to enter into joy, therefore, contains this note of sobriety. We have seen the depths from which Christ's triumph has been wrested. Verse eight bravely invites us to follow where Christ has led. It is a call to courage.

Verse nine draws attention to the paradox that summarizes the entire office. The phrase *a ligno* (from a tree) was an addition to the Vulgate text made by the early church with which Francis would have been acquainted. The phrase points to a drama of kingship made manifest within powerlessness, humiliation and execution. *Dominus regnavit a ligno* (the Lord has ruled from a tree). It is the inward drama of this truth which Francis's office so heartbreakingly illuminates.

Conclusion

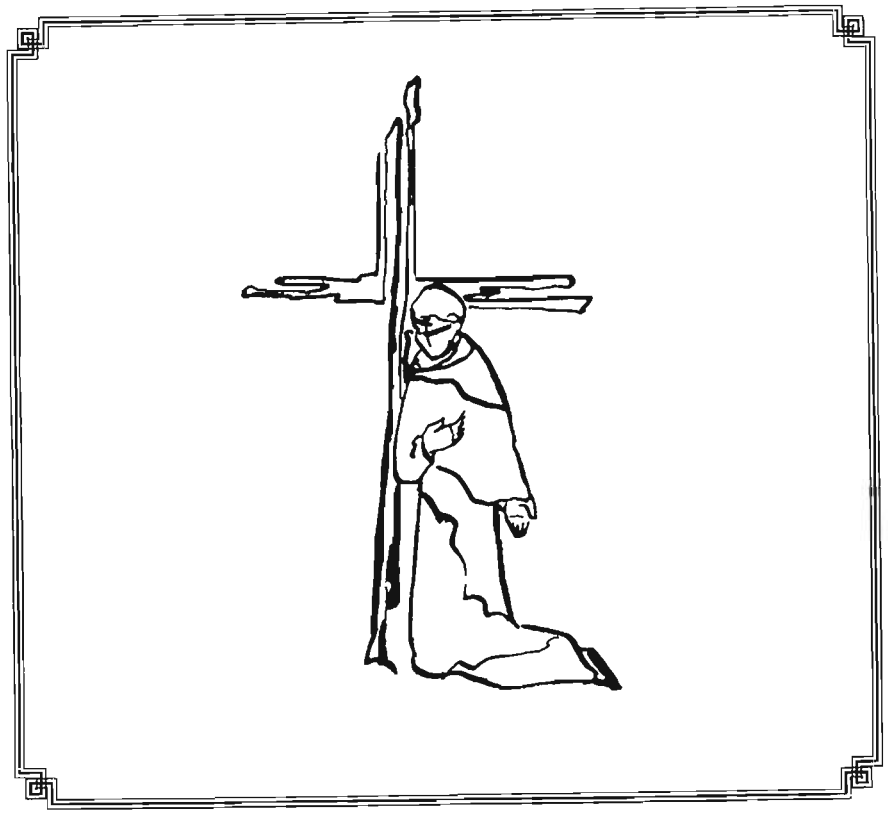
To conclude, the first seven psalms in Francis's Office of the Passion depict the Passion of Christ in a haunting and original way. They offer us Christ's own perspective on his Passion, as it is occurring. I have shown how Francis achieves this by working creatively with psalm verses and verse fragments. The reader has to make an effort to understand Francis's choices and suggestions and in so doing be drawn into an imaginative engagement with the Passion of Jesus. In a subtle, yet authentic way the reader is drawn into intimacy with Jesus, a state of empathy with him.

The psalms combine psychological realism with an eschatological perspective. In the Gethsemane psalm, the first of the series, Jesus struggles with the oppression created by his imminent arrest. However, the first verse of the psalm establishes that everything is known to the Father who has placed his Son's tears in his sight. Even at the moment of arrest there is a reminder that God is present and all-powerful.

As Jesus undergoes his trial by the Sanhedrin, he suffers appalling loneliness and is sentenced to death. Nonetheless, he affirms God as his King and Father. The third psalm in the series steps back from the harrowing sequence of events to contemplate the certainty of final victory. In psalm four the experience of abuse intensifies and in psalm five Jesus is nailed to the cross. He continues to struggle with the contradiction of his fate, appealing to God for help.

In psalm six, the suffering of Jesus culminates in a terrible abandonment. Francis uses a verse combining two verse fragments to describe the dereliction of Jesus' death. However, the psalm does not end here emphasizing that Jesus' death is a passage. The final verses of the same psalm describe his entry into glory and fulfilment. The seventh psalm celebrates his triumph and applauds what he has accomplished on our behalf. Suffering and glory are shown to be two aspects of the same reality. The suffering Son bears witness to the truth of the Father. The Father sees the suffering of his Son and responds by glorifying him.

Through his inspired use of reassembled psalm verses, Francis offers a unique insight into the mind of Jesus as he suffers. That this should have been achieved within this restricted format is remarkable and testifies both to the sensitivity of Francis's response to Jesus and to the prophetic wealth of the psalm verses on which he draws.



Francis's Autograph to Brother Leo: A New Reading

Jacques Dalarun
Courtney Hull, Edgar Magana, Robert Mayer, Geoffrey Omondi-Muga and Juliane Ostergaard

We have two preserved autographs written by Francis of Assisi: one of them (5.26 × 3.90 inches), kept at the Sacro Convento of Assisi, bears the *Laudes Dei altissimi* transcribed by Brother Leo and, on the verso, the autograph blessing of Francis to the same Brother Leo.[1] The other (5.07 × 2.34 inches) is kept in the cathedral of Spoleto and bears the short letter of nineteen lines addressed by Francis to Brother Leo. Considered as relics, these autographs are indeed exceptionally precious documents, given that they are testimonies not only on Francis, but from Francis, transmitted to us without any intermediary. In this short paper, we are going to focus only on the second one.

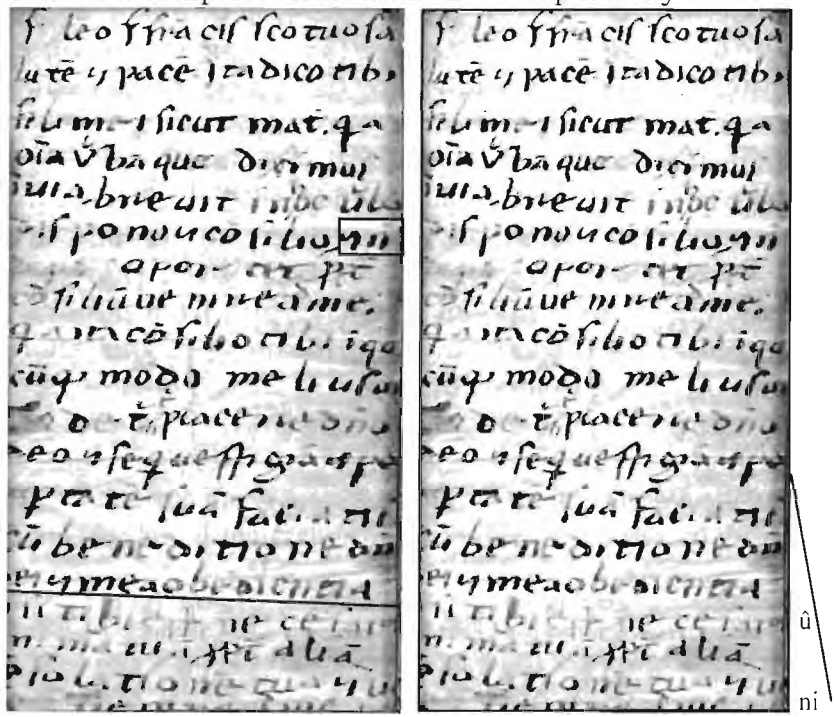
The autograph preciously preserved in the cathedral of Spoleto has recently been the object of attentive studies. First, Attilio Bartoli Langeli offered a new reading of the text, a reading in which two points are especially important.[2]

[1] M.F. Cusato, "Of Snakes and Angels," in J. Dalarun, M.F. Cusato and C. Salvati, *The Stigmata of Francis of Assisi: New Studies, New Perspectives*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 54.

[2] A. Bartoli Langeli, "Gli scritti da Francesco. L'autografia di un *illitteratus*," in *Frate Francesco d'Assisi. Atti del XXI Convegno internazionale, Assisi, 14-16 ottobre 1993*, (Spoleto, 1994), 103-58; A. Bartoli Langeli, *Gli autografi di frate Francesco e di frate Leone*, Corpus christianorum. Autographa Medii Aevi, 5 (Turnhout, 2000), 42-56; A. Bartoli Langeli, "La lettera di Spoleto," in Francesco d'Assisi, *Scritti. Testo latino e traduzione italiana*, ed. A. Cabassi, (Padova, 2002), 115-24; A. Bartoli Langeli, "Ancora sugli autografi di frate Francesco," in *Verba Domini mei. Gli "Opuscula"*

Where editors and scholars commonly read *et si opportet*, Attilio Bartoli Langeli read undoubtedly *et non opportet*: "it's not mandatory, Leo, to come to me." Then, the Italian scholar discovered that the four last lines of the letter were added by Francis in a second stage. After telling Leo that he did not have to come back to see him, Francis added: "but if you need, come on!"

Completing Bartoli Langeli's deciphering, Father Carlo Paolazzi proposed a new hypothesis to resolve the only two words which had not yet had an understandable form and meaning in the transcription: *necesari* and *ve*.[3] Carlo Paolazzi imagined that a very thin slice of the parchment was cut off on the low right side; this is why he suggested *necesarium* and *veni* complete *necesari* and *ve* respectively.



di Francesco d'Assisi a 25 anni dalla edizione di Kajetan Esser, ofm. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Roma, 10-12 aprile 2002, Medioevo 6, ed. A. Cacciotti, (Roma, 2003), 89-95.

[3] C. Paolazzi, "Per gli autografi di frate Francesco. Dubbi, verifiche e riconferme," in *Archivum franciscanum historicum*, 93, 2000, 3-28; C. Paolazzi, *Studi sugli "Scritti" di frate Francesco*, Spicilegium bonaventurianum 35 (Grottaferrata, 2006), 101-26.

Relying on these indisputable contributions to the research, Jacques Dalarun just offered a new interpretation of Francis's autograph.[4] According to him, the key words of the text are *sicut mater*. If one translates them "like a mother," "as a mother", "as a mother to her child," or "as a mother would,"[5] it may distort Francis's meaning and leave the reader wondering why a tender mother tells her dear son not to come to see her in the harsh words that appear later in the text. So Dalarun suggested *sicut mater* be translated "as mother,"[6] which eventually, for greater clarity, we slightly changed into "as the mother." Francis does not speak to Leo "as a mother would," but "as the mother he is," which means, in Francis's anthropology, "as your superior." He related mother to superior because he could not consider himself as Leo's superior in the more traditional sense, that is, the abbot or the father of his brothers. Thus he was their minister, their servant, their mother.[7]

According to this new reading, the first part of the letter would be a very institutional message: "I am going to summarize what we have already said and write to you exactly what you have to do; so you will not have to come and see me." Here, Francis plays the role of legislator of the community; but, in a second stage, he could not send Leo so formal a message and he added: "if you need it for the consolation of your soul, come on!" One can perceive

[4] J. Dalarun, "*Sicut mater*. Une relecture du billet de François d'Assise à frère Léon," in *Le Moyen Âge* 113, 2007.

[5] Indeed, this is the case in the differing English translations that we could consult: *St. Francis of Assisi Writings and Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. R. Brown, B. Fahy, P. Herman, P. Oligny, N. de Robeck and L. Sherley-Price, ed. M. A. Habig, (Chicago, 1975), 118; *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. R. J. Armstrong and I.C. Brady, The Classics of Western Spirituality Series, (New York, 1982), 47; *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. R.J. Armstrong, J.A.W. Hellmann and W. Short, (New York: New City Press, 1999), 122-23.

[6] *Sicut* can effectively assume these two values in Francis's writings: "like" or "as" in English, "come" and "da" in Italian, "comme" and "en tant que" in French, "wie" and "als" in German.

[7] J. Dalarun, *Francis of Assisi and the Feminine*, (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006).

Francis's reversal as a psychological contradiction, a kind of remorse. But it is likely more convenient to see in this double movement what Michel Foucault called "the paradox of the shepherd:"[8] never hesitate to leave ninety-nine sheep to save only the lost one.[9]

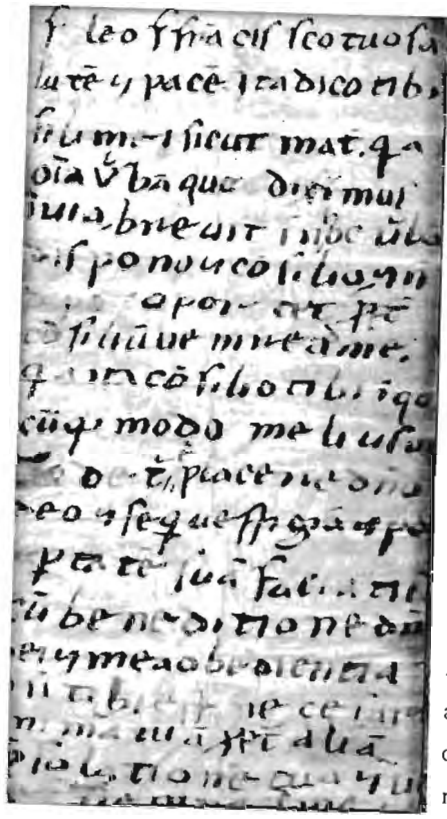
During the Summer Session of the Franciscan Institute held at St. Bonaventure University in June and July 2007, we collectively translated this short letter from Latin to English and we are glad to offer the result of our common work. The readers will discover, successively, the reproduction of the autograph that Mons. Giampiero Ceccarelli of the archdiocese of Spoleto and Norcia kindly addressed to us with a facing Latin transcription of it. In this transcription, the corrections introduced by Brother Leo to improve the very poor Latin of Francis are indicated in bold and the abbreviations, systematically resolved, in italics. The reading of some of the words is based on the decipherings of Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Father Carlo Paolazzi. Some notes will make clear the self corrections that Francis introduced in his text. The modern punctuation (and consequently the capital letters) follows Dalarun's new Latin edition.

Eventually, one can find this Latin transcription facing our new English translation. We did not try to ameliorate Francis's Latin style, but wanted to preserve the roughness of his expression. As much as it was possible, without producing an incorrect English text, we have kept the structure of the Latin sentences and the Latin order of the words. When Francis's sentence contained repetitions, we preserved them in English: "and I counsel ... for a counsel, since I counsel," rather than "and I counsel ... for an advice, since I counsel;" "comes back to me ... come," rather than "returns to me ... come." Each time that the English vocabulary offers the choice between two synonymous terms –a word with Germanic roots or another one with Latin roots– we adopted the latter in order to remain closer to the Latin etymology and

[8] M. Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population. Cours au Collège de France (1977-1978)*, ed. F. Ewald, A. Fontana and M. Senellart, (Paris, 2004), 133.

[9] Mt 12:11-12; Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7.

musicality: "necessary" rather than "needy" for *necesarium*; "benediction" rather than "blessing" for *beneditione*. Some notes explain the pertinent lexical difficulties.



F. Leo f. Francissco tuo[10], salutem *et* pacem. Ita dico tibi, fili mei, sicut mater, *quia* omnia verba que di**x**imus[11] *in* via breviter in **h**oc verbo dispono; *et* consilio: *et* non[12] oportet pro**p**ter consilium venire a**d** me, quia ita consilio tibi: *in* qocumque modo melius vi-[13] detur *tibi*[14] placere Domino Deo *et* sequi vestigia *et* paupertatem[15] suam, faciatis, cum beneditione Domini Dei *et* mea obedientia! *Et* si tibi est necesarium animam tuam, propter aliam consolationem tuam *et* vis, revenire[16] a**d** me, veni!

[10] Francis starts to write without respecting the Latin declension: he should have written *Fratri Leoni* (dative) *frater Franciscus tuus* (nominative), but *Leo*, *Francissco* and *tuo* sounded more familiar to his Italian ears.

[11] First Francis wrote *disimus* before Leo's correction.

[12] Before *oportet*, Francis started to write *dopo* and then cancelled it.

[13] Before *detur*, Francis started to write *so* and then cancelled it.

[14] The pronoun *tibi* was added above the line.

[15] According to Attilio Bartoli Langeli, the word *paupertatem* would have been written by Francis himself as a correction on the previous *voluptatem* that he first wrote for *voluntatem*.

[16] According to Attilio Bartoli Langeli, the *v* of *revenire* could have transformed and integrated the *T* that Francis inscribed at the bottom of the page in the first stage of his writing. This "T" was a kind of signature used by Francis, which meant *Tau*, a Christian symbol.

F. Leo
f. Francissco tuo,
salutem et pacem.
Ita dico tibi, fili
mei, sicut mater,
quia omnia verba
que diximus in via
breviter in hoc verbo
dispono; et consilio:
et non oportet
propter consilium
venire ad me, quia
ita consilio tibi: in
qocumque modo
melius videtur tibi
placere Domino Deo
et sequi vestigia
et paupertatem
suam, faciatis,
cum beneditione
Domini Dei et mea
obedientia!
Et si tibi est
necesarium animam
tuam, propter aliam
consolationem tuam
et vis, revenire ad
me, veni!

To Brother Leo
your Brother Francis,
greetings[17] and peace.
So I tell you, my
son, as the mother,
that all the words
which we said on the
road, briefly in this
letter[18] I set them;[19]
and I counsel: and[20]
it's not mandatory
to come to me for
a counsel, since I
counsel you so:[21]
in any way it looks
better to you to please
Lord God and follow
His footprints and
poverty, do it,[22] with
the benediction and
obedience of Lord God
and mine[23]!
And if it is
necessary for you that
your soul comes back
to me[24] for another
consolation of yours[25]
and you want, come!

[17] In Latin, *salus* means at the same time greeting, health and salvation. Francis obviously wishes all that to Leo with only his *salutem*.

[18] The first occurrence of *verbum* as the plural (*verba*) designates the oral words that Francis and Leo exchanged. The second one as the singular (*verbo*) designates the present writing of Francis: the letter which he sends to Leo. Only in French could we have translated "les mots ... ce mot."

[19] *Disponere* in Latin not only has the common meaning of "to set," but also the juridical meaning of "to take a disposition."

[20] It could sound really odd that Francis's advice starts with "and." But one must remember that, in the humble style of the Poverello, most of his sentences start with "and." Less than a coordinating conjunction, the abbreviation of *et* was above all the graphic mark of a break between two sentences.

[21] The repetition of "counsel" in English (verb, name and verb again) respects the triple occurrence of *consilio* or *consilium* in the Latin. The rough effect is as strong in Latin as in English. In Latin, a *consilium* is more than an advice: it can be a juridical term to express a decision.

[22] Because English does not distinguish the second persons of the singular and plural ("you"), it does not consent to translate one of the most puzzling points of this sentence: at its beginning ("it looks better to you"), "you" is a singular pronoun (*tibi* in Latin) and seems to designate Brother Leo; at the end, the implicit subject of "do it" is a plural one (*faciatis*). *Tibi* is clearly an addition in the autograph; but was it added by Francis or by Leo? According to G. Ammannati, "La lettera autografa di Francesco d'Assisi a frate Leone," in *Il linguaggio della biblioteca. Scritti in onore di Diego Maltese*, ed. M. Guerrini, Toscana Beni librari, 4 (Florence, 1994), 86, and F. Accrocca, "Le durezze di fratello Francesco. L'*Epistola ad fratrem Leonem*," in *Vita Minorum*, 3, 1997, p. 253-54, it would have been an addition of Leo, willing to confer to himself an undue authority upon the Order. If we prefer to admit, with Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Carlo Paolazzi, that *tibi* was actually added by Francis, what may be the significance of such a sentence? Does it mean that all the brothers must behave according to Leo's judgment? Or does *tibi* mean here not only "you Leo", but in fact that each brother is responsible for his own choices and acts, with the only –but so involving– duty to please God (i.e. to follow Christ's example, i.e. to assume His poverty)? In Paolazzi's opinion, this responsibility was only attributed to the first companions, while, in our opinion, it can be extended to all the brothers, or rather to each brother.

[23] After having checked the uses of *benedictio* and *obedientia* in Francis's writings, we think that the genitive *Domini Dei* and the possessive pronoun *mea* are both related with *benedictione* and *obedientia*. Here, in Attilio Bartoli Langeli's opinion, ended the first stage of the writing. The fact that the last word of this harsh message is *obedientia* –and in light of the previous uses of *dispono*, *consilio*, *oportet*, *consilium*, *consilio*, *faciatis*– reinforces the hypothesis that this first draft sounds more institutional and juridical than affectionate.

[24] To make the accusative *animam meam* the subject of the infinitive *revenire* is a suggestion of Father Carlo Paolazzi that we willingly follow.

[25] If Leo is now allowed to come, it is no more for a "counsel" (*consilium*), but for a "consolation" (*consolatio*). According to Dalarun's hermeneutics, Francis expresses here a complementary opposition between an institutional and a spiritual approach. The French scholar perceives a parallel between the couple *consilium* / *consolatio* and the couple *consilium* / *auxilium* ("counsel" / "help") which summarizes the main reciprocal duty between a lord and his vassal.

The Cord, 57.3 (2007)

Franciscan Women

David Flood, O.F.M.

The first Franciscans, around Francis of Assisi, turned the new freedoms of urban life into a distinctive way of working among others and of confessing their faith. They worked, either at one of the trades or in the fields or in service to the needy. As for living conditions, they made do with very simple quarters. Or they found room there where they labored. They established themselves surely enough as to distinguish clearly between the times among themselves and their forays among others. In Chapter Fourteen of the Early Rule, their practice of wishing others peace and exchanging hospitality is sketched out for us. Attentive to others where they worked and committed to peace beyond those contexts, the brothers readily shared their beliefs and hopes with others. As a consequence they won themselves a wide audience in central Italy. Women heard their own message of a new freedom in the brothers' words and soon became a strong dimension of the Franciscan movement.

We can propose several elements in the Franciscan message that had a special appeal for women. The brothers' words were not gendered. They understood their labor as part of the common effort to see to life's needs. Consequently as the servants of those whom they encountered, "subject to all," they invited a specifically female response from women, whether they were able to handle it or not. Then, in a surprising way, for as lesser brothers they had nothing, they promised a new abundance. It had to do with the goodness of the world and the animation of the Spirit, making all new. Women readily modulated attention to others in a nurturing world into a definitely women's view of Franciscan life.

When James of Vitry encountered Franciscans in central Italy in the summer of 1216, he described, in his October letter to friends in Flanders, a development of sisters minor similar to that of brothers minor. He also mentioned the difficulty they had with church voices, clerical and popular, that insisted on ascribing to the women identities they forcefully rejected.

There are reasons why the implicit invitation to women in the Franciscan message, embraced by women, did not change their condition save in marginal ways (marginal in the sense that it gave them a new sense of themselves, without finding its correspondence in the social organization of the world). The reasons are twofold. First of all, the church did not change its practices with religious women. Even though the Beguines achieved a social place and did make a difference in the lives of many women, real religious women, in the eyes of the church, continued to lead a cloistered life in monasteries supported by wealthy families and by church favor. Second of all, Francis and his brothers did not see and act upon the implications of their proposals for women. Men of their age, Francis included, they accepted, in church and society, the natural subordination of women to men. In Chapter Twelve of the Early Rule, Francis and his brothers encouraged women to take their counsel seriously. They were not ready, however, to make common cause with them against the restrictions imposed by society on women. They were not ready to work with women, justifying a Christian freedom similar to the one they personally enjoyed. Beguines meant no danger to the social order as would women inspired by the Franciscan sense of social justice. In short, women did not shake themselves loose from male definitions of their condition. They continued living in a patriarchal world. The brothers were not true to their own principles.

When we do early Franciscan history, we come across references to women in the Franciscan movement. Some are women of the working population, about whom we know little. In the Message, Francis describes how the men and women

of the working population, alongside the brothers, become instruments of the Spirit of the Lord, making all new. Their social condition depended on their place in the family. Women at that time readily slipped into the roles of their husbands, especially as widows, if they had the character to seize the opportunity. As did their husbands, they would benefit from the social relations that belonged to the Franciscan way. It might well have happened, and I suppose it did, yet we have no data that allows us to play out their realization of a Franciscan life as working women. Others are women of religious communities, and first of all Clare of Assisi and her sisters. Historians have tried to play up the role of Clare and her sisters in a way that would, today, speak to women's public sense of themselves. As an historian, I cannot say they make their case; often they force a more positive view than the sources allow.

We have, in the sources for early Franciscan history and the Early Rule in particular, a description of impersonal processes that construct the early Franciscan. For example, in Early Rule V 1-8, the individual brother is given to understand that he shares in the common responsibility of keeping the movement on its spiritual course. Two of the Admonitions tell him to speak up in support of the common effort. Consequently he is free to speak about the work he does, especially if he knows a trade. He takes part in determining the economics of the brotherhood. He does not let social pressure deter him from his Franciscan ways. All of these processes result in an individual Franciscan who supports the movement. Among Franciscans today, women as well as men see to their education in these ways. In the time of Clare and her sisters, that process began – for James of Vitry was speaking about them in his letter of 1216 – but the development was definitely cut short.

In her book *The Theology of Work* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), P. Ranft finds in Clare's writings "one of the clearest echos of Damian's social theology and thus the basis of mendicant work theology" (170). As for Francis he does have a theology of work, but a leaner one than Clare's (173). Moreover Clare "accepted enclosure despite her original

desire to found a mendicant order similar in form to Francis' order for men" (171). This is an excellent example of doing one's best to play up the history of women to fit the present sensibilities of women. (Ranft even proposes that Clare used simple language, 170! Clare used a symbolic language, the contrived language of feminine spirituality of that age, rather than the speech exemplified by the Early Rule and the Admonitions.) The Franciscan idea of work arose out of the dynamics of a movement, to which both Francis and Clare belonged. The movement is the context for their individual histories. When Clare and her sisters were enclosed, they were made to abide by the patriarchal order of the day. That removed them from the processes discernible in the Early Rule and the Admonitions central to a Franciscan's education. If we consider the rule Cardinal Hugolino tried to impose on them in 1219, we see that they were not even supposed to talk to one another, whereas the Franciscan movement thrived from open communication. The sisters had no choice re: enclosure; Clare had to bend to Hugolino's dictate; and their brothers, as far as we know, did not speak up for their role in the Franciscan movement.

Instead of trying to find examples of Franciscan women in the thirteenth century that speak to women today, I propose (as their useless servant) that today's women in the Franciscan movement work out the implication of those emphases in early Franciscan history that speak to them. (And one of them, I trust, will hardly be Clare's acceptance of enclosure as laid on San Damiano by Cardinal Hugolino.) Then they can rightfully claim their part of today's Franciscan understandings. In that way they do Clare and her sisters honor. They claim today the Franciscan freedom denied those women in the early thirteenth century.

COLLESTRADA

I did not long for the tunes of glory
When I stood on the battlefield
In mud and sweat and tears and blood
And saw the brute reality all gory

Round my feet and when I shielded
My eyes against the terrible sight
Of many slaughtered with whom I sang
And laughed and thought the world

To be at our feet. As knells rang
And our standards unfurled
In the hands of our captors
The dreamy tales that once enraptured

Me with great delight
And stirred me on to ride and fight
Seemed moments long, long lost.
Such dreams now too high a cost

And young Assisian nights
Unreal in reality's bitter light

Seamus Mulholland

DAMIANO

Did I hear a voice or just imagine
That in my vacant pensiveness
Words formed from the face
That charged me with the task

To place this stone upon that stone
And rebuild and restore that place
But never think or dare to ask
If this was mine and mine alone

To undertake in one embrace
Of wild responsiveness?

Did I hear a voice and then rejoice
That at last my way was clear
To face with courage my fear
That perhaps this path was not mine

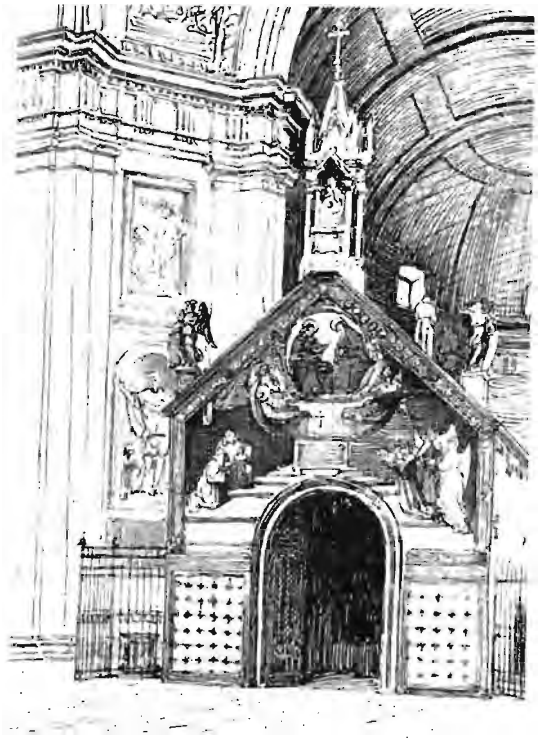
To walk or kneel or lie
Upon? That image of death
In such striking colours
Of one good man's dolours
To freely live and freely die

Turned a heavy saddened eye
And spoke in whispered breath
To humbly ask for this one task
And I, not knowing dream or reality

Said nothing in silent reply.

Seamus Mulholland

Portiuncula



I knew the place
As full of grace
As she for whom
It was named

And not ashamed
To spend my years
At the beginning
There and my tears

At the end
Things come full
Circle in the gloom
Of an early October

Evening and I barely
Breathing now face
The impending tomb
Dark slowly dims

me and wet cold
Stone beneath
My body all worn
Out with death

Is the proper bed
For one like another
Who had nowhere
To lay his head

And I think I hear
Other sounds near
Of prayers winging

Their way upward
Ah yes, their time
To sing has come
And my time gone

And this time I shall
Not silence them
For this is their best of songs

Seamus Mulholland

About our Contributors

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Book Review

***Writings on the Spiritual Life*. Introduction and Notes by F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M. Volume X, *Works of St. Bonaventure*, edited by Robert J. Karris. New York: Franciscan Institute, 2006. pp. vii – 434. $40.00**

The vibrant intellectual spirit of the Middle Ages gave rise to two great lights in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio. Whereas Thomas became virtually a household name through official recognition of his theology by the Church, Bonaventure lived in obscurity, recognized only by a few pedantic medievalists. The late twentieth century, however, witnessed a recovery of Bonaventure primarily through the English translation of and commentary on his writings. Over the last thirty years students have taken up the work of the Seraphic Doctor with enthusiasm, especially because his affective theology speaks to the heart of the contemporary world in its search for meaning and purpose.

The present volume of writings, annotated by Brother Ed Coughlin, contributes to the ongoing Bonaventurian revival. It is the tenth volume in the Bonaventure Texts in Translation Series published by the Franciscan Institute. Although most of the texts in this volume have been translated elsewhere, Coughlin specifically incorporates texts that "invite the reader to make the spiritual journey into the wisdom that comes through true experience as envisioned by the Seraphic Doctor" (p. 2). In the introduction he writes: "Despite the diversity of these works, the variety of forms they take, and the different audiences to which they were first addressed—friars, sisters, laity—the Seraphic Doctor seems always to be urging everyone to believe, to understand, to contemplate,

and to become enflamed with the love of the triune God" (p. 2). Reviewer Michael Blastic notes that Coughlin "offers an introductory essay that presents a detailed yet synthetic overview of Bonaventure's spiritual theology, with a specific view on the journey of the heart into wisdom." And he does so in such a way that is readily clear and cogent.

The translation of the four principal texts by Girard Etzkorn, *The Threefold Way, On the Perfection of Life addressed to the Sisters, On Governing the Soul* and the *Soliloquium*, present Bonaventure's views on the human person and the search for wisdom through the stages of purgation, illumination and union with God. Four supplemental texts support the Seraphic Doctor's search for the wisdom in the journey to God. The translations follow Ewert Cousins' use of sense lines which renders Bonaventure's complex Latin easier to grasp in its nuanced and poetic expressions. The *Soliloquium* in particular is one of the best English translations currently available and reflects the depth of Bonaventure's spiritual insight.

Coughlin has made a significant contribution to the renewal of the Franciscan Intellectual tradition with this volume. He has made accessible some of Bonaventure's key spiritual works, enabling ongoing study and scholarship in the English speaking world. This volume is helpful to the student of Franciscan theology as well as to the non-academic seeker of wisdom. Just as Bonaventure wrote for a variety of audiences, so too, this volume of his spiritual writings will appeal to a variety of readers. Wisdom is the highest level of knowledge for Bonaventure and Coughlin has helped disclose its beauty.

Ilia Delio, O.S.F.
Washington Theological Union

Media Review

***The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi: An Interactive, Explorable Environment with Integrated Text* (CD-ROM and Text). St Louis: Institute of Digital Theology, Saint Louis University, 2006. ISBN 0-9791418-0-X. $49.95 + postage, S & H.**

Long-awaited, *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* is now available. This digital resource uniquely presents one of the world's most celebrated places of Christian worship in Europe decorated by some of the greatest medieval artists of their time, including Cimabue, Giotto, and artists from Roman, German and French workshops. More than a mere series of photographs, the CD provides views of the upper church's interior that are not available to the gravity-bound pilgrim or tourist. Most of the interior furniture has been removed in this display. The viewer can easily glide forward or backward, fly from floor to vaulted ceiling, spin for a 360° panorama, or take a vertiginous look from the top of a column toward the floor. The focus can be a decorative motif along an arch, a particular scene, or an entire vault. These wider views show enough to clarify relationships among the images, and zooming in or out can reveal others. The highest resolution images are of the lowest register, the Francis cycle, best preserved despite earthquake damage and other vicissitudes over the centuries. Above this are two registers of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, often interrelated among themselves and the Francis scenes. Screen shots can be saved for future reference.

A *User's Guide* provides clearly-stated information: complete instructions on installing the program and navigating through the basilica, the controls and keyboard

commands, and how to access the text associated with the images. This latter feature is most useful; by toggling from the image one can reveal an overlay of associated text from the Bible, from the early lives of St. Francis or other sources. The preface by J.A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv., describes the project's origin as a class assignment which developed along dissertation-like proportions. A general introduction provides a detailed overview of the upper church, including historical context, chronology and a research bibliography. The description of the counter-façade, with its four frescoes ("The Miracle of the Spring," the "Ascension," "Pentecost," and "Francis Preaching to the Birds") in chiastic arrangement is most intriguing, as it segues from Old Testament to New: "In effect, the chiasm merges Heaven and Earth as it connects the rest of the narratives in the nave." Three appendices give helpful schemas of the artwork for the nave, the transept and the apse. One might want to print these for handy reference, instead of flipping from screen to screen.

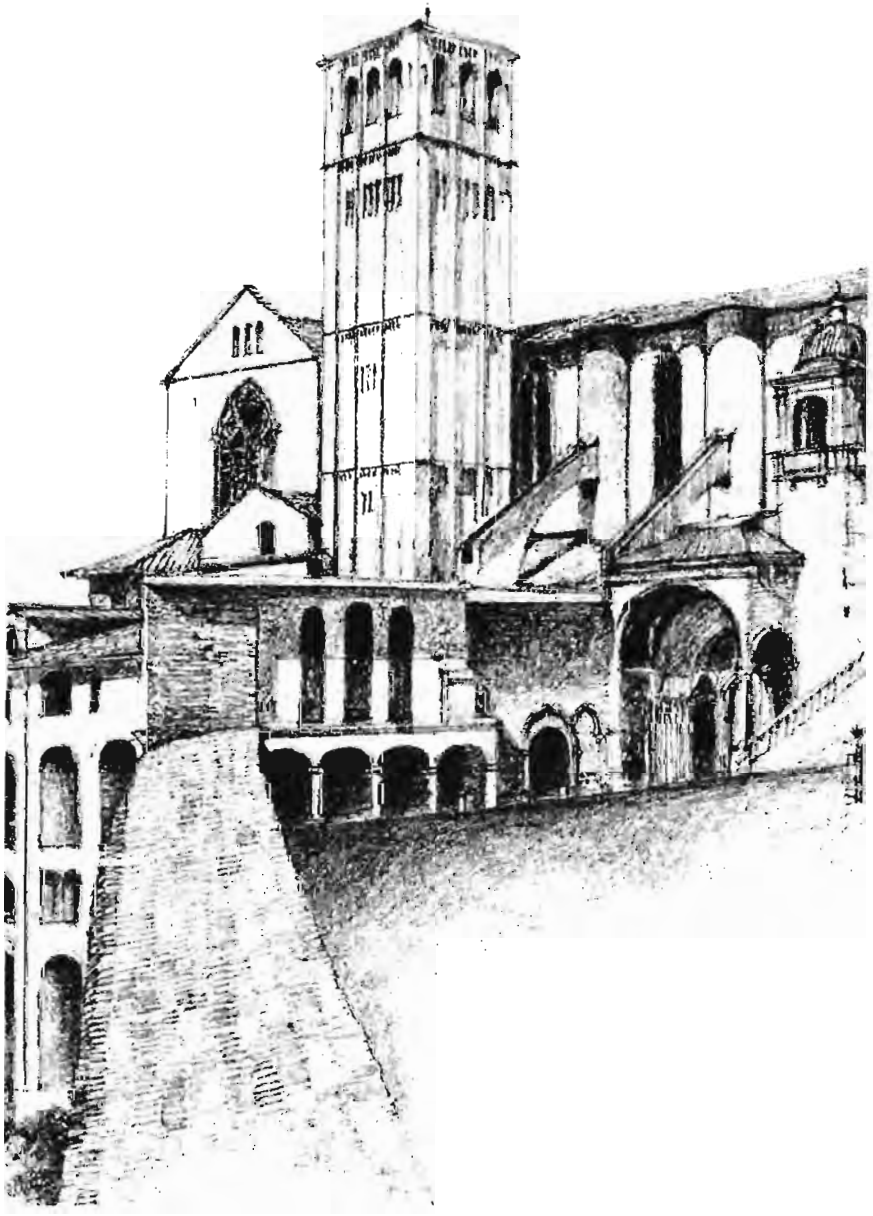
This digital resource is useful for individual as well as class use. *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* will interest students of art, history, theology and medieval and Franciscan studies. At Franciscan schools it can enhance various programs for orientation or information. Of course, since it is part of their heritage, Franciscans can utilize it in other ways, for formation or meditation on individual scenes. Pilgrims to Assisi will find it both useful preparation and wonderful memories.

Scenes of the lower church and the tomb of St. Francis, however, are not included; and a major drawback is the lack of compatibility with Intel 8-x open-board graphics chip sets. Nonetheless, one looks forward to the next productions of the Institute of Digital Theology.

Minimum specifications for *The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi* are: Windows 2000, XP, DirectX 9.0, Pentium 4, 1 GHz, 512 MB RAM, 64 MB Video card, 500 MB Free Space, Sound Card, 4x/1x CD/DVD Speed. The CD will work more smoothly with the recommended: Pentium 4, 2 GHz, 1 GB RAM, 128 Video Card and 32x/2x CD/DVD Speed.

The Virtual Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi is available at http://digitaltheology.org. It is also listed at Amazon.com, where it has two five-star reviews.

Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.
St. Louis University



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4:15 pm • Liturgy
Evening • Open space to explore resources

SUNDAY
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11:00 – 11:50 am • Pastoral Applications
12:00 – 1:00 pm • *"When, if not now; Who if not us"*
1:00 pm • Departure

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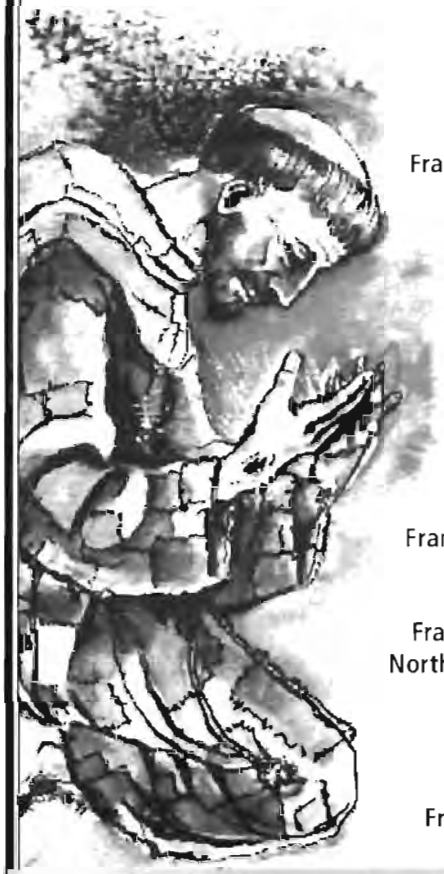

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508	3	Franciscan Movement I	MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Cusato, OFM	SFS507
519	3	Companions and Disciples	MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Blastic, OFM	SFS518
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies	T,W,Th:T,Th 8:30-11:15 am Wed 6:45-9:30 pm	Margaret Klotz, OSF	
546	3	Foundations of Franciscan Theology	M,W,F 1:00-3:45 pm	Fr. Frank Lane	
505	0	Integration Seminar			
597	0	Comprehensive Exams			
WEEKS 3-5: JULY 7th – JULY 25th			**WEEKS 3-5: JULY 7th – JULY 25th**		
525	3	Writings of Francis and Clare	M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Jean François Godet-Calogeras	
539	3	Formation in the Franciscan Tradition	M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Edward Coughlin, OFM	
564-03		Special Topics: Beguines and Bizzoche	TBA	Alison More	
558	3	Readings in Franciscan Theology: Ockham	M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Tom McKenna	SFS 546
565	3	Franciscan Painting I	M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Xavier Seubert, OFM	
ONE WEEK COURSES			**ONE WEEK COURSES**		
564-01	1	Reading Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke	June 23-27 8:30-11:15 am	Robert Karris, OFM	
564-02	1	Franciscans in the Contemporary American Church	June 30-July 4 8:30-11:15 am	Meg Guider, OSF	
GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES			**GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES**		
520	2	Francis: Life and Charism	M-F 8:30-11:15 am June 23-July 4	Mary Meany	
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History	M-F 8:30-11:15 am July 7-25	Dominic Monti, OFM	

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See ad on page 352.

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November 2-4, 2007	Motherhouse	Millvale, PA
November 9-11, 2007	Franciscan Spiritual Center	Ringwood, NJ

See ad on page 354.

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BlL	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 (*Regula non bullata*)
LR	The Later Rule (*Regula bullata*)
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 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
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 John Duns Scotus

53 Is it self-evident that God exists?

It seems that it is:

That greater than which nothing can be conceived is known of itself; but God is such according to Anselm; therefore etc. Proof of the major: because the opposite of the predicate is repugnant to the subject.

54 Also, it is known per se that truth exists, Bk. IV of the *Metaphysics.* God is truth; therefore this is known per se: 'God exists.'

55 Also, propositions having evidence from the existence of the terms in a qualified sense, namely from the fact that they exist in the intellect, have truth that is necessary and known per se; therefore all the more so propositions that have evidence by reason of existence in an unqualified sense, such as 'that God exists,' are known per se.

56 To the contrary: *The fool says in his heart 'There is no God.'*

Distinction 3, Question Two: Reportatio I-A

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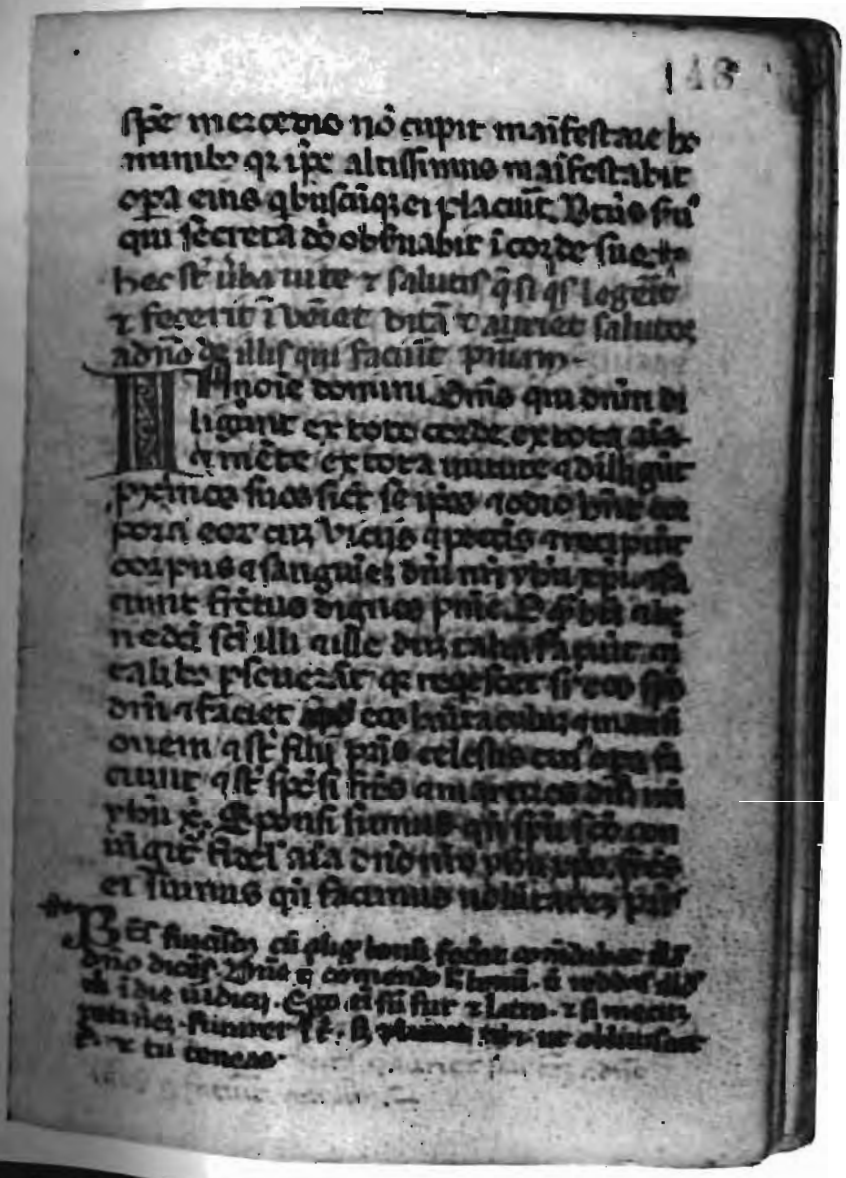

· A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW ·

THE CORD
A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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(Email: dmitchel@sbu.edu)

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

1. MSS should be submitted on disk in Microsoft Word.
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. Titles of articles should be enclosed in quotation marks and not underlined or italicized.
4. References should be footnoted except Scripture sources or basic Franciscan sources. Scripture and Franciscan source references should be identified within parentheses immediately after the cited text, with period following the closed parenthesis. For example:

   (1Cor. 13:6). (2C 5:8). (ER 23:2). (4LAg 2:13).

A list of standard abbreviations used in *The Cord* can be found inside the back cover. Franciscan sources used should be noted in the first reference in a mss and should be taken from *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*.

ADVERTISING: Ads should be sent to the editor at the above address. Cost: full page, $60.00; half page, $30.00. Ad deadline: first day of the month preceding month of publication (e.g., March 1 for the April/June issue).

Cover design: Mark Sullivan

Table of Contents

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that *The Cord* dedicates this issue to the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. May it prove to be a potion for reviving our spirits and re-directing our footsteps after our Brother Jesus. We are in good company! 800 years of seekers of the same Spirit which inspired Francis and Clare. We invite all our readers, and all who have gone before us – known or unknown – to celebrate this year of Jubilee!

It is unfortunate that we must add a note here about more mundane matters. You all know that postage rates have recently risen; our production costs have also increased with the passing years, new format and expanded content. We can no longer absorb these increased costs and so must ask for help from our subscribers. Beginning with the 2008 volume, *The Cord* subscription cost will be $28 for the year. You will soon receive your renewal notices in the mail. It is our hope that sticker shock will pass quickly and your renewals will keep our office staff busy for some time.

When I accepted the challenge of continuing to shepherd *The Cord* for our readers I fell heir to a file of some wonderful graphics – which I sprinkle about the pages and on the cover of the journal. Many of these pieces of art are not attributed, and have been here on file for many years. So I was most grateful when one of our readers wrote to tell us of the origin of the drawing that graced the cover of the May issue. The artist, Fr. Joseph Dorniak, O.F.M. Conv. is currently a missionary in Jamaica but has created many images of Francis – I hope many of them in that graphic file – and especially the one that so powerfully spoke of renewal that I used for our "Resurrection" issue. Thank you, Father Joe, for inspiring us!

It seems strange to send out this issue with no mention of Advent or Christmas. But our whole life is called to be incarnational – may we contemplate that mystery as we reflect on the graced vocation that is ours.

Daria R. Mitchell, OSF

Introduction

Suzanne M. Kush, C.S.S.F.

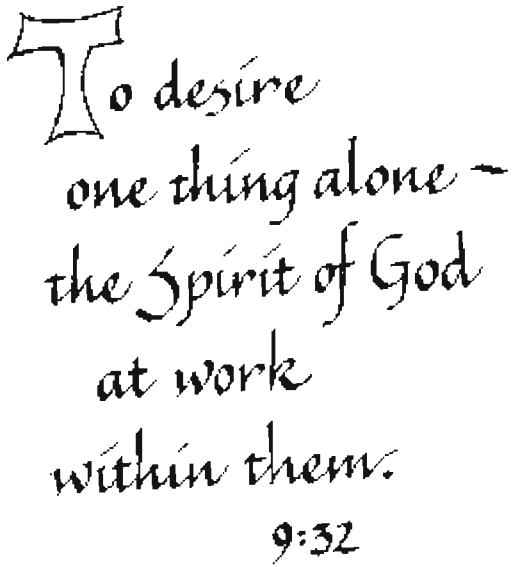
In the Franciscan Family the members of the Third Order have a unique distinction as to their *Rule and Life*. Francis and Clare of Assisi have written the forms of life for the First and Second Orders respectively. On the other hand the Third Order finds its origin in the Franciscan Movement when Francis expressed to Pope Innocent III: "I want to live the Gospel." From the 13th century until the 20th century the Third Order received various rules from the Church without reference to the spirit or values of Francis of Assisi. The revised *Rule and Life* of 1982 is unique in that it was written by an international group of members of the Third Order Regular.

The momentum that began the process for the revision of the Third Order Regular Rule was the Second Vatican Council. The mandate for Religious Orders and Congregations was to return to their roots and recapture their original spirit and vision. The International Work Group, in writing the Franciscan Third Order Regular Rule, captured the original vision and spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi by integrating their writings into the *Rule and Life*. The Prologue of the Rule contains the words of Francis to his followers expressing the mission of the Franciscan Movement, that is, as penitents their lives were to be dedicated to love of God and neighbor.

In the years following the approval of the revised Third Order Regular Rule in 1982 there was great enthusiasm to grasp the meaning of the Rule and its implementation in the life of the Third Order Regular. Members of the Third

Order Regular grappled with its connotation and examined the underlying Franciscan values and the implications for living these values in the post-conciliar Church and World. The celebration in this year of Jubilee once again calls us to pause to remember and reexamine our lives as expressed in the *Rule and Life*. During these 25 years much has changed: merging of congregations, the mission being carried forth by fewer members, and social and economic issues that have caused us to relinquish institutions. The underlying Franciscan values of contemplation, poverty, minority and fraternity have taken on a different meaning. The concept of neighbor has global implications. Modern means of communication has provided a face for our global neighbors and the issues facing the global community. At the same time the Franciscan family is ever expanding to include a greater number of Secular Franciscans and individuals involved in Franciscan scholarship. We are being challenged to widen our circle to embrace all in the spirit of solidarity.

These happenings call for a critical examination of our Franciscan values and motives personally, corporately and globally. How are Franciscan Values being expressed in light of these changes? How are we being called to live the Gospel message? What legacy is being given to the new generation of Franciscans? To assist in this reflection members of the Third Order Regular have been invited to reflect on the *Rule and Life* within the milieu of the 21st Century and their life experience of the past 25 years. Therefore, this commemorative issue of *THE CORD* is offered as a gift to the entire Franciscan World.



In Nomine Domini

Margaret Carney, O.S.F.

In 1968 as part of the implementation of the Counciliar decree on religious life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Sacred Congregation for Religious (as it was then known) issued experimental directives for developing contemporary programs of formation. Fr. Elio Gambari, S.M.M. traveled to the United States providing orientation for those charged with formation roles in communities and many types of seminars and meetings followed his initial educational lectures. One of these was a meeting at Alverno College in Milwaukee for formation personnel sponsored by the newly created Franciscan Federation. The inclusion of brothers was a result of the Rule Project that demonstrated the importance of an organization of all institutes, masculine and feminine, thus leading to a major change in the organization's structure.[1]

Having just been appointed director of the sisters in temporary vows for my community, I went off to Alverno in search of light and guidance. To my delight, most of the attendees felt equally unequal to the task of designing new programs which were bound to frighten our members with very strict views about the novitiate or likely to seem inauthentic to youth whose culture had been up-ended by the activist environment of the times. As our solidarity increased over the days together, our questions about how to proceed with our assignment became more candid, and, at times, downright hilarious. I well remember the moment when I finally

[1] Elise Saggau, *A Short History of the Franciscan Federation Third Order Regular of the Sisters and Brothers of the United States: 1965-1995* (Washington, DC: The Franciscan Federation, 1995), 12.

got enough courage to ask a question that had been bothering me each time I tried to write a program for vow preparation: "What do you say when someone asks you why the Rule is called the Rule of the Third Order Regular?" No one had an answer. We claimed a Franciscan identity as women religious, but this formulation on the title page of our Rule books was mysterious to us.

Six years later, Sr. Rose Margaret Delaney, F.S.P., by that time the president of the Franciscan Federation remembered my plaintive Milwaukee query and urged me to attend a meeting at which she and Atonement friar, Thaddeus Horgan, would relate their experiences at an international congress in Madrid, Spain to which several notable Franciscan leaders from the Third Order Regular had been invited. She assured me that I would find answers to my question and that I would profit from staying for the late session of that year's assembly in Chicago. Thanks to my current General Minister, Janet Gardner, who offered to stay late and share the long drive home with me, I was able to respond affirmatively. That afternoon in an auditorium in Chicago was the beginning of a new and extraordinary pilgrimage of meaning-making for me and for thousands in the Franciscan family.

What Rose Margaret and Thaddeus reported that day was the outcome of a Congress to which the generals of the masculine institutes of the Third Order Regular had been invited as members of an organization they had created among themselves years earlier. They were convening to listen to new research into the origins of their branch of the order. This research was stimulated by the Counciliar call to reclaim the charism of the founders and the work being done in the offices of the TOR Curia in Rome to put biblical, historical and theological foundations in place that were rooted in contemporary scholarship. The two masterminds of the meeting were Roland Faley, T.O.R. and Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. Roland was the Vicar General of his branch of the Order and an accomplished Scripture scholar. Thaddeus was appointed to the ecumenical center that his congregation developed in Rome to serve the needs of ecumenical observers to the Second Vatican Council. As often happens in the Eternal City, expatriates seek each other out for common projects and occasional breaks from the stress of international community living. Roland and Thaddeus had begun an exploration into the meaning of Third Order identity and soon found that they shared a conviction that the Rule of 1927, the rule to which all of the pre-1982 generation were vowed, was not the most authentic expression of the heritage and charism of the order. This was radical thinking and both experts in Vatican offices, and leaders of congregations, resisted the notion that our lives might be on such radically shifting sands at that point. This did not deter Roland and Thaddeus. One decade after the Council's close, they had enough research in hand to propose a critical look at the understanding of TOR history and spirituality.

Realizing the potential outcomes would be dramatic, the friars of the TOR invited sisters who were national presidents of national federations to the meeting of their Inter-Obediential Congress in Madrid in 1974.[2] This opened the door to a dramatic new collaboration. The participants spent days examining the ancient tradition that the Third Order was designated as the Order of Penance. They uncovered valuable biblical, historical and textual information about the title and its significance. What was more important, they traced the outlines of historical development of the medieval penitential movement that was based on current research and the work of several European scholars. Outlining the manner in which Francis of Assisi was impacted by that movement's discipline and ethos, the assembly began the work of promulgating a fresh look at Franciscan beginnings. The lay character of the early movement could be better understood in relationship to this resurgence of the ancient Order of Penitents that occurred in the same twelfth and thirteenth century time frame. The Congress issued a brief document of principles that linked ancient traditions of the TOR to contemporary renewal efforts. The language was simple, direct

[2] See *Analecta/TOR* 123 (1974), which contains the acts, papers, and decisions of the Fourth Franciscan Tertiary Inter-Obediential Congress, held in Madrid.

and appealing—a factor that made translation and international acceptance easier. When the Madrid Document was circulated, its new post-counciliar way of seeing vocation, mission, social commitments made it a popular tool for community programs of initial and on-going formation.[3]

Just as important, and most exciting to those of us hearing this for the first time, was the opening of a path of research leading to more historical information and comprehension about why the Franciscan family included this vast assortment of congregations, institutes, brotherhoods, sisterhoods and contemplative monasteries—none of which belonged, by choice or necessity, to the first or second orders. The first gleanings of the historical foundations and, thus, the contemporary legitimacy of the Order, were beginning to manifest themselves.

From that point to the present day, a major new area of Franciscan research, study and debate has flourished. In 1985, three years after the Rule text was approved by John Paul II, the general superiors of the Third Order Regular met in assembly once more. This time the goal was the establishment of a permanent council of the Order with an elected president and council. This International Franciscan Council of the Third Order Regular would give physical and social location to the Third Order family and have the capacity to represent its four hundred member institutes to pan-Franciscan convenings, ecclesial events, etc. Thus, from the foggy incomprehension present in Milwaukee in 1968 to the approved constitution of the IFC-TOR in 1985, a journey of 18 years brought us from ignorance to international communion in and through the new TOR Rule.

When asked where this identity is declared, one need look no further than the title of the text and the first chapter with its three articles. First a word about the "title" statement. The publication of the rule text begins with this formula:

> In the name of the Lord! Here begins the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.

We often hear the cliché, "What's in a name?" This short phrase holds seven centuries of history in its brief declaration of twenty-five words. The choice of formula is a deliberate homage to the manner in which Francis opens the text of the Rule (both versions) and the wording is patterned after the translations most in use at the time. What is not obvious is the fact that the wording for the Order's name—Third Order Regular of St. Francis—followed intense discussion because the congregations participating in the world-wide consultation had submitted an astounding variety of title suggestions. That variety was interpreted by the Work Group drafting the text as indicative of major confusion within the Order. The confusion was totally understandable. Few contemporary congregations enjoy a history of more than two centuries. Fewer still could trace their roots to the first organized fraternities of penitents. Most institutes taking part in the consultation had not been informed of the work done in the Madrid Congress. Most institutes tended to confuse the proper individual title they possessed with the more generic form of the Order's canonical name.

The work group studied the variety of proposals and, with great care, decided to propose the title most fitting to the history of the penitential branch of the family, but without including the words "of Penance" since that qualifier was not in general usage across time and continents. When the Rome Assembly opened in 1981, hours of discussion about the relevance of an historically accurate title ensued. The final accord of the members with the Work Group proposal signaled a turning point in the debates that had taken place between 1974 and that time. It was the beginning of forming a corporate and historically grounded consciousness of "special charism" in the Third Order family of congregations.

[3] Rose Margaret Delaney and Thaddeus Horgan, ed., *The Statement of Understanding of Franciscan Penitential Life: Issued by the IV Franciscan TOR Penitential Congress* (Madrid, Spain, 1974).

Evangelical Identity

Article One

This article is a statement of the ecclesial place of the Third Order Regular. It opens with the opening lines that have been part of the Rule text since the 13th century. It clearly positions the Order in the universal tradition of Catholic religious life, the following of Christ through observance of the evangelical counsels. The wording "living in obedience, in poverty, and in chastity" is simple and allows for clear congruence with traditional constitutional forms that place the three vows of most religious congregations in prominence. What should be noted here is that the agreement to use the simple phase "in poverty" is also a departure from the phraseology of the First Order rule where the famous *sine proprio*—without anything of one's own—becomes the emblem of minorite dedication to poverty understood in a more radical and comprehensive form than that espoused by other religious orders. Here, again, the plunge into history became critical for self-understanding. As battles raged within the First Order over the interpretation of Francis's intention in relationship to poverty and, thus, the friars' obligations of observance, members of lay Third Order fraternities saw to the proper disposition of personal property by developing a system of social assistance in and through the charitable donations of the fraternity or through the insistence upon proper wills being made to insure that a tertiary's property would continue to be used for alleviation of misery. Rejection of ownership was not the norm. Rather, ownership linked to evangelical convictions about the use of this world's goods, was the norm. This common sense accommodation for lay persons following the Franciscan way of life was subsumed in the canonical discipline that finally recognized congregations of simple vows in the nineteenth century. In other words, a category for religious who did not fully renounce ownership did not become general church practice until the late nineteenth century. From the thirteenth century until that point, Franciscan Third Order communities carved out a tradition that today is espoused by countless religious institutes.[4]

One of the dilemmas faced in the composition of the text was the fact that clear disciplines and traditions concerning the form of life of publicly vowed religious were now part and parcel of the self-understanding of the vast majority of those adopting this new rule. We needed ways to signal that fact in our choice of texts. At that time it was assumed that certain sections of the *Letter to the Faithful* indicated that the addressees included those who made formal promises to observe the penitential discipline as well as those who were simply "in the audience" of the text or preached message. The penitential movement admitted of much variety and attempts to codify precisely who was where on the continuum of those practices could be, and still is, a frustrating experience for many. Thus, the use of the phrase "they are held to do more and greater things" was selected to indicate a point of differentiation between Franciscans of the Secular Franciscan Order and those of the Third Order Regular.

Article Two

If Article One places the Order squarely in the long line of canonically recognized groups that assume the obligations of religious vows within the Franciscan rule of life, Article Two places the Order in its proper historic relationship to the other branches of the Order by providing a biblical-theological definition of penance reclaimed from the writings of Francis himself. This was the most contested aspect of the proposed rule text and the resolution of the difficulties this issue posed was one of the most dramatic aspects of the Rome meeting.

Work on the new rule text was not a "top-down" process. The desire for a text that reflected new research and study of Franciscan origins was arising in multiple places from

[4] Raffaele Pazzelli, *The Franciscan Sisters: Outline of History and Spirituality* (Steubenville: Franciscan University Press, 1993), 149.

the close of the Council. The work of the guiding Spirit of God was nowhere more evident than in the way disparate projects, study documents, and renewal programs created a groundswell that can be traced in the activities of national federations, consortia of Franciscan superiors, interactions between First Order general ministers and the sisterhoods aggregated to them. Many TOR institutes were very closely connected to First Order at the general or provincial level due to the influence of friars who served as founders, spiritual directors, chaplains, co-workers in missionary settings. In some cultures, this relationship appeared to be a dependency. In others it took the form of cooperative activity but combined that with jealously guarded autonomy. The rule project assemblies of 1976 and 1979 were undertaken with the knowledge and support of the General Ministers of the First Order. The support was not merely attitudinal. Financial resources were contributed for the early activity through a Francophone group of Franciscan sisterhoods that took the lead in promoting a new text among their counterparts in Western Europe.

When certain groups within the assembly—and in the preparatory meetings—asserted a conviction that a precise Third Order identity and lineage had to be honored and expressed in the text, many were startled. This differentiation appeared novel, even threatening to established relationships. At times the debates and conversations that needed to occur on this point took on an adversarial tone as if one branch of the Order was being pitted against another in a contest.

All of these tensions came to the hands of the Work Group to resolve. It became clear that geography and history had conspired to prevent knowledge of the Third Order's separate existence and history from being understood by many groups of Third Order women. (The prior existence of the Inter-Obediential Congress had created a shared sense of history among the congregations of brothers and the Atonement and TOR friars.) The turning point came during a meeting in New York hosted by the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn.

While not the intent of the hosts, the outcome included the realization on the part of several sister participants that there were brotherhoods that shared the TOR rule and lived similar lives of service in teaching, social work, etc. Why was this a surprise? In certain countries there were no such brotherhoods or established masculine TOR houses. Thus, the critical turn from seeing the Rule as the exclusive concern of modern foundations of women, to the concern of a vast network with an ancient lineage for both men and women, came about. It was a shared experience of work and life during an intense working session of one week that illuminated the debate that had taken place to that point. Gradually a deepened awareness of the ancient outlines of the Third Order inheritance, its inclusion of men and women, its infinite variety of historical forms and groups, its uneven history of relationships with the First Order, came into focus.

In addition to this difficult path to shared identity, there was a problem to resolve in the use of terms to describe essential elements of the charism of the TOR. Prior to the Brussels Work Group session in May of 1980, the administrative team for the Rule Project and the International Franciscan Conference (CFI), met in Grottaferrata, Italy, and defined a set of values that clearly emerged from the first world-wide consultation on the draft text. This group, charged with managing the project's translations, communications and international meetings, saw the necessity of providing some parameters for the work group whose members differed in levels of international leadership experience. The International Franciscan Bureau's (BFI) mandate was to create a new text taking into account three documents that resulted from earlier Franciscan cooperative ventures: the "French Rule," the Madrid Document and "the Dutch Rule." In addition to these three, there were numerous study texts created by various national federations that were well known to the superiors being consulted and whose vote would ultimately determine the text's success. Taking all of these documents into account and having seen the results of the first international consultation on the draft text, the CFI selected four values

that could be said to characterize the TOR spirit: poverty, minority/humility, contemplation and conversion. It was a clear statement, comprehensive and elegant in its simplicity. Each of the four terms could be probed to yield rich material for a wide variety of communities and to show long and loving adherence to profound Franciscan ideals.

The debate, however, still raged on. If we adopted a simple statement of four values without identifying one or the other as "privileged" did we run the risk of creating a type of smorgasbord approach to describing our identity? Did it matter if one or another of these took precedence in the formulation? Those most concerned that the majority of assembly participants seemed unaware of the importance of the penitential history felt that allowing this to remain unresolved was to risk losing the consent of some of the masculine congregations and several of the feminine ones as well. The task of resolving the tensions were not easy. What finally emerged was an agreement that was borne of much study, prayer and reflection. It took the form of the proposition that the call of penance/metanoia/conversion was, indeed, the singular hallmark of the early Franciscan Third Order men and women. However, they embraced that calling in the spirit of Francis's teaching that penance, far from being a disciplinary code of mortifications and negative ascetical practices, was the very response the presence of Jesus called for in the New Testment kerygma: "Repent! The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mt 3:2). It was a call to embrace the new reign breaking into human history. However, early Franciscans shared this exigency with all Christians seeking a fuller response to the message of the Gospel. Under the inspiration shared with the first friars and poor sisters, the conversion to the life of grace exhibited by Franciscan penitents was characterized by the values espoused by both groups: contemplation, conversion, poverty, minority—and these combined in a way that the world had never witnessed before. This proposition made it possible to see the root identification as a life of penance understood as the incarnation in one's own calling to

the poverty, humility and prayerfulness that the early Franciscans embraced and promulgated as a happy way of life.

At a point in the assembly when agreement upon this proposition was in jeopardy, Sr. Louise Dendooven and Fr. Roland Faley, came together with the Work Group members to hammer out a formulation that all parties to the debate could assent to and that singular moment of cooperation replaced months of contentious and fearful disagreements about how to go forward with both a new historical consciousness and a new commitment to this historic opportunity to redefine an entire branch of the Franciscan order.

It is also important to see the words of Francis chosen to specify the understanding of the call to penance. Here the clarion call of Francis found in Chapter 23 of the *Early Rule* states the criteria for living in "true penance": to acknowledge, adore and serve God, abstaining from all evil, persevering in doing good.[5] It is a program of life reduced to five terms: know, worship, serve, avoid, do. The simplicity is amazing—so amazing that it might be the reason why we ignore the formula and think of it as childish moralizing. In fact, the old catechism sayings seem very close to this and we tend to relate those catechetical sayings to a kind of naïveté. But there it is, in all of its uncompromising sweep and solemnity. We will be judged. The eschatological hour of decision will be rooted in our obedience to this injunction. No one who wants to be in the company of Christ at that hour is exempt. Those who seek the guarantee that the second death will do no harm must heed these words.

Article Three

It is well known that Francis placed obedience to Church authority, vested in the papacy, in a very prominent place in the scheme of Franciscan things. This insistence upon obedience and reverence to the pope (the then-current pontiff named in the Rule but implying whoever held that post in

[5] ER XXIII, *FA:ED,* vol. 1, 83-85.

future) as part of the fabric of the text was not without its set of debates. Some felt a need to mimic the original method of Francis by naming John Paul II in the text. In a dramatic turn of events, the work group debated this issue the morning of May 13, 1981 and emerged from the morning session to the news of the assassination attempt on the Pope that day. Others wanted to mitigate a statement that might appear to create formal obligations that mirrored the Jesuit tradition. It was clear that there could be no argument with the consciousness of Francis that his fraternity/sorority was at the heart of the church and that he feared rupture with Rome as much as he feared anything. Given the gulf of centuries, canon law refinements and actual historical experience that separated us from the Early Rule, what should we do?

Our reflections upon the many suggestions we received led us to see that this article was really an opportunity to describe that "living in obedience" that characterized Francis's conception of obedience as mutual and humble respect for one another leading to profound mutuality as a ground for all decisions and exercises of freedom. Thus, obedience to the Pope became a vast container for a set of inter-related acts and attitudes of mutual obedience and engaged relationships that preserved proper freedoms while promoting fraternal and substantial collaborations. Thus, this article insists that there are inter-woven commitments that define the relationships of the Third Order Franciscan. First, we assert the historic and ever developing relationship of reverence and accountability for being a public figure in the service of the Church. However, the very same attitude must be demonstrated within the Order, and the commitment of obedience to one's own ministers is placed on a level with that of the Pope. It is, after all, the minister who is most likely to need this expression of minority to be concrete in our lives, far more than the Pope who will rarely, if ever, interact officially with an individual friar or sister. The very same attitude is then extended to the members of our immediate community. The heroic attitude posed by some in relationship to obedience to Roman authority is often belied

by the fractious relationships within one's own community. Consistent attention to living in obedience—of hearing the other's need, advice, desire, direction as God-inspired—is a profoundly penitential form of life. Finally, the attitudes of continual interchange and attention fostered by this obediential stance gives rise to a desire to see the entire Franciscan family as a blessed web of relationships, a web that must be created, maintained and protected by human labor. Given the privileged opportunity to write a new rule text, a text that would have repercussions throughout the Order/s, the authors proposed a call to foster a universal, and now international, solidarity among all branches and entities. We live in an era that allows such "unity and communion" to be dramatically exhibited and experienced. Instant communication, international travel, global level cooperation are possible to modern Franciscans in ways undreamed of by earlier generations. This article calls us to the realization of new possibilities and makes it a matter of observant obedience to do all in our power to live beyond the boundaries of our own singular institutions.

There we have it. The identity chapter—as I often call Chapter One—is three short statements that are interlinked in a tight framework that combines eight centuries of history with unfolding international horizons. It establishes an ecclesial point of belonging, a careful but comprehensive description of the specific identity of the penitential Franciscan vocation of the Order, and a framework of essential obediential relationships that protects the individual from isolation and fragmentation in a world that makes the discipline of community more and more difficult to achieve.

The path to these declarations was painful, and it was not without enormous effort to be attentive to the Spirit at work in contrary opinions and heated debates. That, too, is part of our inheritance. We are called to an identity of continual conversion to God and each other. This chapter of the Rule was born in that spirit.

The Cord, 57.4 (2007)

ACCEPTANCE INTO THIS LIFE

Diane Jamison, O.S.F.

Is conversion ever finished? If one were to think of it as an instantaneous moment beyond which there is no growth then perhaps it could be finished. In Chapter II of the Rule "Acceptance into This Life," it becomes obvious that conversion for us as Franciscans is an on-going process; therefore formation must be an on-going process. With this in mind, there is usually a moment that defines a particular conversion. In pondering the lives of Francis and Clare one can certainly identify their defining moments. Who of us has not thought about the life-changing encounter of Francis and the leper or Clare's middle of the night flight from her family home to join the brothers at the Portiuncula? Their conversions did not begin or end with these moments, but nonetheless these experiences were life changing for them.

As individuals approach us, perhaps hesitantly or fearfully but yet attracted to Franciscan life, maybe with questions, or troubling doubts, or even a bit of denial, they are to be received with kindness. We need to patiently hold with them their questions, doubts and fears. Religious life is a culture unto itself with a language and tradition that we take for granted. We have a tendency to think everyone understands our vocabulary of habit, horarium, Office, refectory, and the list continues. We also think everyone understands that to pray is to be in a reverential state of silence or use soft music for reflection. In our religious culture there is a certain way to do things, like making a bed, doing dishes, and cleaning, to mention just a few. The truth of the matter is, we are all unique, therefore, we pray differently, keep

our rooms differently, and enjoy different types of music. We have imbibed the culture of religious life for years thus we do not recognize how very difficult it is for someone who feels called by God to join us.

With great kindness and gentleness the ministers are to discern with them their call from God. Both Francis and Clare acknowledge in their testaments God's movement within their lives. It is essential to know the call is from God. The candidates may need assistance in knowing their call is from God or in recognizing defining moments in their lives. It behooves all of us to reflect on our own journeys of conversion, discerning the moments that have changed our lives. We are influenced by the culture of our society. Questions and doubts at times arise in us about our vocational call from God. With whom are we discerning? Are we not to receive each other in kindness, holding with the other his/her terrifying doubts and questions?

The responsibility for the initial invitation is everyone's. The ministers of the congregation hold the responsibility for reception into the congregation. The aspirant needs to be Catholic. This particular statement is quite challenging for many women and men at the beginning of the 21st century. With this being said, as vowed religious we are public witnesses of the Church. The histories and writings of Francis speak of his deep concern that his followers remain within the Church and not fall prey to heresy.

The candidate needs to be open to the life of the Gospel. Francis and Clare held up the Gospel as the way to follow the footprints of Jesus. Francis's *Early Rule* and the *Form of Life of Clare* contain many Gospel texts. The writers of our Rule and Life chose forty-two Gospel texts which were used by Francis or Clare, and at times both, to express the essence of our life.

The Gospel is the living Word of God into which one continually grows in understanding, wisdom and insight. There are three Gospel texts in Article 5: "If you want to be perfect (Mt. 19:21), go and sell all your possessions (Lk 18:22) and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come,

follow me." And "if you want to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). As I consider Francis's understanding and knowledge of the Gospel I believe he knew the context of the particular text that he chose. His choice of texts is purposeful not accidental. The first Matthew text and the Luke text follow the blessing of children. Children are dependent and trusting on those who provide for them. If all is sold and given to the poor, are we not dependent? Are we being called into dependency on God and on one another? Francis uses these texts in both chapter one of the *Early Rule*, and chapter 2 of the *Later Rule*. In the *Later Rule* Francis seems to be less rigid, with a little more understanding, as he states: "If they cannot do this their good will suffices."[1] We grow into our dependence on God and each other. The selling of all and coming into the life with nothing is an equalizer. We are all on the same level. Our life is one of mutuality as brother and sister. Part of the on-going *metanoia* of our lives is growing into our interdependence. It seems we live half our lives becoming independent and half our lives becoming interdependent.

Matthew 19:21 is followed by the laborers in the vineyard. The owner of the vineyard gives all the workers the same amount of pay no matter when they came into the vineyard to work. Our God is a generous God bestowing on all of us the hundredfold no matter when we come to the vineyard. This can be very difficult for us as we receive older men and women into our congregations. Do we receive these individuals with openness and kindness? In what ways do they challenge us? Herein lies continued *metanoia*.

The story of the blind man follows Luke 18:22. There are times in our lives when we cry out with the blind man: "I want to see" (Lk 18:41). Is the seeing perhaps more about understanding? Each person has different needs. Equality does not mean sameness. God provides for us differently because we are unique.

Matthew 16:24 is preceded by the prophecy of the passion and resurrection. Peter is trying to get Jesus not to go to Jerusalem and certain death but Jesus knows he must be true to his mission. If we choose to follow Jesus, we too must take up our cross. Because we are unique individuals our crosses are also unique. Our crosses are tailor-made. However, this is not a solo journey as Francis writes in the *II Letter to the Faithful*: "We must also deny ourselves and place our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience ..."[2] The choice to place ourselves under the yoke is ours. The yoke is made for two. Jesus chooses to be yoked with us. If we choose to follow in the footprints of Jesus we choose to be yoked with each other. There is mutuality in carrying our crosses. In selling all, our hands and hearts are open to embrace our cross of service. Do we endure our cross or embrace our cross? It does make a difference. The cross is not the end of the story. Matthew 16:24 is followed by the account of the transfiguration. The cross leads to glory. Our faith tells us there is always new life that comes from every cross. Do we really believe the paschal mystery? Does our living witness to our faith?

We are received into obedience. Just as the yoke of servitude is one of mutuality so, too, is obedience. Yes, there is a minister that represents all of us but the responsibility for obedience resides in all of us. It is obedience to the Spirit and gospel living. As we daily reflect on the gospel/Jesus, the Spirit deepens our understanding. Do we deepen our obedience? What is our response to the work of the Spirit? The journey is not static. Growth continues. It seems that lack of growth and a static existence are warning signs that something is amiss. Both Francis and Clare were about mutuality on the journey. Both call us to patience and prayer with and for each other as we dance the journey in our unique ways. As our relationship with Jesus and each other deepens, our single heartedness becomes more certain, obvious and visible. By letting go of that which fills up our hearts and minds, keeping us from moving forward we are freer to dance deeper into union with the poor, humble, crucified One. The letting go provides space in our hearts for the indwelling of our tri-

[1] LR 2:6, *FA:ED*, vol. 1, 110.

[2] 2 LtF 40, *FA:ED*, vol. 1, 48.

une God. The indwelling is about the Spirit bringing us into relationship with Jesus Christ as spouse, brother/sister and mother.[3]

As we ponder Article 8 we read John 14:23. This text can be found in the second of five chapters that comprise the discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper. In these five chapters the essence is of the present, the here and now. The indwelling of our Triune God is in our here and now, not tomorrow or next week or when we are worthy but NOW. The union of our God with us is beyond our understanding. Emmanuel, God with us, is a reality we may not understand but we come to know as truth because the spirit teaches us along the way. The indwelling of God brings us an inner peace that clears our vision to see there is hope in that which appears to be hopeless. De we trust our gracious God to give us what is needed along the way? Do we draw deeply from our inner well of peace in turbulent circumstances?

Union with God, with Jesus, the poor, humble, crucified One was the focus of the conversion journeys of Francis and Clare. This union for Francis and Clare did not stop with the Beloved but moved outward to the other. We are not to be ensconced in our ivory tower of our life together. Rather, our life together is to propel us outward to the other. Our gospel living is intended to be both inward and outward which is the message of the Great Shema: love of God and love of neighbor, that is part of Chapter 9, Apostolic Life, Article 29.

Our journey of conversion leads us to compassion, universal love. We all have the same life-giving Source. We are all related as brother and sister: earth, air, fire, water and all creation. The call is to love with open hands and hearts. Just as our poor, humble, crucified One poured his life out, so too must we who desire union with him. The outpouring is not a one-time event, rather it is daily, hourly, perhaps even minute-by-minute. Our conversion journey is a constant choosing to follow in the footprints of Jesus Christ. Each day is a new beginning. Where is the Spirit leading you today?

[3] These very human relationships are described by Francis in his *Letter to the Faithful* (50) and in the Volterra Document (1:7).

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

Mary Elizabeth Imler, O.S.F.

CONTEXT

> From the exhortation to make ourselves a dwelling place for the Trinity, we move to this third chapter which summarizes key elements of prayer in the Franciscan [TOR] tradition (1982 Commentary, 23).

This Chapter on prayer, based on content and placement within the whole as the first chapter detailing the way of life we have chosen, is the primary condition to becoming the Poor One. Chapter I contains the actual Gospel *mandatum* in the particular expression of the TOR identity, while Chapter II considers the vocational and formational aspects of those who will be welcomed. The first three Chapters state the preconditions that lead to the summit of our Rule and Life, Chapter VI: The Life of Poverty. After Chapter VI follow the three chapters stating the consequences of such a life. All this is held within the embrace of Francis's own words in his *Letter to the Faithful* (Prologue) and his *Blessing* (Epilogue).

More than a prescription for praying or a description of prayer, this chapter elaborates on the fundamental value of contemplation. Chapter III shows that prayer is a way of life for the Third Order Regular; it is its very essence like breathing, *ubique*: in all space (9) and for all times (13). Like Mary of the gospels (Lk 10:42), we are called to the "one thing that shall not be taken from us," the one thing we desire, "the

Spirit of God at work within" (32). There is a rhythm likened to breathing so essential to life, a rhythm in our spirit of prayer if only for mere survival or for a fullness of life. The Chapter does not merely offer duties or recitations for our sacred places but far more. Francis, following in the footprints of Jesus, is model for us living the primacy of prayer, fidelity to prayer, a manner of praying and the manifesting of psychological and spiritual benefits of contemplation.[1] Prayer, giving us personal knowledge of God, forms the basis of Franciscan theology from which our beliefs guide our loving.[2]

The penitential life is fed by constant, incessant spirit in prayer, praying our experiences. There is an "inhaling" and "exhaling." As in the example of Christ in the gospels, it is both private and public, listening and proclaiming. There is a rhythm to the duties of praying the Office that is both liturgical as well as devotional. There is an "in" and "out" rhythm being both interior and exterior (13), engaged in fasting (13) and feasting (12, 13), about praise (10) and petition (9). We are even called to manifest prayer in the dynamic and ecstatic stances of contemplation and compassion (LMj 13:1; 9).

This chapter on prayer is not isolating our value of contemplation but integrally connecting it as one of the four fundamental values of our TOR charism. We are converted into what we contemplate; to become what we love is the fruit of contemplation.[3] This conversion can only be realized when we accept the poverty of being human and in humility accept the merciful embrace of God's love of our true self. Through prayer the poor penitents humbly hold out their hand to God begging to be sustained with God's love on the journey of conversion into holiness.

[1] Lino Temperini, *Penitential Spirituality in the Franciscan Sources* (Franciscan Federation: 1983), 26.

[2] This pattern is exemplified in Exodus in the creation of the ethics of living, the *Ten Words* given to Moses. See Ex 33:7, 11, 17; 34:6, 11ff. Love is the heart of our actions rooted in the *Shema* quoted in the Prologue and article 32.

[3] Ilia Delio, *Franciscan Prayer* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 138.

We are exhorted to persevere first in a life of true faith and then penance as first expressed in our identity statement (2). Faith in the Franciscan tradition is very concrete and may be defined simply as an experience of God. For Francis prayer was such a personal encounter with God, a beautiful, merciful, good and gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through contemplating these encounters an understanding emerges and develops into a theology. The understanding of the faith experience, i.e. theology, moves the heart to expressed beliefs made manifest in deeds.[4] Thus prayer in the TOR tradition is first and foremost rooted in this same "true and humble faith" (9) in which we are to persevere in "true faith and penance" (2). It is essentially a faith experience of God "in the depths of [our] inner life" (9). Here we encounter God in our tasting, touching, seeing, hearing, smelling. In the created realm God who is all our sweetness, our gentleness, our vision turns us to God-self. We long with all our heart to become more and more like God. God is in sacred silence and the harmony of sound; God is revealed in all that is good and beautiful and we desire the same as the Father (9). Prayer unites us body, mind and soul (Prologue; 32) with and in the glory of God in all ways ... always. Prayer is both the path and end of evangelical conversion. Francis's example calls us not so much to be people who pray as persons becoming a living prayer (2C 95).

ARTICLE 9

Francis encountered God fundamentally as Triune for he begins many of his writings, (ER 1, Test 40) letters (2LtF 1, LtOrd 1, 52) and prayers (ER XXIII) addressing the Holy Trinity. This chapter, perhaps more than any other, exhibits the same Trinitarian aspects specifically referencing the Holy Trinity in all but one of the five articles of Chapter 3. Con-

[4] Richard P. McBrien, "Faith, Theology, Belief," *Catholicism: Study Edition* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), 23ff. Clare captures this more simply in, "gaze, consider, contemplate desiring to imitate your Spouse" (2LAg 20).

version begins in making of ourselves a home for the Trinity (8) so that our prayer opens us up to God who is "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (9, 10, 11, 12). Theologically our understanding of God is relational (Prologue). Hence so is our prayer, our living.

The exuberance of Francis pours out in language and a theology of itinerancy in time and place. Francis never left his praying: neither while traveling, nor when engaged in the apostolate or in social undertakings, nor for reasons of health (2C 94, 96). Ceaseless prayer of praise and thanksgiving is never limited to an horarium or within a building. Our life of prayer is mobile, not bound by our work or place but grounded in the ever-deepening relationship with God. In Francis's own manner, Article 9 cannot help from elaborating on the expressions of a heart truly engaged in the spirit of prayer overflowing in "love, honor, ador[ation], ser[vice], praise, blessing and glorify[ing]".

These personal and private expressions of a heart touched by the love of God also give rise to the desires to celebrate in a communal and dedicated way. We are exhorted, as Francis writes, to pray the Liturgy of the Hours "with devotion before God, not concentrating on the melody of the voice, but on the harmony of the mind, the mind truly in harmony with God" (LtOrd 41). The Liturgy of the Hours as the official prayer of the Church is the chosen public celebration and sanctification of the every hour. As the Tertiary finds God in the particular work whether solely contemplative or in full engagement in the marketplace, the Liturgy of the Hours is the gathering in fidelity, communion and corporate intercession of hearts dancing passionately and lyrically.

Though perhaps addressing those "congregations within our Order of specifically contemplative life" (1982 Commentary, 24), we are each called to dedicate time and energy to contemplation. Crucially, the penitents are called to a "daily" discipline as well as monthly times of recollection as played out in the Third Order tradition. The Tertiary may also be drawn to longer periods of time such as an annual retreat or may influence the shape of Chapters. This special dedication

is evidenced in our elders as the energies in the later years greatly shift from the compassionate marketplace ministry to a ministry of contemplation of/for the marketplace.

ARTICLE 10

Francis experienced God in prayer at the Greccio event of the crib. This faith experience develops into a theology of Jesus our brother whom we desire to imitate. The TOR value of humility/*minoritas* becomes a basic belief[5] made manifest in deeds reverencing all creatures as our sisters/brothers. This *vita fraternitatis* (5) into which we are invited is the hoped for fullness of life visioned poetically in Francis's Canticle of the Creatures.

ARTICLE 11

The living Word of God is the source of our conforming to the Gospel or conversion into God's dream for each and for all of us. Like the mother of Jesus, Mary, we are to "treasure all these things and ponder them" (Lk 2:19) in our hearts. It was in this same intimacy with God that Francis felt full of life. This theology of fecundity is revelatory in a belief that we are able to give birth to a "holy life which should enlighten others because of our example" (Prologue).

ARTICLE 12

Francis must have contemplated at length on the Body and Blood of Jesus so much so that he most often used these concrete terms rather than the more abstract liturgical expressions. More often than ordinary for his times, Francis

[5] Jesus though first born is one among all creatures. His example invites us into the *condescendere* of Chapter Two in the Letter to the Philippians.

observed the Sacrifice[6] of the Mass. Seeing through to its core Francis desired a greater participation, lingering after it was over to reverence the Word. Francis was surely awed by the changing of simple bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This theological understanding perhaps becomes the basis for our core value of continual conversion. We believe that every person through participation can and will also be changed by the sacrificial grace of Eucharist as we are promised "eternal life." We are becoming what we remember, what we see broken, blessed and given, what we celebrate.

The influence of the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council is in this verb, "participate." This participation changes us fully into instruments of "peace and reconciliation" both through the Sacraments and simple sacramental rituals (12, 13). The penitential spirit calls us to unite ourselves with Christ in the liturgy for we pray "that we who are nourished by His Body and Blood may be filled with His Holy Spirit,"[7] the very Spirit that works in us.

ARTICLE 13

Another meaning to "do penance" is transparent in this article calling us to the sacrament of reparation. Perhaps born from the San Damiano cross experience and throughout Francis's life, a theology of redemption develops. A theological understanding of penance/conversion/*metanoia* becomes the mirrored manifestation of our experienced love of a God whose heart knows the misery of the human condition. This experience of God's mercy leads the penitent to "worthy deeds," deeds of humility as we choose to "follow in the footsteps" of the mystery of the way of the cross. Our freedom in choosing then "should" move us into the rhythm of regular and real fasting and feasting so evident in a full

[6] This "sacrifice" meaning a mutual exchange of gifts is manifest throughout Francis's life.

[7] Eucharistic Prayer III.

participation in the Paschal mystery. Our TOR core value of poverty comes forth from this knowing that we, too, are called to honor the emptiness waiting for God. From our gazing, considering, contemplating the sacrifice on the altar of the Cross, our desires will lead us to imitate as we "might follow in his footsteps." So much so that one day we too may be transformed into the One whom we contemplate, like Francis, the poor crucified One.

IMPLICATIONS

The celebration of these first twenty-five years after the promulgation of our TOR Rule and Life places us at the beginning of a new millennium. We hear the call to lift these words from the page moving from our prayerful consideration of the gospel life to a contemplative gospel living. The language of mobility calls forth in us an untiring effort to walk the path of holiness with contemplative eyes at every step. To see as God sees the utter goodness of all creatures, all creation, we realize Clare's admonition to Agnes that God sees only goodness (2LAg 4) in me, in my neighbors, in the world. This is not naïve optimism but the genuine contemplative gazing so as to allow the veil that blinds us from "living lovingly" (24) to drop, enabling us to see deeply into the heart of another. We are called to not be distracted, like Francis who prayed "with great concentration of mind and spirit," that is, with such fervor and attention that he felt guilty for even the smallest distraction (LtMin 2, 2C97). In seeking the Christ incarnate, we shall see God's face at the intersection of the vertical and horizontal paths that cross. This is literal in our gazing on the San Damiano icon as well as our itinerancy of journeying toward the crossroads in private moments of devotion and contemplation spilling over into deeds of compassion.

The strong Trinitarian dimension calls us to find our stability and security in our relationships, with God as Creator, Jesus as our Redeemer and Spirit as breath and life and love. We are a people, though we may travel for a time alone, who

always have a heart longing to be together in communion (1C 30). And our prayer reflects a Christocentric dimension, One has reconciled all things in heaven and on earth. With this Jesus, our Brother, we form communities of communion attuned to the fundamental equality and dignity of each and every human person regardless of gender, ethnicity, social status, or religious involvement so that our very stance proclaims, "May you be praised, My Lord, with all your creatures" (10, CtC 3).

This Chapter beckons us to see, to place ourselves within the *ecclesia* that is both communal and accessible.[8] We are called to search out better ways that our prayer can build up the community. We must stand under, not over, as a community of believers within the larger pluralistic world community. We must find tables round and welcoming, not elongated with seats of privilege. Where roles are held because of the Spirit's calling, may they not be designated or defined purely by gender or language. Decisions are made from the fruit of contemplating the need, and we are not merely recipients of directives made by others. Francis sought guidance from God in prayer for every decision, never trusting solely in himself (1C 35). Every moment is sacred if we but have the eyes to see as God sees, and every prayer is gift widening our hearts so that there is welcome in receiving 'the other'[9] kindly (4).

It is absolutely essential that our prayer need be scriptural after the example of Francis. Our following of Jesus is learned through the gospel (11). This personal knowing must enlighten our every step as we make our lives conform to the Word made flesh giving "spirit and life" to our choices. We must return to the gospel again and again, seeking to establish in our personal and social lives the very meaning of gospel discipleship, evangelical conversion.

[8] Edward Foley, "The Contribution of Francis' Prayer to the Church's Communio and Missio." Keynote Presentation: Annual Franciscan Federation Conference, 2006.

[9] Article 22 calls us to go about this world as "pilgrims and strangers" highlighting the importance of our every encounter with "the other." Francis profoundly experienced this in his encounter with the leper.

In our praying, we make manifest the spirit of incarnational spirituality. We must tend and be attentive to our whole being. Our encounter with the divine meets us in our humanity and as such needs to be recognized and reverenced in and through all of our senses. But our spirit of prayer must also embrace all of creation in a cosmic and ecological worldview. It must be evident that the God who is the object of our praise and thanksgiving is creator of all, and therefore loves each and every creature, human and otherwise, in a particular way. We must ponder the revelation of creation illuminated by the Word of God. We can no longer pray without being moved to care for the things of this world showing the greatest possible reverence (10) now and for generations of sisters and brothers to come.

And we participate often and fully in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. We make manifest the mystery of these graces both interiorly and exteriorly by authentic lives of self-giving so that others may live and know forgiveness. We allow ourselves to become instruments of peace wherein we become a very being of praise and petition. Our every action is one of adoration and thanksgiving. Daily we engage in the art of celebration, event'ing our lives and all of creation in a proclamation, "This is the Body and Blood of Christ"..."holy, holy, holy!"

CONCLUSION

As noted in the opening remarks, Chapter III, The Spirit of Prayer, becomes a critical integrating point for the fullness of our Third Order Regular Life as follows in the remainder of the text.

(Chapter 4) Without the spirit of prayer, a life of chastity would be less able to recognize, nourish and protect the virginal space within oneself and "the other" and hold sacred its

emptiness,[10] desiring to let it be filled only by God. *May my experiences with God be times of silent perhaps even lonely waiting in the blessed solitude of my particular human condition birthing "spirit and life"* (11).

(Chapter 5) A true spirit of prayer allows one to hear the cry of the poor, thus to be one among the poor in a stance of true *minoritas. Help me bring my work to prayer so that my whole being says, "God give you peace"* (20).

(Chapter 6) It is through and in a spirit of prayer that one can more intimately know and readily locate the "Poor Crucified" One (1LAg 13), the one whom we desire to imitate. *May I daily allow the gospel to impel me into imitation, to be "emptied"* (21), *and to find happiness living among the poor* (21).

(Chapter 7) We gradually understand and experience that we are reconciled as sisters and brothers in Jesus in our contemplation.[11] *Help me to work towards bearing peace even "before offering [my] gift of prayer before God"* (24).

(Chapter 8) "Wherever two or more are gathered in Jesus' name" becomes the place where we can hear the Word of God. *Draw us to regularly reflect together in an atmosphere where our wills are being melted and merged into God's will so that we are free to mature in that "true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (25).

(Chapter 9) From this place of attentive and collective listening, we can better heed the call to love with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. *Inspire us to lives of contemplation that we are so attuned to "God's voice" that we go forth pregnant with the Word (Prologue) giving "witness by word and work...and make known to all that the Lord alone is God"* (29).

[10] This very emptiness is the greatest treasure in which we hold precious the privilege of our life of poverty. It is in this emptiness that we can create that dwelling place for God.

[11] Francis brought to a deep and real manifestation the reality of our relatedness made possible through the redemption of Jesus. He "received a Spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom 8:15)

LIFE IN CHASTITY FOR THE SAKE OF THE REIGN OF GOD

Gabrielle Ühlein, O.S.F.

Context matters. I have grown up in my Franciscan life with our present TOR rule. In 1982, the year of my first vows, it was new and so was I. But the arc of my religious life had already begun to be shaped by the ecological voice of Fr. Thomas Berry. Earlier as a second year novice, I heard him present the Canticle of St. Francis as a stunning manifesto of creaturely interconnection. It changed my worldview and influenced the direction of my life. Further along in my Franciscan formation, the familial images of the Canticle would become for me the foundation of incarnate *Fraternitas* and the *Kin-dom* of God. Years of eco-feminist study and silver jubilee life later, when asked about my experience of Franciscan chastity, the query evokes for me the words of St. Francis, "*May You be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.*" Simultaneously, I find myself thinking this: "Professing chastity, we mirror sister water." The thought startles me.

Of all the adjectives for precious water, what could be more difficult to explain than chastity in a consumer driven world and in a scandal beset church? Many times since I agreed to author this commentary, I wondered if I was foolish to try. I am not conversant enough with the latest TOR Rule scholarship to do it proper exegetical justice. I can only offer my lived experience with a humble hope for its usefulness to others. When I spoke of my efforts with friends, some amazing conversations ensued. May what follows continue to be a source of conversation inspiration.

I'd like to begin with a poem I clipped some years ago from the July 27, 2001 issue of the NCR. Entitled *Sister Water*, by Marguerite Bouvard, it captures a mystic wetness that confirms my commitment to a life of chastity.

Mountain streams thunder into lakes and reservoirs;
melts hurtle down the slopes in silver veins,
spangling pastures with gentians and alpenrose.
This is the longed for season
when driving up
into the green spaciousness and glistening rocks
is also a tumbling down,
when stones are thatched with miniature blooms.

Water regenerates the earth of ourselves
– sister water – St. Francis called it –
a roaring in the ears, the snowbanks giving way,
carved from within, body against body
rinsed in their own light.

As images of water, stone and flowers form in my imagination, my thoughts provide subtitles in Franciscan translation: St. Bonaventure's God-head of overflowing fountain fullness; the mind's tumble and ascent on the journey into God; Scotus's bias for the sense-perceived natural grandeur of God; my incarnate brothers and sisters that shape me in the light of Christ.

I have always loved poems that articulate my experience of God in the world, and its loveliness. I also learned early in my Franciscan life that it takes the beauty of the earth to inspire the very texts that bring me back to my senses. The words poured into the poem require the poet's gift, but might it not also be true that Sister Water pours herself out as a poem equally expressive, unceasingly begging for the poet's translation? In the moment of scribing the experience, who is the original author? The poem's purpose comes full term as I remember my own experience of spring thaw and the exhilarating rush of newly reborn streams. Sister Water, the

poet, the reader – utterly connected, and mutually interdependent. Heavenly! Or is it Kin-domly?

If I am a sister to water, alive as she is to me, my chastity must matter in a much broader context than afforded by my post-Vatican II, and post-New Rule formation. Happily, I was exhorted early on "to make connections," and my current Franciscan life is shaped by the commitment of my province to "stand in right relationship, sisters and brothers to all." Although the words might be nuanced differently, I hear similar values from friends in other provinces and other congregations. Here is the best part. Franciscans today have a fundamentally fresh mandate for right relationship. What the first Franciscan intuited, we now know empirically: that we are flesh and blood of the same earthen elemental structure. We are Canticle kin, mutually vulnerable to greed, abuse and ignorance on an unprecedented global scale.

Given this challenging planetary context, it both consoles and terrifies me that we are of the same sisterly juice of life. We are rinsed in the light and the intention of the One, same, self-revealing God. From St. Francis's own poem we have permission to name ourselves vowed sisters and brothers of not only humans and other creatures, but also of earth, air, wind and fire. Such a broad understanding for right relationship demands of us new chaste loyalties. We are poised in our Franciscan charism, to incarnate Canticle kinship sensibilities in profoundly deeper ways, and I find that we are doing so in ever widening spheres of influence. For example, I myself have experienced the evolution of our province's Justice and Peace efforts to an office of Justice, Peace, *and* Integrity of Creation, the initiation of Franciscans International, and most recently, the invitation to form the Franciscan Action Network.

I think of these collaborations as a kind of necessary collective chastity. All our earth kin depend upon us to make it so. As a child, a polar bear sometimes wandered my dreamscape, "wild, invincible and wise." I'd savor that. Franciscan and two decades years later, dreaming this bear, reveals to me a different aspect of soul. Tracked and tagged, the very

existence of polar bears depends on tax-funded airlifts to ever-diminishing feeding grounds, like winter wards of the state. The white bear brother still comes in my dreams. But now "dependent, vulnerable and on the verge of extinction," is the tangible truth he teaches my soul. He is only one of many brothers and sisters equally endangered.

When asking the chastity question, I must therefore also ask myself, what do we make tangibly true with our bodies, lands and homes? What do our convent spaces and property places offer those that come to us, winged, finned and legged alike? May what we have the grace to design and shape be living texts from which to learn and to savor beauty: true, good soul places – the stuff that healing dreams are made of. It is for such "mattering" (not only with my own vulnerable body, but also corporately with my home and whatever portion of Earth's body I am privileged to steward) that I choose to context my chaste TOR vowed life. The very title of this Chapter of our Rule contains for me its strongest rationale: *to live a life of Chastity for the sake of the reign of God.*

If I am asked why I am faithful to my vow of chastity today, I say that I have an enormous family to get to know and continue to love, no exceptions. But like the proverbial tip of the iceberg, that response is only the uppermost bit of a long-time and hard-won accumulation of life experience, reflection and prayer – with loves, tears, contentments, heart-wrenchings and amazing graces present beneath the waterline. In addition, words and the meanings with which I describe my life of chastity are the fruit of a gradual process through numerous years of practice and attention. The sustaining revelations that evolved my Franciscan chastity go something like this:

- From not choosing a husband and family of my own, to never taking a lover, save God who loves me dearly.
- From never taking a lover, to being for and with my sisters and brothers, whom I dearly love.
- From being for and with my sisters and brothers, to being in solidarity with women: affirming that a woman's worth is not determined by traffickers, clients, husbands, owners, bosses, corporations or religious teachers.
- From being in solidarity with women, to affirming the self-authoring, God-revealing diversity of all humans and creatures.
- From affirming creaturely revelation, to belonging with all my sisters and brothers, in the family (or some might say *kin-dom*) of God.
- From being in the family of God for my sake, and the sake of all my sisters and brothers, to participating in the ever unfolding kin-dom for the sake of my Lover God.

I am sure those skilled in Franciscan formation can easily recognize the stages of my spiritual growth and the development of my social conscience, and of course, how much I have yet to experience and learn. There are many individual names and faces that go with the circumstances that shaped each revelation and made my experience of the next one possible. I am most grateful for the good influence of my teachers and mentors in living this life. I would not have grown as well without them. I am also sure that those further along on the path will find me and lead me deeper in Love. What I offer here is what I am familiar with now. It is a joy to find resonance in the Rule:

> 14. Let the sisters and brothers keep in mind how great a dignity God has given them, because God created them and formed them in the image of the beloved Son according to the flesh and in God's own likeness according to the Spirit (Col 1:16). Since they are created through Christ and in Christ, they have chosen this form of life which is founded on the words and deeds of our Redeemer.

I have always heard in these words how good we are, every one of us: men *and* women, adults *and* children, born

and unborn, Christian *and* Muslim, Caucasian *and* all others ... *imago Dei* every one. Yet twenty-five years ago, I had only begun to realize with what Christic dignity and beauty the whole of creation is imbued, for the sake of revealing God. Today I know I choose our chaste way of life not simply because of the gospel mandates that ground it, but also for the very ground that reveals God to me. In my body I know that I was first swept off my feet by God's creation. As a child, I experienced nothing as powerful or as constant as the ocean, not even my parents. Caught up in its surf and surge, I said my best prayers. A visceral response to the sea has never left me, even though it took a while for my theology to catch up with its more immediate spiritual potency. I can now say without hesitation, when experiencing Earth's diversities and complexities, in them, I experience God. Likewise, to this day I remember the surging moment I first heard the renowned cosmologist, Brian Swimme describe the great sacrificial give-away of the sun. He spoke, in what I experienced as a liturgical cadence, how each moment it brightly burns itself up, growing smaller in a great transubstantiation of sorts, transforming itself into solar energy, so that life to the full on this planet is possible. I have had from that moment forward, a new authentication of the "likeness of the most High" Brother Sun bears. I want my chaste living to be just as authentic and life promoting.

In my experience I find Franciscans really good, too, at grasping the gospel foundation of our way of life, and the life-changing *imago Dei* that encounters with others of our own species afford us. We are accustomed to asking how our chaste life through and in Christ, is an incarnation for the sake of our human family. Do we matter for our brothers and sisters? Do we make a Christ-like difference for the people of God? We ask ourselves such questions at house meetings and community gatherings, over chips and beer, and in the confessional. Gospel texts provide many examples and suggested behaviors. Formators, spiritual directors and seekers alike also have multiple resources and commentaries available to affirm the Christ-likeness we bear in our bodies and

our souls. Yet for me, the greatest stretch is in remembering the original revelatory vocation of *all* creation. We, and all our Canticle brothers and sisters, share the *same* creational call and revelatory intention: God's desire to be made known through Christ. Now there is a newer question begging to be asked: how does our chaste incarnation reveal our life through and in Christ, for the sake of all our *Canticle* sisters and brothers, no exceptions.

> *15. Professing chastity for the sake of the reign of God (Mt 19:12), they are to care for the things of the Lord and they seek nothing else except to follow the will of God and to please God (1Cor 7:32). In all of their works charity toward God and all people should shine forth.*

My 28 years of TOR vowed life constitute a relatively short tenure among my many United States Franciscan sisters and brothers. Yet unequivocally, in these men and women I have encountered the visible beauty of their shining love of God, and their openly manifest dedication to loving those they find themselves among. Experiencing their chaste fidelity helps me choose to persevere. What is more, in my retreat work, and in my spiritual development ministry, I have heard from them, over and over, the discernment question St. Francis asked, "What does God want of me?" Among most of the TORs that I know, this question is not motivated by fear of what God might do if we get the answer wrong. Rather it is driven by a fundamental desire to please the One, and to care for the ones we love. In my own experience too, this primary yearning to please God is a press for my own deepest perfection of joy: to feel God's pleasure, and to foster the happiness of my sisters and brothers.

In regard to chastity then, I find that I do not choose my celibate life out of a sense of limiting myself. Rather, the choice springs today from an expansive perception of how much joyful living is mine as a loving sibling among my Christ-given kin – not as wife, lover, or matriarch, but as

sister. I must admit there is something profoundly mysterious about this. I have had my moments of wishing for the pleasure of sexual experience and childbirth. I have debated quite heatedly with God the pros and cons of having hungry flesh and creature appetites while at the same time feeling called to a celibate way of life. Rest assured that conversation is not finished yet. But the longer I live as sister among kin, the more deeply I desire to incarnate a particular *sisterly* chaste relationship in the midst of those it is God's pleasure to place me, and to give me to love. God desires to be revealed in the heacceitas of *this* choice of mine too.

The steady underlying happiness of incarnating a chaste life that I feel called to, has already afforded me more joy and love than I could ever imagine. My mileage in the TOR way of life has slowly worn down my sharpest resistance to its very real abstinences and behavioral disciplines. Clearly, a celibate, sibling intimacy, priceless as it is, has its costs. In the costlier circumstances, a generous dose of mystic humor is helpful. Funny that God would give me these ones as sisters, and those ones as brothers...Funny that God would give me a taste for this TOR way of life...Funny that God would ask this of me now...Of course, these statements are not always so theologically stated. They can also take these curious guises: "You mean I should live with *them*? You mean I must relocate *there*? You can't be serious about having to include that one *too*?" Possible permutations of these questions are legion. I also know that I am in the territory of mystery, when the thoughts I address to God begin with "What were you thinking...?" Some of my latest ones of this ilk sound something like this: "What were you thinking, that this one I have loved for so long should die so suddenly? What were you thinking, that my kin are now so frail, so vulnerable? What were you thinking that this should come to an end? Variations of these questions are equally numerous.

When confronted with such thoughts, I want to remember above all, the mandate of chastity *"for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."* Sylvia, one of my Wheaton sisters, helps me not to forget. She loves to say with great feeling, when

either amazed or dismayed, "Oh, for Heaven's sake!" I think she has it exactly right. Our right relationships are intended to manifest no less than "heaven," right here in the midst of our on-Earth lives. No need to seek elsewhere. The kin-dom has been intended, from the beginning, to be among us in the flesh and bone of our sisterly and brotherly exchange. In the all-encompassing web of earthly interdependence, surely a taste of heaven is possible.

> *16. They are to remember that they have been called by a special gift of grace to manifest in their lives that wonderful mystery by which the Church is joined to Christ her divine spouse (Eph 5:23-6).*

I must confess I have no immediate visceral resonance with the spousal theology of this section of our rule. My energy takes me instead, to the experience of the retreats I have offered, and the dialogue with my TOR sisters that ensued. The most provocative conversations were those that explored the interplay between the public and private dimensions of our chaste lives. The more we talked together, the more convincingly evident it became, that in the profoundly incarnate Franciscan life we *espouse*, there is no such thing as a truly private act. For instance, I know from my own experience, that a private retreat has public effect. I know that private thoughts have tangible outcomes, and much to my waistline's chagrin, even what I eat alone, is eventually seen by others. To put it another way, what happens in our bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens, matters as much as what happens in our chapter-rooms and chapels.

I have learned too, that community participation and visits to family alike, often take a special interior grace. In my so-called private home life, a meal in the company of my closest sisters and brothers can offer my soul true respite in the New Jerusalem of my longing. My happiness at times like these is very real and very evident to those around me. At other times, the same longed-for kin-domly right relation-

ships are more illusive. Then my frustrated yearning or my grief is equally palpable. Clearly, while my home relationships may be considered my private life, how they go, how I experience them, has public effect. Here then is the chaste challenge: living with kin, whether by blood, by vows, or by common creature-hood, is never easy and always complicated. In choosing a vowed TOR life, my practice of conscious kinship requires constant private conversion for a positive tangible outcome. After all, *these* ones, chosen or not, likeable or difficult, are my Christ-siblings. The incarnation of our inner conversions in this regard can have profound public communal effect. It can make us manifest as Church in the fullest, most Christ-centered manner.

To be boldly public enough to say, "we are the church" in such a Christ-kin way can be a potent homeopathic remedy in institutions and relationships within which sexual trust has been abused. From the earliest beginnings of our charism, St. Francis publicly declared his familial duty to a great heavenly communion, rather than an obligatory commitment to his merchant father. By St. Francis's actions before the bishop of Assisi just about eight hundred years ago, an archetype of familial right relationship was constellated for those of us who make public our religious vows in a Franciscan context. In a charism that can trace its custom of chastity back to an original kin-ship allegiance, our vowed life can assure that in our company, every sister and brother, without exception, is cherished chastely and is protected passionately. In an environment of abuse, our private capacity for chaste loving can be our greatest public witness to what a church conjoined in Christ can offer. With practice, our lives together can become divinely accomplished at incarnating a superbly graced sanctuary and solidarity. The signs of the times demand it of us.

> *17. Let the brothers and the sisters keep the example of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever before their eyes. Let them do this according to the mandate of Blessed Francis who held Holy Mary, Lady and Queen, in highest veneration, since she is the virgin made church (SalVMV1). Let them also remember that the Immaculate Virgin Mary, whose example they are to follow, called herself "the handmaid of the Lord" (Lk 1:38).*

Following this exhortation, less than seventy words are offered in the original commentary that was published with the 1982 Rule. What is presented is an eloquently simple reminder to embody the *Magnificat* of Mary. I recall my own eager commitment in 1982 to strive to do just that. As I prepared for first vows, I spent weeks reflecting on the Marian *Magnificat* theme chosen for the ritual. I recall writing what I thought was a brilliant formation essay about it. I'd love to read it again. I am sure I'd blush. Recently, I heard Marge, a golden jubilarian friend and sister, quip, "When I entered fifty years ago, what did that girl know?" The same holds true for me. Just like the essay that has mercifully disappeared, so has my simplistic grasp of Mother Mary as lady, queen and virgin. Although no less important, keeping the example of Mary before my eyes has become both more complex *and* more ambiguous. Given my on-going studies, the appellations of *lady*, *queen*, and *handmaid*, in their hierarchical expression, have lost their innocence, and have become less accessible to me as viable and desirable in my own contemporary experience. This is a poverty of image not suffered by generations of Franciscans before mine. Additionally, in light of the sister-moms I know and love in my own community, the exaltation of *virgin* becomes truly much muted.

Thank goodness that in my conversations with TOR sister friends, I find I am not alone in my continued devotion to and ongoing ambiguity about Mary. Equally thankfully, I am indebted to a host of contemporary Franciscan voices for my current conception of what it means to be called to the Christ-mothering of my sisters and brothers. My current articulation of the common TOR vocation implied in the aforementioned exhortation is this: in the deepest mystical aspects of our inescapably embodied *chaste* relationships,

Christ incarnates, and more and more of God is available to be known, *on earth as in heaven.* I pray as often as I can to grasp the full implications of such a thought, *for our good and the good of the Church.*

In closing, I'd like to return to the opening image of this essay. There is a particular poignancy in lifting up water, our sister, as an image for our own chaste living. Water, in its impending potable scarcity, offers little in terms of security for a peaceful human future. Let me confess that I still find it startling to say: "Professing chastity, we mirror sister water." Words still fail to adequately explain that intuition too. In the face of such poverty I can only fall back on the words of Marguerite Bouvard's poem in this way: if Sister Water provides a longed-for season of greening regeneration, so might our chaste lives. May we live them well, for *Earth's* sake, and the full life of all our kin.

Professing chastity for the sake of the reign of God (Mt 19:12), they are to care for the things of the Lord and they seek nothing else except to follow the will of God and to please God (1Cor 7:32). In all of their works charity toward God and all people should shine forth.

The Way to Serve and Work (ER 7:1)
An Assessment

Kevin Smith, O.S.F.

Remembering the 1980's

Twenty-five years ago with my kaleidoscope in hand (as I recall doing as a child) I set out to create the ideal mixture of shapes and colors in imaging my living the gospel life in the Franciscan tradition. I was armed with a new guidebook, a spiritual and inspirational prescription written by my sisters and brothers of various cultures and regions, an affirmation by the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes (SCRIS) and our Holy Father John Paul II and, most importantly, the enthusiasm of the TOR family.

Twenty-five years later my contemporaries and I have grown older in age, richer in temporalities, wiser (hopefully) from our life experiences yet struggling to animate in my (our) life the four fundamental values of our *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis* – conversion to God and neighbor, poverty, minority and contemplation.

My kaleidoscope has not settled on the perfect mixture. All too often I forget to take out my kaleidoscope to twist and turn it to produce new visions.

We TOR women and men continue to perform well. We know how to meet the standards of the various accrediting agencies of our professions. We have become adept at writing goals, objectives and assessment criteria in our professional areas. Now, twenty-five years later, it is time for us to be the accrediting agency and to focus on assessment. Our

future depends on our assessing how we have lived differently during these last twenty-five years and what changes are needed.

One of the first things I am realizing is that when I first spun my 1980's kaleidoscope I never set specific measuring criteria to regularly assess my performance. Hence, I invite you to journey with me as I wrestle with assessing my experiences over these twenty-five years and explore the changing landscape. This task demands a review of how I (we) have been re-shaped and re-formed and a look at the challenges ahead. My reflections will focus on Chapter V of our TOR *Rule and Life: The Way to Serve and Work*.

An Early Transforming Experience

It was the summer of 1983. I was working in the Chancery of the Diocese of Rockville Centre on Long Island. I arranged to go with a Sister working in the Spanish Apostolate of the Diocese to visit the priests and sisters ministering in the Rockville Centre missions in the Dominican Republic, which were located in El Cercado and Hondo Villa. At the time I was curious about these missions and wanted to see what we living on Long Island could do to support the efforts of those serving in these villages.

I readied myself (ha!) with two years of conversational Spanish, luggage stuffed with medicines and medical supplies and lots of good will. I was off on a Good Samaritan mission. Within a few hours of life in Hondo Villa I became aware of how ill prepared I really was. I had delivered all the medical supplies (my good deed) then attempted to settle into my new turf. I quickly learned that conversation with anyone over 7 or 8 years of age was impossible. Somehow the memorized dialogs of my study didn't work and I found myself stuck in a very limited vocabulary as well as the present tense. My would-be electrical and plumbing projects were severely hampered when there were no spare parts or near-

by hardware stores or Home Depots or Lowes equivalents. I wanted to DO something and see RESULTS and wondered why the missionaries didn't seem to have a specific schedule each day. I could not figure out what they were accomplishing and wondered if there were not better ways to help the poor in their midst.

After the first few very frustrating days, outside events began to change me. I was not in control of anything. The youngsters were happy to spend time giving me the Spanish word(s) for different items one of us pointed to and they gently corrected my pronunciation (sometimes after a few giggles at whatever I said). A handicapped pre-teen boy cut and shaped a branch to plug up the remaining good section of our water pipe while I tried to install a new faucet. A walk with the sisters and a visiting priest found me being introduced to the neighbors in Hondo Villa. On this journey we visited a young mother (losing her eyesight) and her four children who lived in a one room, tin roofed dwelling on the outskirts of the village. She was in the process of preparing the noon meal (probably about three cups of cooked rice) but enthusiastically welcomed us to join with her family at table. Sister Babs, one of the missioners, explained that we could not stay but the woman after sitting with us for a while presented us with a freshly hatched egg to thank us for stopping by and visiting her. We had to accept her gift.

Throughout this visit, one experience after another, I kept being hit in the face with the reality – I was not in control – I was powerless. I was forced to be a *minores*, to be humble, to be submissive to every human creature for the sake of God. The "be prepared" scout and Mr. Fix-it images were crushed. I became a student of life and a receiver of love from unexpected sources.

Every so often when I look back through these almost 25 years ago at my summer in the Dominican Republic, its profound messages yet filter through. I realize that I am always gaining insights about how I am to live and work.

The same process is true for me with respect to the *Rule and Life* of 1982 when I am drawn to read and reflect on it. I

discover that I need to Monday morning quarterback on my experiences and assess what changes it wrought in my life. I read the document in the early 80's – I thought I understood its guidance – and I discover that I have only taken baby steps in embracing and responding to its challenges in my life.

Preparing the Way

Prior to the approval of the Rule on 8 December 1982, the entire Franciscan Family celebrated the 800th anniversary of the birth of Francis. In preparation for the celebration of this event the family came together. We met and collaborated – our Brothers of the First Order, our Sisters of the Second Order, our Third Order Regular cousins, our Secular Franciscan cousins, our Anglican, Lutheran and Ecumenical Franciscan brothers and sisters. Many of these events occurred on diocesan and regional levels surrounding the Feast of Saint Francis in October 1982. We invited our Franciscan family and friends to celebrate together. That was an historic event! In retrospect, a unique road was paved for the watershed experience of December when our TOR family forged our new identity in the Franciscan family. Looking back, the year 1982 presented diverse calls to conversion, to change, to new beginnings that were loud and clear.

From seeds to new shoots...

I remember being struck by the title "Rule and Life." I was only familiar with the term "Rule." In the novitiate we learned about the 1927 Rule. Our formula of profession was based on the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis approved by our Holy Father, Pius XI, and the Constitutions of the Franciscan Brothers. This focus on "life" received attention in 1982

with various writers pointing out that "life" reflected Francis and his preference for expressing how his followers were to live. The emphasis was on charism and spirit rather than statutes, canons or law. The "life" emphasis inspires – fills us with spirit – for our way of "life."

I have often been amazed with what I see as the parallel between the values of Francis and Paul's Letter to the Philippians. This parallel jumps out at me as I reflect on Chapter V: The Way to Serve and Work. Gospel living, steadfastness in faith, humility, minority, living in accord, joy, peace, gratitude are the topics Paul writes about. Paul's apostolic loves, his concern for the gospel, his enthusiasm for Christ, his concern for all of his converts are clearly evident. "To live is Christ and death is gain" was key for Paul and, I believe, also for Francis. If I continue to live, Paul says, that means fruitful labor for me. Francis saw the ability to serve and work as a gift, as a way that we can give back to God all that He has given us. And the inspiration continues in Philippians 3: "It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus ... I continue my pursuit towards the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus." This attitude permeates our call to continuous conversion rooted in service to God and also in service as "little folk" (*minores*) in working for a better world.

Just as the Gospel is not a text, the Rule is not a text but alive and lived. In his new book "Jesus and Paul: Parallel Lives," Jerome Murphy-O'Connor speaks to the conversions of Jesus. Initially Jesus defined his relationship to God in terms of the Law. Jesus rethought that relationship and presented himself as a model of prayer and the touchstone of salvation. Murphy purports that Jesus' exemplary activity replaces the Law.[1] With Jesus' second conversion, "his message was no longer 'Repent!' but 'Follow me!' Acceptance of his teaching on the kingdom of God replaced obedience to

[1] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Jesus and Paul: Parallel Lives* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007): 73.

the Law as the touchstone of salvation."[2] Could it be (should it be) that we are to replace law or rule with living as Jesus did inspired by our *Rule and Life*?

The Intervening Years

I think we played the game Giant Steps – taking strides forward as well as not moving forward or retreating. Among the Giant Steps have been the strengthening of the IFC (International Franciscan Conference), the Franciscan Federation in the United States, Franciscans International, the AFCU (Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities), the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, and a host of other joint projects. In each of these we have been the voice for the voiceless, one with the poor and modern lepers, brother and sister to those with whom we work and serve, witnesses of humility and peace. And yes, there have been stagnant moments and times of regression for most of us.

The Litmus Test (Assessment Time)

The *Rule and Life* opens up the possibility of seeing things afresh according to the new covenant relationship between God and His people established by Jesus Christ: I will be your God and you will be my people if you love one another. Through this covenant God enters into a loving relationship with all filled with mercy.

Test Questions upon which to mull concerning how we are to live and work:

- ❖ What has my ministry, my work, my service taught me about my gifts and limitations?
- ❖ What am I living for? Among whom should I live and work to fully live what I am living for?
- ❖ How can I honestly pursue self-abandonment/self-emptying so that I live in conversion?
- ❖ When can success end up being a failure, and how is failure often a success?
- ❖ Is my search for meaning an honest appraisal of who I am as an individual, how I relate and fit in to my communities (large and small), and how my life is responding to the vocation that has been given to me?
- ❖ What is my image of God? How does that interface with my seeing God in the other?
- ❖ How do I witness conversion in my life? Witness humility in my life?

Take the test! Make an assessment! How have you changed? As I attempted this assessment, I kept hearing Francis calling out as he did to his brothers: "Up to now you have done nothing" (of our current-day potential). Challenges abound:

Like Ilia Delio's challenges in *The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective*:[3]

- ❖ When she discusses the idea that God humbly bends down low to meet us where we are. (How do you and I bend down to others each day?)
- ❖ When she explores the doctrine of the Trinity and calls it a dance of love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (how do you and I dance this dance?)
- ❖ When she asks how do we recognize the footprints of Christ? How can we see the face of God in the stranger by deepening in our lives in the humility of God?
- ❖ When she discusses God's relationship to the suffering that is so apparent in the world, in the chapter aptly entitled "The Tears of God," and asks how much of your life are you willing to spend in love or do you believe in "costly discipleship"?

[2] Ibid., 48.

[3] Ilia Delio, *The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005).

Like Brian Mahan's challenges in *Forgetting Ourselves On Purpose*:[4]

- ❖ Who points out that Jesus noticed pain wherever he walked and was sought out by those in pain.
- ❖ Who suggests that attending to suffering in the world is a gentle practice and not a harsh ideal.
- ❖ Who states that the joy Jesus noticed is imparted in the unsettling good news of the beatitudes (akin to Joseph Campbell who suggests that using the word 'blissful' is more appropriate than 'blessed' when we consider the beatitudes).
- ❖ Who argues that fitting into a life of our true vocation requires awareness of who we really are, as opposed to what it is we are doing.

Like Henri Nouwen's challenges in *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*:[5]

- ❖ As he attempts to articulate the predicament of contemporary ministers – ministers are called to recognize the sufferings of their time in their own hearts and to make that recognition the starting point of their service
- ❖ As he tells a story of Elijah and the rabbi wondering about the coming of the Messiah where Elijah tells the rabbi that he will find the Messiah sitting among the poor, covered with wounds. Unlike the others who unbind all their own wounds at the same time and bind them up again, the Messiah unbinds and rebinds them one at a time so that he will be ready without delay if he is needed by another. Nouwen adds, "What I find impressive in this story are two things: first, the faithful tending of one's own woundedness and second, the willingness to move to the aid of other people and to make the fruits of our own woundedness available to others."

Like Leonardo Boff's challenges in *Francis of Assisi: A Model for Human Liberation*:[6]

- ❖ Who concludes this work: "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 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 toward others, more gentleness with the poor, and greater respect for nature."

What's needed for our continuing journey? It remains for each of us to joyfully dance in the world listening to the beat emerging from deep within our Franciscan-imbued hearts!

[4] Brian Mahan, *Forgetting Ourselves On Purpose: Vocation and Ethics of Ambition* (San Francisco: Joseey-Bass, 2002).

[5] Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books, 1979).

[6] Leonardo Boff, *Francis of Assisi: A Model for Human Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006).

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LIFE OF POVERTY

Ingrid Peterson, O.S.F.

The first chapter of the 1982 *Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis* identifies the Third Order as a way to live the gospel life by observing the precepts and counsels of Jesus. Chapter IV deals with chastity, chapter VI with poverty, and chapter VIII with obedience. Chapter VI, "The Life of Poverty," picks up the treatment of the evangelical counsels in light of the tradition of Francis and Clare. The Rules for the First and Second Orders served as distant forerunners of the 1982 Third Order Rule and established poverty as essential to the Franciscan way. The lay penitents of the early thirteenth century were precursors of the Third Order by living among the poor and attending to them by sharing their goods. Along with the needs of their families, they often managed to extend their concern to large numbers of poor.[1]

Francis directed his followers to be poor in temporal things. Francis's *Earlier Rule* in 1221 related poverty to the acquisition of money (*ER* VII) and the practice of begging alms (*ER* IX). Chapters IV and VI of *The Later Rule* in 1223 specifies rejecting coins, wearing simple clothing, and begging for alms in imitation of the poor Jesus. Chapter VI, the heart of Clare's *Form of Life,* describes her life of poverty as the

[1] Lino Temperini T.O.R., "Poor with Christ to Serve the Poor," *Propositum* 3.2 (1998): 7-26. Temperini provides many examples of the works of mercy done by the penitents, including Elizabeth of Hungary who one day purportedly gave six marks each to 2,000 beggars in May 1229 when they came to the castle of Marburg.

visible sign of her conversion. Clare explains that because she and her sisters had begun to live without fear of poverty, Francis gave them the gospel as a rule. Then he exhorted Clare and her sisters to follow Jesus and his mother in their way of poverty. Clare adds that the poverty promised to God and Francis is safeguarded in the manner in which her successors are bound to observe it, "that is, by not receiving or having possessions or ownership (*FlCl* 6.10).

It is not surprising that Francis had an aversion to coins during an historical era in which the exchange of money had become a means to overturn the power of the aristocracy. Francis's father, Pietro Bernadone, used his newly acquired wealth to indulge his son with a horse and suit of armor so he took on the trappings of the nobility. Francis's effort to become a knight and fight with Assisi's commune against Perugia turned sour when he was captured in the battle of Collestrada. Following a two-year imprisonment, Francis experienced the dark side of acquiring wealth and cautioned his followers to have nothing to do with coins.

Clare's understanding of poverty also developed from her experience as a noble woman. The aristocratic class, estimated to be ten percent of the thirteenth-century population in medieval Europe, held the land as power over the remaining peasants whose labors were essential for their livelihood. Clare knew the underside of such an economic system. Young girls of the aristocracy were often subjected to marriages that would augment the family's property and power. Clare protected herself from such an arrangement by giving away her inheritance and making a private vow of virginity. She began a new way of community life that was open to women of all classes since it did not require a dowry for entrance. Agnes, the daughter of Assisi's merchant class mayor, was one of the first women to be welcomed by Clare and her sisters into San Damiano. Clare's efforts created a community that skirted the injustice of class distinctions.

The charism of the Third Order, however, emphasizes charity while adhering to the admonition of Francis's *Later Rule* (6.4) and Clare's *Form of Life* (8.4) that "poverty makes

us poor in things and rich in virtue."[2] The practice of poverty for the brothers and sisters of the Third Order is chosen for reasons of charity while adhering to the Biblical imitation of Christ who "emptied himself" (*Phil 2:7*). Before making public profession of poverty, the sisters and brothers of the Third Order Regular make a will giving any possessions and the right to administer private property to the religious group they are joining so that the charitable activities to which they are dedicated may endure. Such a way of life requires common property, the sharing of services, and the willingness to perform works of mercy. In a spirit of helping the poor of society, Third Order communities retain the right to own property and willingly accept donations to help them support their works. Whatever possessions they have corporately and individually are not used exclusively for them, but always for the needs of others.

The early tertiaries were lay persons, often married with families to support. They depended upon the economics of exchanging money for the labor of their goods to assume their family responsibilities. But according to the gospel, their love stretched beyond the confines of their extended families to all those suffering and in need. While they preserved the life of the gospel, the early secular penitents accommodated their values to their situations and needs. They chose not to accumulate more money or property than they needed in order to give to others from their surplus.

This way of life is recalled in Chapter VI of the 1982 TOR Rule. It refers to Timothy's report about the early Christians. He noted how as a community they "provide enough food and sufficient clothing," and "with these we are content" (1 *Tim* 6.8). The pursuit of the common good becomes a norm of poverty for the brothers and sisters of the Third Order. Chapter VI cautions about acquiring an abundance of "the goods of this world" and about the lure of acquiring money. Following the

[2] This interpretation of poverty is developed in Raffaele Pazzelli's *St. Francis and the Third Order; the Franciscans and the pre-Franciscan Penitential Movement* (Quincy, Il: Franciscan Press, 1989) and the recent writings of Lino Temporini.

tradition of the early penitents, the Rule observes that Third Order members are found living "among the outcast and despised, among the poor, the weak, the sick, the unwanted, the oppressed, and the destitute" (*TOR Rule* 6,21).

The second paragraph in Chapter VI deals with the spiritual aspects of poverty, urging the brothers and sisters to live in this world without attachments to places and people. According to the example of Jesus, they are to live "as pilgrims and strangers" (*Mt* 10: 27-29). This means neither appropriating nor defending either tangible nor intangible things. The rule stipulates refusing ownership as a tenet of poverty, and concludes by articulating the spiritual aspects of poverty. Clinging to poverty is presented as the road toward heaven, stripping away other desires in the search for eternal life in God. Simply stated, the TOR Rule provides a means to achieve the deepest desires of the human heart.

The evangelical counsel of poverty is lived in the service of charity according to the needs and rights of the poor. This charism has effected the mission of the Third Order wherever they live across the globe. Their witness of life, their works of mercy, and their commitment to justice all encompass the message of Christ. Matthew's Gospel (*Mt* 25: 31-46) defines the spiritual and corporal works of mercy as the primary criteria by which we will be judged at the end of life. The earthly lives of the brothers and sisters of the Third Order are measured by our love "in deed and in truth" (1 *Jn* 3:18).

Throughout the centuries, Third Order provinces, congregations and religious communities and fraternities have built buildings in order to provide needed services for others in hospitals, schools, and to create and staff agencies that help to provide for some of the overlooked social needs of their time. Today's sisters and brothers of the Third Order practice poverty by sharing with others: sharing their space, sharing their time, sharing their skills and know-how, sharing their joys and sorrows and, yes, sharing what they earn and the monies that are contributed to them. The needs of every locality and of the world are palpable.

Whereas nineteenth and twentieth century religious made enormous contributions to the immigrant populations

of North America, today many groups find themselves unable to sustain these monumental works upon which their reputations and image were built. Third Order religious communities were rich in success, esteem, and personnel. Once the mold began to crack with a shifting cultural climate, vowed religious found themselves gradually passing on many of their institutional works to the laity. The consequences promise an exciting future for the church. Lesser numbers of sisters and brothers has resulted in the emergence of a highly educated laity who have stepped into some of the roles previously held by vowed religious. Lay persons hold many pastoral and administrative positions that had been filled by religious. The laity understand that the experience of God and the responsibility for ministry belong to all people. Across the continents, lay persons are claiming their priesthood in new and creative ways.

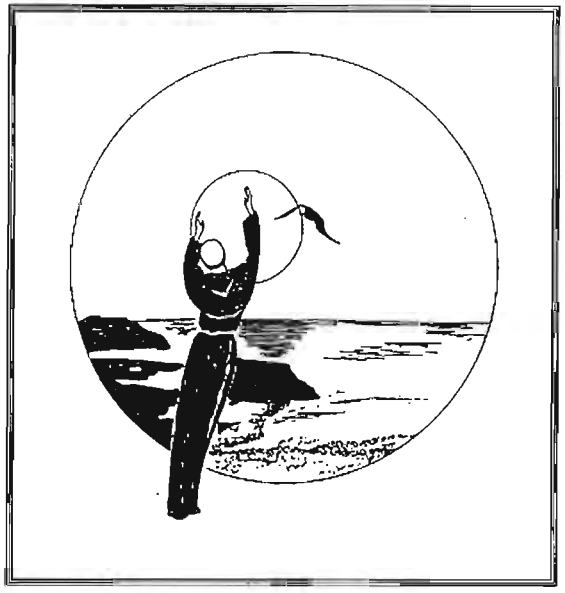
The meaning of the common good has exploded beyond the walls. The sisters and brothers themselves have begun to realize an expanded sense of community as they have been forced to become more dependent on others and to discover their generosity and goodness. Persons in active ministries are working with new lay colleagues, making new friends, and entering into a larger arena of life and love. As previously cherished institutions are relinquished by vowed religious, many Third Order brothers and sisters are stimulated by working as partners with the people of God, instead of performing works for them.

Nonetheless, the essential understanding of poverty for the Third Order as a path to the works of mercy remains intact. The changing face of men and women religious in the United States since Vatican II presents new challenges to the way poverty is experienced. The figures showing the drop of vowed religious are staggering and have been widely publicized by a muddle of recent publications.[3] Religious

[3] Kenneth Briggs, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns* (New York: Doubleday, 2006) is a recent popular example. In his introduction, Briggs reports that in 1965 there were 185,000 sisters in the United States. By 2005 the total had dropped to 69,963. Nearly 60 per cent of these were over seventy and fewer than

groups are currently in the process of handing on many of the charitable institutions which they established. The rhythm of receiving and giving that characterizes the practice of poverty in the Third Order is manifest corporately as religious groups turn over their buildings and possessions to worthy agencies of mercy.

New members are entering the Third Order into a whole new world in transition. The vow of poverty provides them with the necessary freedom to live generously and do what is theirs to do. Francis, Clare, and the early penitents have drawn broad outlines for a life of poverty. The vow of poverty was never primarily an antidote to the acquisition of money or property. It was and continues to be about the search for God through charitable and social works. Third Order men and women who have been committed to a life of poverty for fifty, sixty, or even seventy years are eloquent testimonies to the way the vows open doors to the place where God alone dwells.



6,000 were under fifty. Earlier studies include David Nygren and Miriam Ukeritis, *The Future of Religious Orders in the United States: Transformation and Commitment* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993) and Patricia Wittberg, *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders: A Social Movement Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994).

Fraternal Life

Dorothy McCormack, O.S.F.

Because God loves us, the brothers and sisters should love each other, for the Lord says, this is my precept, that you love one another as I have loved you.

As I reflect on these words, the first reality of which I am aware is how central is this chapter of the Rule to our way of life. I have come to understand and am convinced that the heart of Franciscan life is a gospel life lived in *fraternitas* (or relationship in today's parlance) modeled on the life of the Triune God – a community of loving relationships. The goal of our life – "that we love one another" – is revealed. The motive for the command is spelled out – "because God loves us." And the manner in which we are to love one another – "as I have loved you" – is clearly set forth.

Since I made my profession of vows in 1955, I lived under the Rule of the Third Order Regular of 1927 for 27 years, during which time I was involved in teaching, formation ministry, and parish ministry. I also earned a Master's Degree in Theological Studies from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, California where I was the second woman accepted into the school and where I focused on the study of Sacred Scripture, my first and foremost passion.

Prior to the introduction of our new Rule in 1982, I was secretary of the General Chapter of our Congregation – Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity – held in Rome in 1979. During this Chapter, our new Constitutions were formulated. On this occasion, I also had the opportunity and privilege to visit for the first time Assisi and Heythuysen, the Netherlands, the birthplace of our Congregation. This experience of visiting our sacred places and of the General Chapter was the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in my life as a Franciscan. Francis came alive for me and was enfleshed in myriad ways. So enamored was I by this new excitement and energy that I began reading the sources and then passing on the treasure through teaching courses on Francis as well as Scripture in my parish ministry. I was fortunate in that I was working as a Pastoral Associate at a Franciscan parish in Sacramento, California and was surrounded by "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5). So when the new rule arrived, I welcomed it as a breath of fresh air.

Shortly after the emergence of this new Rule, our sister, Clare of Assisi, seemed to leap out of obscurity and into our lives with all her brilliance, and we discovered that ours is a shared charism and a spirituality that is relational at its core. With this awakening came the consequent feminine dimension and soul of the Franciscan Gospel Life with its accompanying language of exchange, mutuality, integration, compassion, and a holistic view of created reality.

Let them manifest their love for each other in deeds.

In the beginning I would understand this statement as a charge to carry out what was asked of me by those in authority. Thus, I entered into the ministry of formation. While this office was a sacred trust with many graced moments and memories of rich community life, and of small and profound conversions, the shadow side of the position carried with it for me the burden of isolation, loneliness and misunderstanding.

Today, I understand that the Franciscan vocation is to a life, not a ministry. Our identity is not in what we do; rather, it is in how we do whatever we do. What we bring to any ministry in which we are engaged is a quality of presence, an attitude of service. Today the deeds that manifest love for me are more in the arena of making time for each other, to

listen, to affirm, to challenge and to encourage each other. I wait up for my sister at night to ask about her day. I make rhubarb pie for my brother because it is his favorite. I, who am a night person, get up at 4:30 am to take my sister to the airport. I sat at the bedside of my soul brother when he was dying from AIDS-related complications. With such actions I manifest my love in deeds.

> *With confidence let them make known their needs to one another so that each can find and offer to the other that which is necessary.*

One of the most stimulating and energizing experiences of my life that continues to this day began with my election as a delegate to our General Chapter of 1984. As we were preparing for the event, the document "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate" by SCRIS (1983) had begun to circulate. As delegates, we were further instructed to study another document for the Chapter entitled "Apostolic Spirituality in View of the Kingdom" by the USIG (1983). Both of these documents caused us no little consternation. We turned to our brothers, Joseph Chinnici O.F.M., William Short O.F.M., Peter Van Leeuwen O.F.M., and Jean François Godet to help us to sort through them and help us to describe and contrast our Franciscan values with what was proposed in these documents. This dialogue and refining resulted in responses and reflections from each of these brothers, and an article by Joe entitled "A Franciscan Experience of Life in the Spirit" (1984), wherein he contrasted Franciscan Evangelical Life with the Monastic and Apostolic religious way of life. Armed with these critiques and reformulation of our gospel way of life, I made a presentation to our General Chapter which I titled "Vita Evangelica." Thus, we were privy to the emergence of the new revised understanding of our Franciscan Evangelical Life.

When the Franciscan Federation began a new structure of Regional representation in the early 90's, I was asked to

chair Region 6, which appointment involved membership on the National Board. Here I found that my Franciscan Family expanded, this time exponentially, to include brothers and sisters of almost every Third Order Regular Congregation in the United States of America. While the challenge of organizing Region 6 with its large expanse and few members was huge, the blessings far outweighed the difficulties. I remember at the annual Federation Conference of 1992 when the Chair of Region 1 commented that he was finally beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel, my response was "We have light in abundance in our Region; I'm desperately looking for a tunnel!" Help followed by way of steering committee members and financial aid. I can't begin to count the friendships and relationships with which I have been gifted over the years through this intercommunion.

A much more personal and recent experience of making my needs known to my sisters began with my letting go of a long and fruitful ministry at Mission San Luis Rey Parish, where I served for 10 years and lived with the Sisters of the Precious Blood. I moved to Sacramento hoping to live in community with my Franciscan sisters, and to be near to my blood family since we were all aging. Before I could settle in, I was asked to fill in as Interim Director of Mount Alverno Conference Center in Redwood City, California because the Director had unexpectedly resigned. This temporary post lasted 6½ months. It was followed by a long awaited and magical trip to Ireland with four of my siblings and 34 close relatives. Shortly after this wonder-filled trip, I was diagnosed with breast cancer with surgery to follow. While awaiting radiation treatment, I found myself needing to find and move into an apartment and living what has come to be called "living singly" for a year. After I finished radiation, I had arthroscopic knee surgery and water aerobic therapy. This year was indeed a "dark night" for me.

With the sale of our provincial house in Redwood City in 2003, I asked to move into community with some of the sisters who were in the process of finding new living quarters. In February of 2004, five of us moved into a home in nearby

Belmont, where God has indeed blessed us with true *fraternitas.*

> *Blessed are those who love the others when they are sick and unable to serve, as much as when they are healthy and of service to them.*

In the early 80's I had moved to another Franciscan parish in Portland, Oregon and was still involved in formation ministry with sisters in temporary vows, one of whom lived with 3 of us sisters. After several months of sharing with each other in the evenings over a glass of wine, this young sister asked me whether I believed that she loved me. When I answered "yes," she told me that she thought I had a problem with alcohol, and asked whether I thought I had a problem. I answered "yes"; then she told me that she had seen a counselor and made an appointment for me to get help. The next few days were a flurry of work, turmoil, tears, and prayer. The day of the appointment, I opened my Bible at random and my eyes fell on the words of Deut. 30:15 ff:

> See, I set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments ... then you shall live.... But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish.... I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you ... may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him, for that means life to you ...

The end result was that I entered an alcohol rehab program with the love and support of my sisters, my Provincial Minister, and my pastor. This experience of death led me to grace and freedom, life and resurrection, and I am forever

grateful. Blessed are they for loving me into life. Since then, 2Cor. 12:9 has become for me a favored passage: "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

> *If discord caused by word or deed should occur among them, they should immediately and humbly ask forgiveness of one another even before offering their gift of prayer before God.*

My lived experience of this instruction occurred during and after our Provincial Chapter of Elections in June of 1985. My name had been submitted for Provincial Minister. After the election, one of my sisters shared with me that another sister had spoken to many delegates discouraging them from voting for me because I was an alcoholic and the stress of the job might cause me to relapse. I was deeply hurt by this revelation. After much reflection and prayer, I wrote to her and shared with her my deep sadness that she did not feel free, nor feel a need, to share her concern about me with me. I told her that it was in sacred trust that I shared with the province my "leprosy" in the hope that we could begin to live with each other in the open, sharing ourselves rather than our masks. I concluded by saying "I share with you my pain as a renewal of an invitation to a deeper life of *fraternitas* among us."

Within a few days I received a response from her that expressed her deep sorrow and, in all humility, asked my forgiveness. Thus, having loved myself well, I could forgive and love my sister and be at peace.

> *Whether in sickness or in health, they should only want what God wishes for them.*

What does God wish for us? We are made in the image and likeness of the Triune God whose very nature is communal and social – a community of relationships, a communion of love. For Francis and Clare, observance of the gospel revolved about the great commandment of love of God and neighbor. So, Franciscan life is basically a fraternal life.

Since God is Father, the only Father, our Father, we are all brothers and sisters to one another. Fraternity has to do with the quality of our relationships, the marks of which are communion, interdependence, and solidarity in love. A fraternity is vital only in as much as it gives freedom and responsibility to each person. A person is vital only in as much as one lives with and for others. As Franciscans we are united by the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood initiated by the Spirit of the Lord. The bond is love. The journey to God is the journey into love. Love to be experienced must be seen, felt, heard, touched in our relationships with one another. And the inner imperative of love is to express itself, to become visible in our relationships with each other.

This fraternal communion and solidarity extends as well to the non-human created world – sun, moon, stars, wind, water, fire, earth, animals – all of whom Francis addressed as brother or sister. This precious legacy celebrates the unity of all creation and calls us to reverence and work with, rather than over against or above, our kin in the cosmos, and to live in harmony and peace with all beings.

As my Franciscan life has progressed, my notion and experience of fraternity has grown and expanded, from the local level, to the national and then international level, to the global and now to the cosmic dimension. It has become more inclusive and universal.

> *If anyone seriously neglected the form of life all profess, the minister, or others who may know of it, are to admonish that person. Those giving the admonition should neither embarrass nor speak evil of the other, but show great kindness. Let all be carefully attentive not to become angry or disturbed because of another's sin. For anger and disturbance impede love in themselves and others.*

Given the violence of the world in which we find ourselves today, this chapter is all the more relevant in its universality, its call for patience and endurance, its call for compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It is a commentary on how

Franciscans are to be in the world. Like Clare we are to be light illuminating the darkness and fog. Like Francis we are to be examples of the unconditional and compassionate love of the Crucified Christ, who held nothing back and gave himself away totally. Both Francis and Clare present themselves to us as unarmed and invite us to be bearers of peace to all people, and warn us against anger which impedes fraternal love.

> *For all that happens to them let them give thanks to our Creator.*

When I reflect upon what led me to this Franciscan way of life – the magnet that drew me and holds me – the answer is always the goodness of God. God has so lavishly blessed me. As Psalm 116 says, "What return could I make to the Lord for all the good I have received?" Now as I look back on all that has happened in my life, the twists and turns, the ecstasy and the pain, the deaths and the resurrections, I can see how the arms of God have always been there for me. And it is the incarnate God that I have met over and over – the God who is enfleshed in the brothers and sisters with whom I have been gifted along the way. I have met in my brothers and sisters, as well as in myself, the God who suffers, the God who listens, the God who affirms, the God who challenges, and the God who embraces.

I give thanks for Jesus, my brother, and the profound humility of God who chose to participate in creation by becoming one among us in our humanity – Jesus, the Word made flesh, who showed us what it means to be human, and who bequeathed to us the Spirit to dwell within us when his life on earth was ended.

I am deeply grateful for those brothers and sisters who have shared with me their knowledge, understanding, and experience of God, of the Word of God in Scripture, and of the Franciscan way of life. And finally I am grateful for the many people who have touched and blessed me by their presence in my life, and for those privileged moments of grace in which we have walked together in sacredness.

The Cord, 57.4 (2007)

OBEDIENCE IN LOVE

Mary Beth Bux, O.S.F.

Introduction

This eighth chapter of *The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis* (henceforth referred to in this article as *The Rule & Life*) elaborates on the initial reception of the Franciscan "into obedience" (TOR, 7). Chapter VIII's six brief articles (23-28) summarize the whole life to which a Franciscan is called. The *Early Rule* (9) and *The Form of Life of Clare of Assisi* (2:13) use this terminology when describing the commitment of the individual friar and Poor Lady within the fraternity. It is found again in *II Letter to the Faithful* (42). It is no coincidence hence that this phrase continues to be repeated in *The Rule & Life*: it is essential to the design of the Franciscan approach to life.

What is it into which each one of us is received? How is this obedience lived out in each one's life? Why its centrality in the Franciscan way of life? How would I rate the communication of my living group in respect to its regularity and its elaboration of meaning? What is the role of the Franciscan person in leadership? These reflections have preceded the writing of this article.

Since the Papal Approbation of *The Rule & Life* in 1982, there has been much activity in the Catholic Church regarding religious life. A selected list of church documents has been prepared by Elizabeth McDonough in *The Church & Consecrated Life*, notably the issuance of *Essential Elements* (May 31, 1983) and the 1994 Synod on Consecrated Life.[1] This gives ample evidence of the ongoing, direct, active interest of the institutional church in the gift of consecrated life in its midst. However, she also notes: "Throughout church history, consecrated life has been truly renewed only from within by people who generously embrace and truly live their charism while remaining faithful to its founding purpose as continually sanctioned by the church in and for its mission of evangelization."[2]

In the United States, much attention was raised by the three-year study, *The Future of Religious Orders in the United States,* also known by its acronym FORUS. Conducted by David Nygren, CM, and Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ, beginning in 1989, it represents the opinions of 10,000 religious brothers, sisters, and priests throughout the United States. The Executive Summary is reprinted in *The Church & Consecrated Life*[3]. The conclusions point to eight dynamics which operate in varying degrees in Religious Orders that have undertaken substantial renewal in response to the Second Vatican Council's call to return to "the spirit of the founder": individualism and vocation, leadership, authority, work and corporate identity, affiliative decline and role clarity, racism and multiculturalism, materialism and the gospel, and charisms and parochial assimilation.

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[1] David Fleming and Elizabeth McDonough, ed., *The Church & Consecrated Life: The Best of the Review-5* (St. Louis, MO: Review for Religious, 1996): 21, 72.

[2] McDonough, *The Church & Consecreated Life*, 21.

[3] David Nygren and Miriam Ukeritis, "The Future of Religious Orders in the United States" in *The Church & Consecrated Life*, 246-94.

Another social psychologist, Gerald Arbuckle, wrote about the "refounding" of religious communities. He notes that:

> [...] Refounding persons [...] are able to live within today's context the experience of the original congregational founding people. They are pained to see the void between the gospel and the needs of the world; so, like their original founding members, they move to create pastoral strategies to bridge this gulf. They, together with others in their communities, are dreamers who do. These are restless or liminal people in the sense that they are on the edge of what is considered to be the 'correct or predictable' way of being religious; they are prepared to critique everything according to gospel values.[4]

Much theory and practical application have also been written by the religious who live the life. Sandra Schneiders, considering religious life historically, considers the vows as "the *order* of this alternate world" which religious life constructed as separation from the secular world and obedience as handling freedom and power by renunciation of the independent exercise of the will.[5] This alternate world, the Reign of God, creates an alternative stance that challenges the status quo; in the case of obedience, "the unrestricted use of power to control reality (including people) for one's own advantage is rejected in principle and practice" for a "dialogical listening as the way to corporately exercise power for the common good."[6]

Religious life is distinctive in its public witness to living the Gospel and the totality of that commitment. It is not that we are necessarily better at it than anyone else. "This is part of what religious life is about and from that flows a whole sense of identity. The questions we still need to answer are:

[4] Gerald Arbuckle, "Prophecy or Restorationism in Religious Life," in *The Church & Consecrated Life*, 305.

[5] Sandra Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure: Locating Catholic Religious Life in the New Ecclesial and Cultural Context*. Religious Life in the New Millennium, vol. I (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 109.

[6] Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*, 109-10.

Who are we? What do we say to the world today?"[7] For Sandra Schneiders, the deceptively simple answer to "What is it [religious life] all about?" is love: "Religious life is about *whom* we are committed to and *how* we live those commitments."[8] She has made "the choice to relate consecrated celibacy first and foremost to perpetual commitment and community rather than, as is traditionally done, to the vows of evangelical poverty and obedience...."[9]

> At a conference with 400 young religious women, Barbara Fiand, SSdeN, said, "the fundamental concern of modern religious women today should not be simple accord with their founders' wishes or maintaining survival of their order or conforming to canon law. Our work must be the transformation of all things in Christ, bringing about the reign of God." And the reporter continues: "[...] whatever is not conducive to that goal needs to be jettisoned, even if that should include the traditional notion of perpetual vows."[10]

Beginning in 2006, the Religious Formation Conference (RFC) is offering "We Are the Change," weeklong summer forums, on the new theology of the vows.

Today, Franciscans are grappling with how their life is reflected to the world. In response to the 1994 *Lineamenta*, indicating that religious life was either monastic or apostolic, Franciscans asserted:

> The emphasis is on neither a common place centered on contemplation and the praise of God, nor on a common task centered in the concrete mission of service to the Church and world. It is rather a common heart; a prophetic witness to Christ and the whole of the

[7] Miriam Ukeritis, "Has the Window of Opportunity Closed?" (Interview conducted by Annmarie Sanders, IHM) *The Occasional Papers*, Summer 2007, 36.2 (Silver Springs, MD, LCWR), 11.

[8] Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*, 405.

[9] Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*, 406.

[10] Robert McClory, "Young Nuns find strength in Numbers," http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2002c/070502/070502d.htm on Sept. 28, 2007, 2.

> gospel [evangelical]... Francis' followers insert themselves in the world, not having specific works, but for all kinds of service to promote the Gospel.[11]

If this "common heart" is to be witnessed by others, it requires the daily work of forming community and coming to terms with the ways in which the whole of the Gospel is not being promoted. It is in the living of what is heard in daily reflection on the Gospel and in mutual correction concerning the ways in which we are not being mirrors of the gospel values we profess.

The Counsel of Obedience

Chapter VIII's placement in the sequence of chapters, following "Fraternal Life," is decisively located because obedience does not exist within the individual alone, but within the context of community. It precludes a community fully engaged in conversation about its life, not unlike the experience of the early friars in the shaping of their Rule. David Flood observes that *The Early Rule* "witnesses to a prolonged effort at elaborating meaning" and "results from and points to the regularity of their communication."[12] Being "received into obedience" implies a living and breathing reality into which I, as an individual, enter. I am part of this entity, but not the sole member, and my life should be shaped by this truth. In Godet-Calogeras's recent translation of *The Rule & Life* from the original Latin text, the chapter title is named "Obedience in Love." The preposition "in" emphasizes the manner in which obedience is to be exercised both among the community members and by the leadership.[13] This love

[11] Ingrid Peterson, "The Third Order Tradition of Evangelical Life: A Prophetic Witness to the Whole of the Gospel." *Franciscan Studies.* 64 (2006), 473.

[12] David Flood, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement,* (Quezon City: FIA Contact Publications, 1989), 79.

[13] Jean François Godet-Calogeras, Class notes from The Franciscan Institute SFS 527, Summer 2007.

in obedience is a way of life among those who live as members of a Franciscan religious community.

Diarmuid O'Murchu, MCS, reminds us in *Consecrated Life: The Changing Paradigm* that,

> from the earliest times, obedience becomes part of the vocabulary of asceticism. Here, *obedience* denotes subjugation to the will of another, a very different meaning from the etymology of the word which means 'to listen' attentively (from the Latin *ob-audire*). Obedience in its true Biblical sense is not about subjecting one's will, but utilizing all our God-given resources to listen more deeply to divine wisdom, so that we can discern God's will more authentically—for ourselves and for God's creation.[14]

The language around "obedience" in the Franciscan references does not limit itself to the authority of an external person. In the *Early Rule* Chapters IV and V outline the relationship of the first fraternity in relation to "true and holy obedience" (V: 15) and clearly include all members in the responsibility of helping one another do what they have promised and "let them know when they have remained in true obedience" (V: 17). And Clare, in her *Testament,* shows the relationship between the community member and her leader in regards to obedience: "Let the sisters who are subject, however, keep in mind that, for the sake of God, they have given up their own wills. Therefore I want them to obey their mother of their own free will as they have promised the Lord, so that, seeing the charity, humility, and unity they have toward one another, she might bear all the burdens of her office more lightly, [...]"[15]

Because Francis entered deeply into the Word, he came to identify with what he heard. This posture in prayer demands an understanding of the "psalmic faith" of the Jewish people: "[...] any spirituality we think we find in the Psalms that does

[14] Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Consecrated Religious Life: The Changing Paradigms* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 74.

[15] Regis J. Armstrong, *The Lady Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 2006), 67-69.

not raise serious questions about theodicy has misunderstood the nature of psalmic faith."[16] Brueggemann clearly asserts that *communion with God* cannot be celebrated without attention to the *nature of the community*, both among persons and with God. *Religious hungers* in Israel never preclude *justice questions*. The Christian faith too cannot be restricted to a privatistic, romantic spirituality if it is consistent with its Jewish heritage.[17] From Francis's very prayer, there was no way he could continue to live in Assisi by the social and political rules set out by the Charters of 1203 and 1210.[18] Therefore, a hearing of Matthew 5:23-24 or the Psalms or other scriptural texts and God's grace would naturally lead Francis, in obedience, to the lepers and a social reorganization that would embrace (yes, even kiss) them. And that is obedience – to hear the Word, to apply it to our daily situation, and make the changes necessary to comply with the vision of God.

The letter came in spring 2006 from the General Chapter Coordinating Committee announcing that I had received the required number of written suggestions as a potential member of the General Leadership from members of the international congregation. Included in the letter were the reasons each individual had given for making the suggestion of my name; the duplicate forms before me were in a variety of languages. Would I give serious consideration to allowing my name to remain in the discernment process? If so, I had until May 1st to respond in writing to the Committee so that a second list of names of those who responded in the affirmative could be prepared for the congregation prior to the General Chapter.

How should I reply to the call of my sisters to this office of leadership? Would I be required to move to Germany? What about the leadership position that I currently held in my own Province? There was a time of listening and discerning before I completed the response in the affirmative.

[16] Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 169.

[17] Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, 169.

[18] Michael Cusato. Class notes from The Franciscan Institute SFS 507, Summer 2007.

The second list mailed out to the congregation was considerably shorter than the first list of recommended names. In fact, only two names from the same Province remained for those willing to be considered as General Superior and a more international group for the four positions on the General Council.

The Chapter

Francis began, in the early years of evolving his way of living, to call the friars together each year. These meetings became the way to engage members with one another in evolving their life and to glean from one another the fruit of their prayer and work. Here, says David Flood, "they worked out a new set of understandings, based on mutuality and service. That is, they acted together (mutuality); they saw to it that the available goods sustained the lives of all (service). They did it all in the belief that the Spirit carried along those who so lived."[19] Thus the layers of the *Early Rule* reflect their understandings of what it was they promised together.[20] For Clare, all matters were handled in Chapter, with all present: work assignments (FLCl 7:3), acknowledgement of alms received (FLCl 7:3)[21] and the sale of property (Mandate of 1238) signed by all the members of the San Damiano Community.

In what ways do we today engage in this kind of dialogue with one another? As Lynn Jarrell puts it in a recent interview, conversation within community on the topic of the common good

> goes to the heart of our life. It really cuts away many of the other things that could cover up our need to look at why we live this life. What is happening in religious life is almost like what Jesus' death did for the dis-

[19] Flood, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement*, 116.

[20] Cusato, Class notes SFS 507.

[21] Armstrong, *The Lady*, 119.

ciples. It brought them into their true mission, which was to carry the Gospel message. But they had to go through the suffering to see that deeper purpose.[22]

Four members of my congregation left the States in late August 2006 for Germany in preparation for the General Chapter scheduled to begin in early September. I was not one of these delegates, so in the meantime I prepared a video of self-presentation for the General Chapter Body. I had sobering moments in the writing and rewriting of the script, during the taping and mailing of this video. Yes, even second thoughts about why I had allowed my name to remain.

There were several very early morning transatlantic telephone conversations during the week of pre-election discernment confirming my agreement to keep my name included on the slate of nominees. Each time I tried to go back to sleep I would reflect on the reason(s) I was willing to do this: I had been asked by members of my congregation, their reasons for suggesting me were logical and bore truth, I had no reason that withstood prayer and discernment to say no (though there were some reasons that returned for review throughout the process, like not speaking German or being separated by an ocean from family and friends).

Then on September 15, 2006, at 4:30 AM I was awakened with "You have been elected as a General Councilor. Please get to Germany as soon as you can for installation and the continuation of General Chapter!"

Role of Franciscan Leader as Minister And Servant

The dual role in Franciscan leadership is seen from around 1217-1218 "minister and servant."[23] Authority is seen as service and distinguishes itself from the surrounding

[22] Lynn Jarrell, "Leadership & The Common Good," (Interview conducted by Annmarie Sanders, IHM) *The Occasional Papers*. Summer 2007, 36.2 (Silver Springs, MD: LCWR), 4.

[23] Flood, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement*, 124.

society,[24] even in the monastery where the leader is "prior" or "abbot." It is also found in the feminine version with Clare and, although she finally concedes to use the title "abbess," her style of leadership follows that of Francis. "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" (TestCl 61-62).[25]

Authority continues to evolve its role today as we vacillate between too much or too little over the decades. Miriam Ukeritis responds:

> A big part of the role of leaders is to listen to the voices of members. That's what obedience is – to listen – listen to the voices of the members and listen to the needs of the world and listen to how they can be pulled together and to how members can be invited to address those needs. Leaders have the opportunity and privilege of hearing various voices and then presenting back to members some synthesis of that and perhaps then inviting them to help chart a direction to respond. That's a part of the job of leadership.[26]

She concludes her consideration of the implications for leaders fifteen (15) years after her and David Nygren's FORUS study: " ...what would I say to leaders today? Lead. Don't be afraid to lead!"[27]

But what is distinctive about the Franciscan style of leadership. Michael Cusato gives an impassioned response in his presentation to his own province's leadership:

> all of those entrusted, in a special way, with the responsibility and the authority to shepherd their brothers to stay rooted in God and remain faithful to their rule of life – it is they who are called first and foremost

[24] Flood, *Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement*, 121.

[25] Armstrong, *The Lady*, 64.

[26] Ukeritis, "Has the Window of Opportunity Closed?", 14.

[27] Ukeritis, "Has the Window of Opportunity Closed?", 14.

> to model, visibly and really, this fundamental Christian and Franciscan posture for the brothers, absorbing within themselves – ourselves – all unjust accusations, persecution, obstinance and insult, for the sake of God *and* our brothers, lest we break the bonds of the human fraternity.[28]

This kind of leader carries the discipline of being another Christ, suffering for others' lives – the living out of true and holy obedience. He or she is called to embody the full insight of Francis into being "minor and subject to all."[29]

And since then nothing has been the same! Not the measurements that I use every day, or the language I hear about me, nor the sights and smells of the seasons, nor the way I work and live. We are an international leadership team of five members representing four cultures and four languages. Our transition has been challenging and full of learning – all in service of our international congregation. That was a year ago and obedience in love puts into perspective the why of this drastic change in my life.

Conclusion

Franciscan obedience in love involves the whole community and places great expectations on both member and leader. It encompasses everything one promises to live and more. It shows the depth of respect to all. And finally it witnesses to the world that grace does indeed exist.

[28] Cusato, Class Notes SFS 507.
[29] Cusato, Class Notes SFS 507.

APOSTOLIC LIFE

Patricia Hutchison, O.S.F.

The ninth chapter of the Third Order Regular Rule encompasses the major themes of the preceding eight chapters. The chapter presents an ideal: how Franciscan evangelical life ought to be lived. In a spirit of continuous conversion, the brothers and sisters turn toward God in loving prayer and toward their neighbor in loving service. Contemplation and action complement one another; there is no dichotomy between the two. In whatever place or circumstance they find themselves, the sisters and brothers recognize and proclaim through their manner of living and serving and, when necessary, through their words, the goodness of God. Striving always to be men and women of peace, the brothers and sisters demonstrate by gentleness in action and in speech that true peace flows from right relationships, reconciliation, and action on behalf of justice. Strengthened by their dedication to and dependence on God, the sisters and brothers risk ridicule and rejection as they actively seek to create a world in which all feel welcomed equally and loved deeply and in which all participate in loving and healing one another. Contemplating God who is Love, the brothers and sisters understand the immensity of God's self-emptying love in Christ (Phil. 2: 5-11). The response to such love allows no room for competition or hierarchy. At times the response is silence, awe, and wonder. At other times, the response is action, which furthers God's plan for relating, loving, caring, healing, and serving. At all times, the response is humility and gratitude.

This reflection on the 25th anniversary of the Rule will focus on four aspects of the ninth chapter: loving God and neighbor, witnessing by word and work to the goodness of God, living as peacemakers, and responding with humility and gratitude. The reflection will include a short commentary on each theme, concluding with a few challenges, which seem (at least to this writer) particularly compelling in this first decade of the 21st century.

Loving God and Neighbor: Facing the Christ Incarnate

In both the Jewish and Christian scriptures, the measure of one's love for God is the love one extends to one's neighbor, especially the one who is poor or marginalized, disfigured or despised. Loving God engages a person in the messiness of the human condition. Yet, according to Joseph Chinnici, O.F.M. there exists "a deep prejudice against the Incarnation. We don't like the fact that we and our neighbor are human."[1] Such an attitude justifies the separation of love of God from love for neighbor and creates a dichotomy between contemplation and action.

Francis of Assisi offers an alternative vision, demonstrated through three episodes from his life: the experience at the church of San Damiano, the embrace of the leper, and the encounter with the sultan. Michael Hubaut, O.F.M. describes Francis's experience at San Damiano: "This, of course, was not the first time Francis had looked at a crucifix.... But that day, Francis was enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see the true face of Christ crucified, a living face of simple but majestic beauty. It struck [Francis] that God has a face, that He looked at our world through human eyes ..."[2] Gazing upon

[1] Joseph Chinnici, "The Prophetic Heart: The Evangelical Form of Religious Life in the Contemporary United States," *The Cord* 44 (1994): 298.

[2] Michael Hubaut, "Christ, Our Joy: Learning to Pray with St. Francis and St. Clare," *Greyfriars Review* 9 (1995): 18.

the suffering face of Christ, Francis recognized the face of God, Love Incarnate. Gradually Francis began to understand that the God who became human in Jesus Christ actually shares in the human condition of all creatures. Conversely, all creatures share in the life of God.

By Francis's own assertion, the meeting with a leper became the strongest revelation of this mystery and the experience, which changed his life forever.[3] Kathleen Warren, O.S.F. comments on Francis's experience in these words: "*Among the lepers*, Francis' eyes were opened, and he saw what it meant to be human, he knew what it was to look on the face of God."[4] Formerly a source of fear and revulsion, the leper became for Francis an icon of God. Recognizing how God moved in humility toward humanity, Francis defied the social norms of his day and took the initiative to move toward those whom others chose to ignore and marginalize.[5] Frequent contact with lepers and others excluded from "respectable" society prepared Francis for an even less acceptable encounter as he moved toward the Muslim Sultan Malek al-Kamil.

If Francis's contact with lepers offended the sensibilities of his society, his engagement with the Sultan went even further. At a time when civil and church authorities both recommended and rewarded efforts to suppress the "infidel," Francis moved among the Saracens "open to discovering a brother, a friend, the face of God. He went open to learning new truths about God.... He went as Jesus went, obedient, humble, peaceful."[6] Francis looked for goodness where others expected to find evil. Francis recognized a well-beloved face where others anticipated meeting an enemy. For Francis, both leper and sultan were icons of God. Seeing them he

[3] Test 2, *FA:ED*, vol. 1, 124.

[4] Kathleen A. Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold: Francis of Assisi Encounters Sultan Malek al-Kamil* (Rochester, MN: The Sisters of St. Francis, 2003), 37.

[5] Michael Blastic, "Contemplation and Compassion: A Franciscan Ministerial Spirituality," *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism* 7 (1997): 152.

[6] Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 68.

recognized the face of God and responded in compassionate love.

How are the sisters and brothers of the Third Order Regular challenged to love God and neighbor by facing the Christ incarnate today? Despite the passage of more than 800 years, the 21st century world is not so different from the medieval world of Francis of Assisi. Although the details change, the reality remains the same. Individuals and entire groups of people are excluded and sometimes demonized, often in the name of God. The invitation for the brothers and sisters of the Third Order Regular is clear: to see in every creature the face of God and to move toward every "other" in love. In the abstract that may seem simple. In fact, nothing could be more difficult.

Witnessing by Word and Work to the Goodness of God

The Franciscan Third Order tradition does not claim a specific ministerial focus. Rather the brothers and sisters "seek to proclaim the fundamental Goodness of God in all of life and creation."[7] With a preference for example over words, the sisters and brothers reverence the unique dignity of each person and strive to promote life-giving relationships with all creatures. Within the Franciscan tradition ministry can take many forms. Nonetheless, within the Franciscan family in the 21st century, the brothers and sisters have an opportunity to direct their witness through both word and work in support of a significant endeavor: the retrieval, revitalization, and sharing of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition.

Within the Western Catholic Church there have always been multiple theological and philosophical traditions.[8] The

[7] "Response to the *Lineamenta* in Light of the 1994 Synod of Bishops on Consecrated Life in the Church," *The Cord* 44 (1994): 289.

[8] See Kenan B. Osborne, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing its Origins and Identifying its Central Components* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2003).

major traditions have centered on the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225/27-1274), and the Franciscans St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217/21-1274) and Blessed John Duns Scotus (1266-1308). Despite the credibility and legitimacy of all these traditions, the writings of Thomas Aquinas became mainstreamed into the seminaries and universities of Europe and the United States.[9] When it became apparent that Thomistic philosophy and theology could not speak to emerging contemporary issues, a void was created. Although marginalized, the Franciscan intellectual tradition continued to develop and has the potential to fill the void created by the decline of the Thomistic tradition.

In an effort to retrieve and revitalize the Franciscan tradition in the 21st century, Franciscans have been collaborating in the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition Project for the past 20 years. Speaking of the impact of the Franciscan tradition particularly among laity, the Task Force commissioned to initiate this project claimed that when the Franciscan tradition "in its view of God's overflowing goodness, its Christocentric emphasis, its moral-decision making process, its view of a Spirit-filled yet sinful Church, its understanding of property and community, and its valuation of freedom and personal dignity, is presented, it almost always meets with an enthusiastic reception."[10] The Task Force for the Retrieval of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition has claimed that the tradition has the potential "to give people hope, speak to their fears, and present a coherent intellectual pathway which strengthens faith and encourages just action for our neighbors."[11] According to Chinnici, the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition is particularly relevant in the midst of the cur-

[9] In 1879, Pope Leo XIII decreed in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* that the writings of Thomas Aquinas were to be the primary philosophical and theological texts used in seminaries and Catholic colleges and universities. In 1917 the Code of Canon Law confirmed Thomas Aquinas as the pre-eminent voice for the Catholic Tradition.

[10] The English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition Project* (Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers, 2001): 8-9.

[11] ESC-OFM, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition Project,* 9.

rent "breakdown of human relationships in terms of violence, new ethnic nationalisms, fundamentalisms, complex moral dilemmas, and the dissolution of universal categories."[12]

On the 25th anniversary of the revision of the Third Order Regular Rule, the sisters and brothers have an excellent opportunity to join with Franciscan congregations who have already begun to study and share the riches of their tradition and thus find a new way to proclaim by word and work the goodness of God.[13] What might be the impact if TOR sisters and brothers educated themselves on the meaning and implications of their own theological tradition and then identified ways to integrate the tradition appropriately into their pastoral and educational ministries? Such activity could indeed offer people hope through a new perspective on God, creation, the Incarnation, and the familial relationships, which connect all creatures within the cosmos.

Living as Peacemakers

Francis of Assisi's commitment to peacemaking is recognized universally. Although Francis is not actually the author, the well-loved *Peace Prayer* is commonly attributed to him.[14] On four occasions (October 1986, January 1993, October 1999, January 2002), Pope John Paul II invited representatives from more than a dozen world religions to gather in Assisi to pray for peace. In Assisi in June 2007

[12] Joseph Chinnici, "North American Stewardship of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition" (paper presented at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY, June 2000).

[13] Initiated and funded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, a recent program entitled "God's Extravagant Love" presents the basic components of the tradition (Love and the primacy of Christ; Creation and the Humility of God; and the Dignity of the Human Person) as a weekend program for religious and lay women and men. For information, contact Kathleen Moffatt, O.S.F., skmoffatt@aol.com.

[14] For an explanation of the origin of this prayer and an excellent commentary, see Leonardo Boff, *The Prayer of St. Francis: A Message of Peace for the World Today* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001).

to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the conversion of St. Francis, Pope Benedict XVI recalled Francis's witness to peace. In the spirit of Francis, Benedict implored world leaders to reject hatred and violence and to embrace sincere dialogue and justice that lead to peace. He also urged all women and men to follow the example of Francis and "become 'instruments of peace' through thousands of small gestures in their daily lives."[15]

In his Testament, Francis declared: "The Lord revealed to me a greeting that we should say: '*May the Lord give you peace*'".[16] According to Celano, Francis always prayed for peace before sharing the word of God and through his preaching many women and men turned way from hatred and embraced peace.[17] Moreover, Francis continually connected peace with patience and humility, forgiveness and reconciliation. Kathleen Warren, O.S.F. characterizes the *Canticle of Creation* as "the ultimate expression of [Francis's] vision of fraternal life, the life of brotherhood and sisterhood, rooted in Christ."[18] Warren contends that fraternal relationship is true peace. She points out that humans appear in the *Canticle* only when they have achieved fraternal relationship, genuine harmony, through pardon and reconciliation.

The Franciscan call to live as peacemakers and to pray and work for peace is clear. At the same time, the path to peace through compassionate love, pardon and reconciliation is difficult in a culture characterized by "autonomy, individualism, and analgesia."[19] Typically, violence fuels hatred and retaliation, rather than love and forgiveness. All the more reason that on this 25th anniversary of the TOR Rule the sisters and brothers should re-commit themselves to living as peacemakers!

[15] The full text of Pope Benedict XVI's address delivered at the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi on June 17, 2007, may be found at http://www.zenit.org/phprint.php.

[16] Test 23, *FA:ED*, vol. 1, 126.

[17] 1C 23, *FA:ED*, vol. 1, 202.

[18] Warren, *Daring to Cross the Threshold*, 98. See pages 98-119 for further reflections on the *Canticle* and peacemaking.

[19] Ilia Delio, "The Franciscan Path to Peace," *The Cord* 54 (2004): 289.

In addition to following the example of Francis by praying for peace and by approaching others in a spirit of peace and gentleness, TOR women and men might renew their collaborative efforts to promote peace on the national and international level. On the tenth anniversary of the TOR Rule, Margaret Carney, O.S.F. encouraged the creation and maintenance of regional, national, and international associations of Franciscans to advance peace, justice, and service to the poor.[20] At that time, Franciscans International was a relatively new organization, having achieved recognition as a non-governmental organization at the United Nations in 1989. Twenty years later, Franciscans International has developed a significant agenda to advance justice, peace, care of creation, and human rights.[21] In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the TOR Rule, the sisters and brothers might commit themselves to become better informed about the issues embraced by Franciscans International, engage in concrete efforts to support these issues, and introduce others to the work of this international organization.

Within the United States Third Order Regular women and men have still another opportunity to collaborate with Franciscan friars, sisters, seculars, and members of ecumenical groups to advocate for peace through justice. In March 2007 representatives of 69 provinces, congregations, Secular Franciscan regions, and ecumenical Franciscan groups adopted a vision statement and initiated a process to establish a Franciscan Family Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation and a Center for Action in Washington, DC in the hope of transforming national social policy and thus fostering the dignity of all creation.[22] Engagement in this emerging Franciscan Action Network offers TOR sisters and brothers another concrete way to respond to the call to be peacemakers in a world torn by hatred and violence.

[20] Margaret Carney, "A Decade of Development," *The Cord* 42 (1992): 238.

[21] For information on and resources from Franciscans International, visit their website at http://www.franciscansinternational.org.

[22] For information on this initiative, contact Russ Testa, Holy Name Province Office for Peace, Justice, and Integrity of Creation, 6896 Laurel Street NW, Washington, DC 20012, phone 202-541-4245, e-mail JPIC@HNP.org.

Responding with Humility and Gratitude

Chapter IX closes with an exhortation to respond humbly and gratefully "always," "in every place and circumstance," whether "praying or serving or working." For a people fixated on progress, achievement, upward mobility, and technological advancement, the embrace of humility and gratitude is both particularly challenging and desperately needed. Although Francis's writings overflow with sentiments related to these two virtues, Thaddée Matura claims that two texts unlock the meaning and provide a point of unity for all Francis's writings: Chapter 23 of the *Earlier Rule* and the *Later Admonition and Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance,* also known as the *Second Version of the Letter to the Faithful.*[23]

The *Earlier Rule* provides Francis's image of God and God's plan for salvation. The *Later Admonition and Exhortation* suggests the requirements and rewards of living the Gospel. Matura describes the *Earlier Rule* as Francis's *Credo,* a summary of what he believes and at the same time a great hymn of thanksgiving in three movements. In the first movement, Francis praises God (Father, Son, and Spirit) as supremely worthy of praise. In the second movement, Francis invokes the Son and Spirit to join in the hymn of praise to God. In the third movement, Francis asks the entire Communion of Saints to join in praising God. Within this hymn of thanksgiving is embedded Francis's view of human beings as "the object of divine love, the crowning glory of creation, the image and likeness of God."[24] According to Matura, Francis was convinced that "God really loves us and, in some mysterious way, cannot do without us."[25]

[23] Thaddée Matura, *Francis of Assisi: The Message in His Writings* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997).

[24] Matura, *The Message in His Writings,* 36.

[25] Matura, *The Message in His Writings,* 36.

In the *Later Admonition and Exhortation,* Francis describes the true identity of the human person. Humans are children of the Father, brothers and sisters of the Son, and spouses of the Spirit. The images are familial and deeply personal. According to Francis, human persons are caught up in an intimate relationship with God. Contemplation leads to an awareness of the immensity of that love, expressed in the kenosis, God's self-emptying in Christ.

On this 25th anniversary of the revision of the Third Order Regular Rule may all the sisters and brothers respond with great humility in a resounding chorus of praise and thanks to a Good God who "humbly bends down and lifts the lowliness of our nature into unity with his own person."[26]

[26] Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Nativity.*

Three Hymns for St. Elizabeth of Hungary

Translated by Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

Considered by some as the woman whose Franciscan involvement preceded even Clare's, Elizabeth is certainly significant. She is patroness of the secular Franciscans and of hospitals. These three hymns about her are all anonymous, from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. They were collected by Guiseppe Abate from earlier sources, and published in *Miscellanea Francescana* 35 in 1936, 485-86. The translations, paraphrases and suggested melodies are meant to facilitate the hymns' use, especially for Elizabeth's 800th anniversary in 2007.

Hymn One: *A New Star*

1. Novum sidus emicuit,
Error vetus conticuit;
Novo splendore rutilat,
Plebs novas laudes jubilat.

1. Ancient error fell silent;
a new star suddenly appeared;
it glows red in extraordinary splendor,
people joyfully sing out new praises.

2. In cuius nunc praeconia
Linguam solvat Ecclesia:
Novi praeconis gloriam
Promat, sperando veniam.

2. Now in whose celebration
let the Church loose tongue
bring the glory of new praises into view,
hoping for kindness.

3. Dies solemnis agitur,
Dies salutis colitur,
In qua spes, quae promittitur,
Hac attestante redditur.

3. The sacred day is done,
the day of salvation is cherished
in which hope, which is promised,

witnessing this is restored.

4. Ergo, tu Dei famula
Elisabeth, per saecula
Christo conregnans, veniam
Nobis poscas et gratiam.

4. Therefore, Elisabeth, you handmaid of God,
reigning together with Christ
through generations, may ask
pardon and grace for us.

5. Deo Patri sit Gloria
Eiusque soli Filio,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Nunc et in perpetuum.

5. May glory be to God the Father
and to his only Son
with the Spirit Paraclete,
now and for all time.

The Latin hymn is in long meter (8888) and can be sung to: *Old One Hundredth*, aka "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," *Jesus, Dulcis Memoria*, aka "O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts," *Veni Creator spiritus*, aka "Creator spirit, All Divine," *Erhalt uns Herr*, aka "O Bread of Angels," and *Eisenach*.

Metrical Paraphrase of *A New Star (Novum sidus emicuit)*

1. The ancient error, silent, stilled.
A new star shone as God had willed,
Extraordinary, splendid, red,
Glowed bright, as people praises led.

2. By starlight then we celebrate
The virtues that we imitate.
The Church's tongue cries out delight
And asks for kindness from the height.

3. The sacred day is truly spent,
Salvation's sun yet at ascent,
As cherished hope sees every face
Restored, a witness of God's grace.

4. Elisabeth, o maid of God,
You therefore reign with Christ the Lord.
Through generations may you ask
Us pardon, won by Jesus' Pasch.

6. May glory to the Father be –
God now and through eternity –
And only Son, receive our praise
With Paraclete through endless days.

This hymn in long meter (8888) can easily be sung to *On Jordan's Bank* and *Tallis' Canon*.

Hymn Two: *The Church Sings*

1. Concinat Ecclesia
Celebri memoria
Elisabeth hodie,
Quae in caelesti curia
Coronatur Gloria,
Stirps regia Hungariae.

1. Today the Church sings
in honored memory of Elisabeth,
royal lineage of Hungary,
who is crowned in glory by the heavenly court.

2. Pro Francisci cordula,
Mantello, tunicula,
Purpuram deposuit;
Tandem magiserio,
Multis facta lectio,
Stella mundo claruit.

2. For Francis's cord,
little cloak, tunic, she put aside purple garments;
finally the official choice made
for the common people, a star became bright in the world.

3. Leprosis, obsequio,
Languidis suffragio,
Maestis fit in gaudium;
Pauperum refectio
Fuit in hospitio,
Cunctis patens ostium.

3. For the lepers, solicitude,
for the weak, intercession,
sad things may become an occasion of joy;
the poor one's refreshment
was in the hospital, [its] doorway open to all.

4. Hospitalis domina,
in tuorum agmina
Nos hospites elige;
Nostra dele crimina
Et ad caeli culmina
Pedes nostros dirige.

4. Lady of the hospital,
choose us [as] guests in your crowd;
remove our faults
and guide our feet to heaven's height.

The Latin may be sung, if in the first stanza "quae in" and "regia" are elided, to the 777777 hymn tune *Dix*, aka "As with Gladness" or to *Redhead 76*. See Christian Classics Ethereal Hymnary, http://www.ccel.org/cceh/cceh_ind.htm

Metrical Paraphrase of *The Church Sings* (*Concinat Ecclesia*)

1. The Church recalls Elisabeth
In joyous song today.
Her lineage from Hungary
In doubly-crowned array,
Her memory in heaven's court,
Shown now in bright display.

2. For Francis's cord she put aside
Her lavish purple dress,
Wore simple tunic, little cloak
Her choice well to express,
Though drably clad she clearly shone,
Star for the world's redress.

3. Solicitude for lepers shown,
Prayers pled on poor ones' side;
Sad things occasioned joy for you.
Refreshing sorely-tried
Was found there in the hospital,
Its doorway open wide.

4. O Lady of God's hospital
Choose us as guests inside,
As members of your entourage,
We see you as our guide.
Remove our faults and guide our feet
Above to heaven's height.

This can be sung to the 868686 hymn tune *Coronation*, aka "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." See Christian Classics Ethereal Hymnary, http://www.ccel.org/cceh/cceh_ind.htm

Hymn Three: *The World Brought Forth a Flower*

1. Florem mundus protulit,
Cuius odor contulit
Spem salutis
Constitutis
In valle miseriae.

1. The world brought forth a flower
whose odor carried
hope of health
to those set
in the valley of suffering.

2. Fructus huius flosculi,
Clarus ut carbunculi
Cor succendit,
Dum perpendit
Gustum pertinentiae.

2. This flower's fruit,
bright as live coal
kindles the heart,
while it ponders
reaching out for a taste.

3. Flagrat mundus ex odore,
Exardescit in amore;
Corde toto,
Voce, boto,
Sirgit in praeconia.

3. The world flames from the scent,
blazes up in love;
with whole heart,
voice, prayer
it rises in praise.

4. Claudis gressus reparatur,
Caecis visus restauratur,
Quies fessis,
Pax oppressis,
Eius per suffragia. Amen.

4. The cripples' step is renewed,
Sight is restored to the blind,
rest to the wearied
peace to the oppressed
Through her intercession.
Amen.

About Our Contributors

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Book Review

Franciscans at Prayer. Edited by Timothy J. Johnson. The Medieval Franciscans, Vol. 4, General Editor, Steven J. McMichael. Leiden-Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2007. 507 pp.*

"Franciscans at Prayer" is a disarmingly simple title for a very scholarly and in-depth analysis of Franciscan prayer as it evolved in the Middle Ages. Containing highly specialized essays by well known Franciscan authors, this fourth volume in The Medieval Franciscans series published by Brill provides an opportunity to become more knowledgeable of the diversity and richness of our Franciscan prayer tradition.

This book is not for the casual reader nor for someone just beginning to learn of Franciscanism. Highly academic, the book attests both to the excellent scholarship of the authors and to their own lived experience of prayer. It should serve as a compendium to other works being written on our Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, since it provides a wealth of information unknown to many Franciscans.

The broad spectrum of Medieval Franciscans at Prayer is divided into five sections: Early Witnesses; Contemplation and the Academy; Mysticism, Orthodoxy and the Academy; Portals to the Sacred; and Traditions in Time. This format was chosen, as stated by Timothy Johnson in the introduction, in order "to underscore resemblances and points of convergence without suggesting an exhaustive, singular narrative."

In the "Early Witnesses", the contributions of Michael W. Blastic, Ilia Delio and J.A. Wayne Hellmann highlight respectively the intimate relationship between the fraternal form

of life and the mode of prayer of the early brothers; Clare's spiritual path, her mysticism of motherhood bringing Christ to birth in one's life and Thomas of Celano's description of Francis's life as one that developed from beginning to end in prayer leading to on going conversion. This first section may prove very rewarding for personal prayer in enriching previous understandings of the affective and contemplative aspects in the prayer of Francis, the early friars and Clare.

"Contemplation in the Academy" provided a greater challenge, based as it is on the works of Bonaventure and Duns Scotus. Timothy Johnson's examination of the fundamental role of prayer in Franciscan evangelization as presented in Bonaventure's *Sermones dominicales* and Minorite prayer, and Jay Hammond's clarification of Bonaventure's strategy of reflexive reading as demonstrated in his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* leading to a type of "spiritual thinking" were chapters which demanded thoughtful, deliberate but rewarding reading. Mary Beth Ingham's erudite analysis of Dun Scotus's *Tractatus de Primo Principio* in comparison with Bonaventure's *Journey of the Soul* opened up entirely new vistas of Franciscan prayer and whetted the appetite for learning more of the Subtle Doctor's prayer and spirituality.

The third section, "Mysticism Orthodoxy and Polemics", opening up the uniqueness of the prayer forms of Angela of Foligno, Jacopone da Tode and the "heretical beguines" may be new ground for many readers. Diane V. Tomkinson's description of Angela's Spiral Pattern of Prayer, Alexander Vettori's exposition of Iacopone da Todi's vernacular poetry with its wide variety of forms; and the orthodoxy of the prayer of those termed as heretical beguines are especially informative and intriguing. The final essay in this section dealing with the conflict between Christianity and Abrahamic religions in their approach to prayer seemed to resonate with the current issues and conflicts of today. Steven J. McMichael's in depth essay on "Friar Alonso de Espina, Prayer and Medieval Jewish, Muslim and Christian Polemical Literature" affords material for sobering reflection on the conflicts of similar nature being experienced today.

Although each section of this volume on Franciscan prayer affords new insights into the breadth and depth of medieval Franciscan spirituality, the fourth section, "Portals to the Sacred" introduces unique aspects. Each of the essays focuses in some way on the spatial dynamics of prayer: "The Eremitical Practice in the Life of the Early Franciscans," by Jean Francois Godet-Calogeras, describing the need of the brothers to stop at times in their preaching ministry to rest and pray; Amanda D. Quantz' examination of the narrative fresco of Bonaventure's "Tree of Life" in the refectory of Santa Croce's friary in Florence in "At prayer in the shadow of the Tree of Life": and Amy Neff's analysis of the "Byzantine Icons, Franciscan Prayer: Images of Intercession and Ascent in the Upper Church of San Francesco, Assisi" were fascinating and may hold special interest for those whose interest lies in art history as well as Franciscanism.

The final section, "Traditions in Time" focuses on the liturgical worship of the early witnesses and their pedagogical practices. Edward Foley's essay on "Franciscan Liturgical Prayer" and its identification of the role of the Eucharist and Divine office which characterized Francis's approach to ecclesial prayer is a good "refresher course." Bert Roest's chapter on the "Pedagogies of Prayer in Medieval Franciscan Works of Religious Instruction" provides insights into early formation practices which may be of special interest and help to those serving in Formation Ministry. William Short's contribution on "From Contemplation to Inquisition: The Franciscan Practice of Recollection" during the time of inquisition and the factors that led to the destructive undermining of contemplative forms of prayer among the religious and the laity during the 15th-18th centuries was a sobering, educational treatise with which to conclude both this section and the volume of comprehensive insights into Franciscan Prayer during the Medieval Ages.

The authors are to be commended for the plethora of information they have provided through their scholarly essays. Each of the authors provides ample footnotes for further research. An extensive index of over 30 pages is an asset to the scholarly reader. A simple review cannot do justice to the quality and depth of the individual chapters given the exceptional scholarship within. This book should be in all Franciscan Colleges/Universities, Houses of Formation and the libraries of Provincial/Motherhouses. It will also be of great interest and value to those who have pursued Franciscan studies in preparation for their ministry. The topics touched upon have not been exhausted and offer incentives for further study, reflection and prayer.

Norma Rocklage, O.S.F.
Marian College, Indianapolis

*This book is available from the Franciscan Institute at a substantial discount to our readers by the generous permission of the publishers. Call 716-375-2105 for the price and information on the other volumes in the series.

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extend best wishes for a prayerful, peaceful Advent

and joyous, grace-filled Feast of the Nativity

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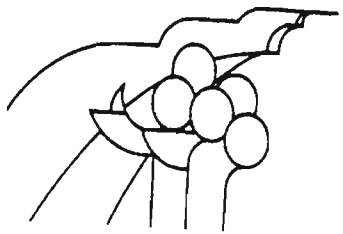

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"God's Extravagant Love": reclaiming the Franciscan Theological Tradition

Twenty-five years ago. Eric Doyle O.F.M., encouraged us to immerse ourselves in our Franciscan theological tradition. He urged us to "enter into fresh dialogue with it until it becomes part of the very air we breathe and forms the structures of our vision of God, humanity, and the world." [The Cord 32.4(1982)111.]

This Program seeks to do just that!

Participants have said:

This opened a whole new world to me. It's a different lens a different way of seeing and experiencing life – makes all the difference but its difficult to take off "old" glasses.

Good timing … we need much more of this. Profound… nothing short of amazing … It is a broad springboard giving many tastes of topics for further study… very enriching.

Keep urging – keep reminding – keep trusting!

"We have a hopeful word to speak to the concerns present in today's Church and to the crises affecting our society."
Bill Short O.F.M.

Program Costs
$225.00 – all costs
or $150.00 – commuter

Information: Kathleen Moffatt O.S.F.
Skmoffatt@aol.com; cell phone: 302-559-0952

Coordinators: Esther Anderson, Aston, PA and Kathleen Moffatt, Wilmington, DE

St. Francis Spirituality Center
200 St. Francis Avenue
Tiffin, OH 44883
Phone (419) 443-1485
e-mail: retreats@stfrancisspiritualitycenter.org
www.stfrancisspiritualitycenter.org

UPCOMING EVENTS/PROGRAMS

December

1st *Matthew's Infancy Narrative... with a Touch of Luke*
Facilitator: *Frank Yeropoli* **Time:** *9:30- 3:00*
Suggested Offering: *25.00*
(Dinner and materials included.)

5th *Guest Night for Yoga*
If you've never done it and want to see if it's the right exercise and stress reliever for you, come as our guest ... Our small Christmas present to you.
Facilitator: *Sr. Paulette Schroeder osf*
Time: *6:30-7:30*

8th *Mary the Peacemaker*
Entering Advent with Mary
Mary pondered all things in her heart. Slow down with Mary as Christmas nears and the "push" begins once again to completely lose "center."
Facilitator: *Virginia Welsh osf, ... recent community minister for the Sisters of St. Francis, retreat director ... speaker for Novena to Mary at Carey for the Assumption celebration.*
Time: *9:30-3:00*
Suggested Offering: *$25.00*

Dear Readers,

This is the end of the first year of the new format of The Cord. We'd like to know your opinion and suggestions on how we can make the journal a more effective means of increasing understanding and appreciation of our Franciscan heritage and spirituality. Would you please take some time to fill out the addressed/stamped card at the back of this issue? An advisory board is being re-constituted and will consider all opinions and suggestions in planning the future direction of the journal. Thank you.

Dacia R. Mitchell, OSF

Latest Releases from Franciscan Institute Publications

Bonaventure's **Writings on the Spiritual Life**

Introduction and Notes by F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M.

Fresh translations of Bonaventure's Writings on the Spiritual Life include "The Threefold Way," "On the Perfection of Life," "On Governing the Soul," and "The *Soliloquium,*" with an appendix of four other related texts.

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Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of John

Edited by Robert J. Karris, O.F.M.

For the first time Bonaventure's commentary on the Gospel of John is now accessible in readable English with helpful, scholarly notes. Karris brings us Bonaventure's interpretations which are often surprisingly contemporary, theologically attuned, pastorally sensitive and textually oriented.

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WTU 2006 Franciscans and Liturgical Life
Let us Praise, Adore and Give Thanks

Edited by Elise Saggau, O.S.F.

Contains essays by Catherine Dooley, O.P., Judith Kubicki, C.S.S.F., James Sabak, O.F.M., William Cieslak, O.F.M.Cap. and Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M.

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Jacques Dalarun

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Edited by Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M. (reprinted 2007)

Foundational Franciscan insights and intuitions are offered for consideration in the contemporary search for meaning.

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School of Franciscan Studies
Projected Summer Schedule 2008

SFS	Credits	Course Title	Days/Time	Instructor	Pre-Requisite
WEEKS 1-5: JUNE 23th -JULY 25th					
508	3	Franciscan Movement I	MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Cusato, OFM	SFS507
519	3	Companions and Disciples	MWF 8:30-11:15 am	Michael Blastic, OFM	SFS518
560	3	Introduction to Franciscan & Medieval Studies	T,Th 8:30-11:15 am Wed 6:45-9:30 pm	Margaret Klotz, OSF	
546	3	Foundations of Franciscan Theology	M,W,F 1:00-3:45 p.m.	Fr. Frank Lane	
505	0	Integration Seminar			
597	0	Comprehensive Exams			
WEEKS 3-5: July 7th – July 25th					
525	3	Writings of Francis and Clare	M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Jean François Godet-Calogeras	
539	3	Formation in the Franciscan Tradition	M-F 1:00-3:45 pm	Edward Coughlin, OFM	
564-03		Special Topics: Beguines and Bizzoche	TBA	Alison More	
558	3	Readings in Franciscan Theology: Ockham	M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Tom McKenna	SFS 546
565	3	Franciscan Painting I	M-F 8:30-11:15 am	Xavier Seubert, OFM	
ONE WEEK COURSES					
564-01	1	Reading Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke	June 23rd-27th 8:30-11:15 am	Robert Karris, OFM	
564-02	1	Franciscans in the Contemporary American Church	June 30th-July 4th 8:30-11:15 am	Meg Guider, OSF	
GENERAL ORIENTATION COURSES					
520	2	Francis: Life and Charism	M-F 8:30-11:15 am June 23rd-July 4th	Mary Meany	
501	3	Survey of Franciscan History	M-F 8:30-11:15 am July 7th-25th	Dominic Monti, OFM	

On the Franciscan Circuit

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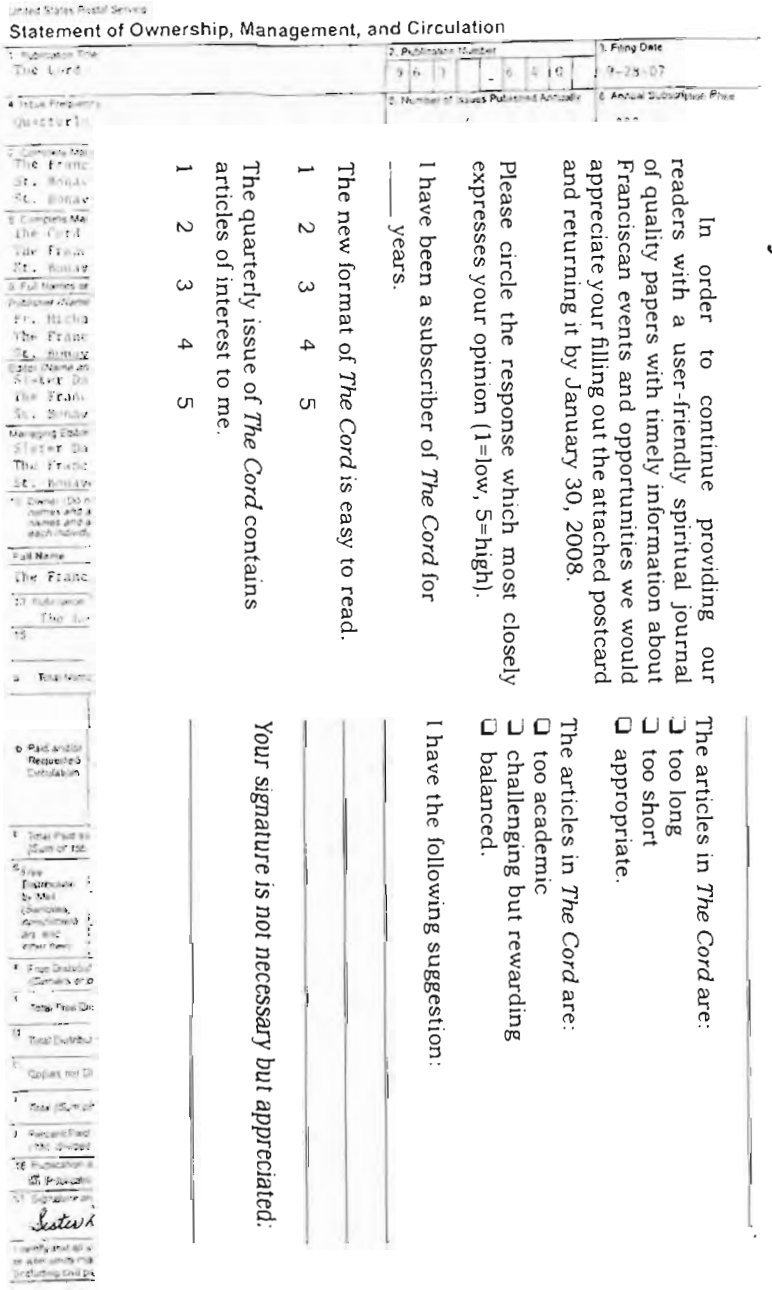
Subject Index


Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

Survey of Readers

In order to continue providing our readers with a user-friendly spiritual journal of quality papers with timely information about Franciscan events and opportunities we would appreciate your filling out the attached postcard and returning it by January 30, 2008.

Please circle the response which most closely expresses your opinion (1=low, 5=high).

I have been a subscriber of *The Cord* for _____ years.

The new format of *The Cord* is easy to read.

1 2 3 4 5

The quarterly issue of *The Cord* contains articles of interest to me.

1 2 3 4 5

I would like to see more articles about

_____

_____

_____

The articles in *The Cord* are:

- ❑ too long
- ❑ too short
- ❑ appropriate.

The articles in *The Cord* are:

- ❑ too academic
- ❑ challenging but rewarding
- ❑ balanced.

I have the following suggestion:

_____

_____

_____

Your signature is not necessary but appreciated:

_____

Abbreviations

Writings of Saint Francis

Adm	The Admonitions
BlL	A Blessing for Brother Leo
Cte	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 (*Regula non bullata*)
LR	The Later Rule (*Regula bullata*)
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 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
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